10 Lessons to be learned from IGAD's involvement in the Sudan peace process (1993–2005)

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Introduction

This chapter examines the circumstances that led to IGAD's involvement in the Sudanese peace process; how that involvement was conducted; what challenges were encountered; how they were dealt with; and with what results and consequences for Sudan and, later, for South Sudan. The objective is to better understand the various facets of IGAD's involvement, including the geopolitical context; the roles and positions of the IGAD member states; how IGAD mediation was structured and in what circumstances; and how it was conducted to achieve the declared or sometimes undeclared objectives. The dynamic of the interactions between the two belligerents, the Government of Sudan and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), and how that interaction affected the evolution and conclusion of the peace process are examined. The role of international actors, particularly the United States (US) and other members of the "Troika Plus," namely the United Kingdom (UK), Norway, and Italy; as well as how the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in Nairobi, Kenya, on 9 January 2005 was negotiated and concluded are interrogated. Finally, it examines the pitfalls of the implementation process and the reasons that led to a truncated implementation of the agreement, which led to the secession/independence of South Sudan.

How IGAD became involved

It was the government of Sudan that requested IGAD to mediate in the conflict between it and the SPLM/A. Very quickly, it became evident that the government of Sudan and other IGAD members – particularly Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda – did not see eye to eye as to the root causes of the conflict and ways to resolve it. The disagreement became evident as early as 1993 when those countries proposed a Declaration of Principles (DOP), signed by the government of Kenya and the leadership of the SPLM/A in May 1994, with the government of Sudan refusing to sign it until it was practically coerced to in 1998 (El-Affendi, 2001; Apuuli, 2015). The DOP epitomised all the issues that the Khartoum regime refused to recognise at that time, namely: clauses 2, 3, and 4 of the DOP relating to the right of self-determination for the people of southern Sudan; the seven

conditionalities linked to maintaining the unity of Sudan (curiously, the issue of self-determination was given precedence in the text over the unity of the country, which was nonetheless said to be a priority); and separation between religion and the state, an issue which has yet to be accepted by the government of Sudan. While seeking to find a compromise and to accommodate as much as possible the positions of the two belligerents, the DOP seemed to be more inclined to give preference to the SPLM/A's demands. This is not to minimise the value of the DOP as a document in its own right but to say that it might have contributed to sowing the seeds of a methodology that had thrown a spanner into the peace process even before its inception. The methodology consisted of putting pressure on the Khartoum delegation to accept what was obviously unacceptable to them, with the delegation feigning to accept what it intended to find a way of circumventing in the future.

Consistent with this approach to the negotiating process, Khartoum refused to sign the DOP, and when it did in 1998 it was obvious that it did so under pressure and against its own will. Actually, it accepted it, but did not believe in it. Thus, it was not meant to implement it. It was nothing more than a game that proved to be detrimental to the peace process. Gen. Lazaro Sumbeiywo recounted how Kenya's President Daniel Arap Moi managed to "convince" al-Bashir to sign the DOP: as the elder statesman, Moi, guided Bashir to his office and tried to make him see reason. "These young men [meaning the relatively younger President of Uganda, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, and the Eritrean President] mean what they are saying. They will do this to you, and this will only stoke the conflict," Moi told Bashir. When he considered those words, he feared that the Heads of State whom he considered excitable could as well make good their threat (of invading Sudan). Bashir calmed down and decided to play along (Waihenya, 2006, 38).

It was then, in July 1997, that the Heads of State present at State House in Nairobi decided to establish the IGAD Peace Process for Sudan and special envoys were appointed representing the IGAD member states. Gen. Sumbeiywo was appointed chair of the Technical Committee. Kenya's Foreign Minister Kalonzo Musyoka was the chair of the Council of Ministers, as Kenya was the chair of the IGAD Sub-committee on Sudan (Woodward, 2013, 171; Young, 2012, 84).

At the international level, following the end of the Cold War, the advent of George W. Bush coming to power in the US and the events of 9/11, the international environment had changed and an aggressive push for the resolution of the problem of southern Sudan started (El-Affendi, 2001, 35). Senator John Danforth was appointed as the US Special Envoy to the Sudan Peace Process and the Sudan Peace Act was adopted by the US Congress in 1997 (Woodward, 2013, 171). The Peace Act clearly identified the culprit as being the Sudan government, or the NIF regime as it was customarily called in international media. For different reasons, the US Christian right and the Congressional Black Caucus lobbied for sanctions against Sudan and viewed the conflict as angels on one side and devils on the other, in line with the habitual Hollywood vision of conflict (Young, 2012, 89).

Within Sudan itself, the opposition to the regime had organised itself, since the days of the regime of Gaafar Nimeiri into a National Democratic Alliance (NDA)

which comprised northern and southern forces opposed to the regime, including the National Democratic Union, the Umma Party, the SPLM/A, and other parties (Johnson, 2016, 143). The SPLM/A, when it came to the negotiating table, completely ignored its fellow members in the NDA and engaged single-handedly in negotiations with the government of Sudan, represented by the National Congress Party (NCP). As a matter of fact, the NCP and the SPLM/A carefully excluded any other political forces from the north or the south from the talks, which gave the talks the aspect of a bilateral discussion between two belligerents who did not represent the totality of the forces in play in the country. This exclusionary attitude proved to have dire consequences on the future of the peace process and on the course of events in the country, both before and after the independence of South Sudan.

From Machacos to Naivasha

In 1993, Sudan first requested that IGAD mediate in the civil war between its northern and southern parts (Johnson, 2016, 145), and in 1994 the DOP was concluded. It was signed by the SPLM/A in May 1994 but only by the government of Sudan four years later (Johnson, 2016, 157). The disagreement over the DOP was to foretell what was to come and probably carried the ingredients of the imminent failure of the peace process, despite the notable success in concluding the CPA in Naivasha, Kenya, on 31 December 2004 and its signing in a grand ceremony at Nyayo stadium in Nairobi on 9 January 2005 (Young, 2012).

It was only in 2001 that that mediation, led by Kenya, started to bear fruit. President Moi visited Sudan in July 2001 and the late Bonaya Godana, then minister of foreign affairs of Kenya, who accompanied the president on that visit, recounted that a few days later on the return flight from Khartoum, President Moi said that it was the first time he believed in peace in Sudan and the unity of Sudan. In his visit to Sudan, President Moi presented a seven-point proposal for peace in Sudan, dubbed by the Sudanese media “The President Moi Peace Plan” (Editorial by Mahgoub Irwan in *Al-Sudan* newspaper, July 2001).

In June 2002, the first round of direct talks between the Government of Sudan and the SPLM/A took place in Machacos. Waihenya (2006, 84) had this to say about Gen. Sumeiywo’s first encounter with the negotiating environment:

Sumbeiywo was also to realize that the negotiations had to be done in a situation where some parties, other than the two protagonists, were all suspicious of one another. There were envoys whose countries were not particularly at peace with others. The Ugandans, for instance, were at conflict with the Sudanese Government over the Lord Resistance Army which was fighting the Ugandan Government from its base in Sudan, and Eritrea and Ethiopia had just ended a war with each other. There was then a quiet internal conflict within the mediation team. There was also the international community which wanted to hijack the negotiations, and there was the IGAD Secretariat to take care of. Sumbeiywo had to balance all that within what he was later to call “a spider’s web.”

In 2005, the CPA between the government of Sudan and the SPLM/A was signed. It ultimately and inadvertently paved the way for the separation of South Sudan and its formation as an independent state on 9 July 2011. As mentioned earlier, the IGAD-led Sudan peace process revealed the strengths and weaknesses of IGAD as an intergovernmental organisation, the sometimes fierce competition for influence and prestige among its member states, and the intrusive role played by international partners.

Judging by what it achieved in comparison to its declared objectives, the Naivasha CPA can be considered a success for IGAD (Young, 2012, 129). But like all successes in such complicated circumstances, it was a success the consequences of which could only be measured in relation to the unfolding situation in Sudan, as well as in the new country created as a result of that same “success,” which is to say, South Sudan. It could be said that Naivasha, particularly the way it was implemented, succeeded in helping South Sudan to gain its independence while failing to keep Sudan together. But to be fair to IGAD and to the mediation team, even if some of them may have worked for the secession of South Sudan, they gave the belligerents an agreement that, if implemented differently, might have led to a united, democratic, and secular Sudan.

IGAD’s mediation

It is to be noted that when IGAD got involved in the Sudan peace process it had no prior experience in mediation or conflict resolution. As indicated above, it had barely reformed itself into a regional cooperation organisation and its mediation and conflict resolution capabilities were quite limited at the time. The IGAD Secretariat was under-resourced and understaffed, and ill-adapted to undertake the daunting task of mediating the various conflicts that were then starting to sprout in the IGAD sub-region: Somalia in the early 1990s; the LRA problem in Uganda; the Ethiopia–Eritrea war in 1998; and, of course, the Sudanese civil war in its second phase, which erupted in 1983 (Johnson, 2016). The intra-IGAD politics made it difficult for the organisation to play a role in the Somali conflict, that of the LRA, or the Ethiopia–Eritrea war. Interestingly, in the case of the Sudan civil war, it was the government of Sudan itself that invited IGAD to help find a solution to the conflict. This request came at a time when many of the IGAD member states were hostile to Sudan, mainly because they felt threatened by its radical Islamist activities (Woodward, 2013, 161). In doing so, Sudan put its fate in the hands of its fellow IGAD member states, who seized the opportunity to put an end to a conflict that was affecting the whole region, but also to coerce the Sudan regime into changing its ways, even if the price was to be the division of the country.

The choice of Kenya to lead the negotiating process was dictated by the intra-IGAD relations at that time. Kenya was the only country that had reasonably acceptable relations with both belligerents. It was not too far from the Sudanese government and not too close to the SPLM/A, while at the same time having enough leverage with the latter to bring it to – and keep it at – the negotiating table.

The choice of Gen. Sumbeiywo as chief mediator was a judicious one. He was known to be a man of integrity, a military man who would understand the intricacies of the conflict but at the same time had the requisite skills to lead the negotiating process. The structure of the negotiating process was also done in such a way that the IGAD member states, mainly Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Uganda, would be represented through their envoys to the process to provide support to the chief negotiator and see to it that their interests were being observed.

The regional and international setting prevailing at the time did not allow for a different structure for a peace process. The various stakeholders and interested parties needed to be represented in one way or another in the mechanisms that dealt with mediation. This included the member states represented at the level of heads of state, to guide the process and take strategic decisions; the ministerial level, which ensured the link between the technical level and the higher decision level and prepared the decisions to be taken at that level; the technical mediation level, the advisors and experts who provided technical, diplomatic, or academic advice; and the Secretariat, which ensured the smooth functioning of the whole process and provided support at all levels.

The process excluded Sudan's northern neighbours, in particular Egypt and Libya, who had their own peace initiative, judged by some observers as being more comprehensive as it included other political parties from northern and southern Sudan (Young, 2012, 87). It was probably for this reason that it was not accepted by the two belligerents, who were seeking to ensure their full monopoly and control of the process. This approach was supported by the mediating IGAD member states, who wanted to keep IGAD's control over the process and to preserve the "African" nature of the mediation. Critics of the CPA process, and of similar processes for that matter, argued that the model was flawed and described it as "a liberal peacemaking model" (Young, 2015).

The Sudan peace process was initiated in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, when a triumphant West was entertaining ideas about the "End of History" (Fukuyama, 1992) and the "Clash of Civilizations" (Huntington, 1993) and when the so-called "neocons" and the Christian right were carrying the day in the US. The conflict resolution model that was being promoted at that time was inevitably a liberal one based on the premises of human rights, democratic change, and the right to self-determination, which was an amended version of the model exercised during the era of decolonisation. IGAD member states had neither the resources nor the political or economic clout to challenge or even amend that model to suit the realities of their region. They exercised a copy-and-paste approach to the resolution of conflict in Sudan that sought to introduce democratic transformation and human rights in isolation from the real will of the people. The result was an accommodation of two anti-democratic and totalitarian bodies, the government of Sudan and the SPLM/A, who sought the same objective, albeit by different means, which was consolidation of their grip on power and resources, regardless of the will of the people.

However, we must give the mediator, Gen. Sumbeiywo, his dues. He realised early on the necessity to go into the "field" to listen to people in both northern and

southern Sudan and see for himself the tragic effects of the war. This was a step in the right direction, but it was not enough. No mediation or conflict resolution model had succeeded thus far in achieving the requisites of systematically and thoroughly bringing the views and concerns of the people into the peace process. Surprisingly, the government of Sudan and the SPLM/A agreed to apply the concept of “popular consultation” to the two areas – South Kordofan and the Blue Nile states – but did not want to apply them more widely in northern and southern Sudan (Grawert, 2010; Wassara, 2010, 89). Popular consultation is perhaps the closest you can get to achieving the democratisation of a peace process. But popular consultation must be done as part and parcel of the peace process itself, as a mechanism of mediation and conflict resolution rather than an afterthought or an appendix to a peace agreement. But, of course, the question is how this can be done when you are dealing with those who are unwilling to listen to the will of the people.

The conflict between the government of Sudan and the SPLM/A was unique in many ways. It opposed an Islamist regime, seeking to spread its ideology beyond its borders to a movement initially inspired by Marxist–Leninist ideology, but reformed itself into what was perceived to be a liberation movement with an opportunistic leadership with unclear objectives, ranging from creating a New Sudan to seeking the independence of South Sudan (Young, 2012, 62f). The agenda pursued by the government of Sudan at that time was resisted not only by the SPLM/A but also by a sizeable part of the Sudanese people and by the traditional political parties allied to the SPLM/A within the NDA. The problem of radical Islam is not only of concern to the Sudanese, but to the whole of the IGAD sub-region, to Africa, and to the world at large. A wider analysis was needed, and still is, to identify the inter-linkages and ramifications of the Sudan peace process and its medium- and long-term impact on regional peace and stability, as well as on the two Sudans. Western media, think tanks, and interest groups channelled the attention of the elite and decision-makers in the IGAD sub-region in one direction, which served the immediate interests and concerns of these circles and of their reading of the situation from a Western perspective, while ignoring the medium- and long-term ramifications that are now visible to all.

Interaction between the two belligerents

As indicated earlier, the two parties, the government of Sudan and the SPLM/A, had one goal in mind: to reinforce their positions and legitimise themselves in the eyes of the regional and international communities. The government was keen to preserve the Islamist nature of the regime while making minimal concessions to the regional and international communities. As it turned out later, the government was prepared to sacrifice the unity of the country rather than compromise its hardline position. There was, of course, a constituency within the regime that would have preferred to keep the country together, whatever the cost, but it was the hardliners who carried the day. The SPLM/A, for its part, was not much different from the government: many years before the beginning of the Naivasha

talks, a struggle had started between unionists and separatists within the SPLM/A. Garang was said to be a unionist and had elaborated the vision of a New Sudan, which would be secular, democratic, and egalitarian. Another constituency within the SPLM/A, presumably led by the present president, Kiir, worked for the secession of South Sudan. This trend was supported by influential lobby groups in the US, led by the infamous “Friends of South Sudan,” who saw the future of South Sudan as a separate country. As we shall see later, there was no agreed policy within the US as to the future of South Sudan. Waihenya (2006) quotes an interesting exchange of views and words between Gen. Sumbeiywo and Danforth on the issue of self-determination:

A more feasible, and, I think, preferable view of self-determination would ensure the right of the people of Southern Sudan to live under a government that respects their religion and culture. Such a system would require robust internal and external guarantees so that any promises made by the government in peace negotiations could not be ignored in practice.

This view was not shared by the southerners. The SPLM/A had all along insisted that the southerners must be accorded a right to determine their future status in a referendum. But Danforth was trying to water down the meaning of self-determination as it related to the cause of Southern Sudan (Waihenya, 2006, 89).

Was this prophetic? At that same time, there were other constituencies who considered the secession of South Sudan not only a preferred option but an objective they had been working to achieve for many years. In the aftermath of the Naivasha Agreement, former US ambassador to Sudan Tim Carney wrote:

In 2001 and 2002 no great sophistication was needed to recognize that the United States did not have a unified position on how to deal with Sudan. Opposing views in the Congress, the National Security Council staff, and the State Department made it difficult for the United States to articulate a coherent policy. U.S. agencies viewed Sudan through different lenses. Although the State Department had moved Sudan to its Africa Bureau in the late 1950s, other U.S. agencies kept it in their Middle East offices.

Moreover, American non-governmental organisations (NGOs), churches, and journalists held strong views, often informed by only one party. Some lacked an understanding or willingness to try to grasp complicated Sudanese realities. Former President Jimmy Carter did, however, use his ties with evangelical Christians to ensure some breathing space for Senator Danforth’s efforts (Carney, 2007, 5).

This is probably another lesson to be learned: to what extent should we trust bigger powers to resolve our own conflicts when they themselves do not agree about the way to go about it? Too many conflicts around the world give us sufficient evidence, if it were needed, that we better serve ourselves and should seek to resolve our own conflicts before they become intractable and require the

interference of the bigger powers. Their role should be a supportive one, giving us the right push at the right time.

Arguably, South Sudan already had its self-determination during the interim period. It was governing itself, while participating in the government of the north with 32 percent share of power. The oil was flowing and the south was exempted from the application of Sharia legal code. This was as controversial in the north as it was in the south. People in the north developed the habit of living with it because even if that brand of political Islam was resisted in its own right, the real problem was the totalitarian police state hiding behind it. Proponents of political Islam now themselves recognise the failure of their project, which was based on rhetoric and empty slogans.

The hardliners in the Islamist movement imagined that the south was an obstacle in the way of consolidating their grip on the country and achieving their dream of a radical Islamist state in the Sudan. By getting rid of the south they imagined that they could make that dream come true. They were wrong: they have been able neither to consolidate their grip on power nor to fulfil their dream of an Islamist state because the basic premise was flawed.

The CPA negotiations became associated with two names: Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, the former first vice president of Sudan, and the late Dr John Garang, former leader of the SPLM/A. Garang died in a helicopter crash in July 2005 and Taha has lost his position in the government. The opponents of the CPA option for unity saw to it that the CPA did not achieve its two objectives of peace and unity. Taha and Garang became the scapegoats in the nightmarish worst-case scenario that we are living through now. South Sudan had an option to live in peace and harmony with (North) Sudan, but some of its leaders and their friends did not want that to happen. Making the north bleed was more important for some than making the south prosper. But this is not to absolve the hardliners in Khartoum of the responsibility, which is a shared one, as indicated earlier.

The role of international partners

The IGAD Partners Forum played an important role in providing support to the peace process. Most of the funding came from the EU and European countries, which also provided diplomatic support to the process. The Troika Plus, led by the US, the UK, Norway, and Italy equally provided considerable support to the process (El-Affendi, 2001; El-Battahani, 2013, 35; Ahmed, 2010, 7). In this process, as in other African peace processes, questions about the role of international partners keep re-surfacing all the time. How can their influence on the process be controlled when their financial and diplomatic support to the process is sometimes vitally needed? How can we keep the independence of the mediation process and protect it from the interference of the bigger powers? The formula of African solutions to African problems was introduced many years ago without Africans being able to gain full control of their own destiny or resolve their problems and conflicts without assistance or interference, sometimes robust, from the bigger powers. At most, what Africa and IGAD can do at this stage is to try and gain financial

independence by funding conflict resolution initiatives themselves and build their own technical, logistical, and intellectual mediation and conflict resolution capacities. This will be a first necessary step in the right direction. The AU launched such a process at its summit of Heads of State and Government in Kigali, Rwanda, on 18 July 2016, thus emulating the funding mechanism put in place by countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) many years ago. This is necessary, but not enough.

Reinforcing IGAD's mediation capacities

I had the privilege of taking part in a meeting for the formulation of the mediation strategy in Nairobi and was happy to see that some profoundly serious thinking and planning was put into the process. The strategy was to include an IGAD mediation and peacemaking model based on the realities, needs, and aspirations of the people of the region. This further required putting together a “brains trust” that would develop the mediation and conflict resolution model and keep updating it and adapting it to changing regional situations.

In the current conditions of international relations, the role of bigger powers should never be underestimated. If you cannot have them with you, you should at least see to it that they are not working against you. The best you can do is try to maximise their benefits and minimise their harm. This is one of the hard realities of international relations today. Whether we want it or not, there is an international order structured around the United Nations (UN) and its funds and specialised agencies, continental and regional cooperation, and peace and security organisations. IGAD and its member states must find their niche within this complex array of bodies, organisations, and institutions. The experience of the Naivasha peace process has shown that IGAD member states should do more to align their relations, concerns, and interests at the bilateral, regional, and international levels. They need to agree on how to help a member of their family who is experiencing problems or in a state of turmoil or failure; and how to minimise competition over who will lead peace processes.

Sudan was assisted in splitting apart, even when the writing on the wall was only too clear. IGAD midwived the process that led to this parting of ways. As the saying goes, “You cannot blame the midwife for the sex or colour of the baby.” But this is precisely the point: does IGAD's role stop at the delivery of the baby, or should it follow the process of its development and growth? In other words, what was IGAD's role in the implementation of the CPA? The answer is, very little. The baby was taken out of IGAD's hands and reared by others. But it is a well-known fact that while reaching an agreement is important, implementing that agreement on the ground is equally if not more important. In the case of Sudan, as in many other conflict situations, implementation is handled by those who have the financial, technical, and logistical resources to do it. But they may not always garner the necessary political consensus to do it or may not have correctly read local political or socio-cultural intricacies. The established format is that of a pledging conference to which are invited major donors, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, UN agencies, and other funding and/or implementing partners. Implementing structures

are put in place, comprising a ceasefire commission, a monitoring and observation commission, an assessment and evaluation commission, and other commissions according to the various areas of concern of the peace agreement.

In the case of South Sudan, as in the case of many other countries in conflict, pledges have rarely been met: USD \$7 billion dollars was pledged for a reconstruction and development fund, only 20 percent of which was paid. Additionally, the international community seems to have run out of ideas as to how to deal with certain categories of conflict such as those plaguing the IGAD region. The usual recipe is that of financial and economic sanctions, which have little effect on the governing elite but add to the suffering of the population; or arms embargos, which are difficult to monitor or enforce in the current environment where the whole world is awash with all kinds of arms and when it is easier to get a gun in certain areas than to find a piece of bread. Human rights and democratisation are indeed noble ideals that need to be upheld, but in today's world you can get away with crime if you have the right kind of connections. Is there here an issue of double standards? Probably, yes.

Conclusions and lessons learned

IGAD decided to involve itself in the conflict between the government of Sudan and the SPLM/A at the request of the former. That was the first experience of IGAD in mediation and conflict resolution. The agreement of the IGAD member states to designate a single mediator supported by envoys from some of the member countries and to dedicate a technical secretariat facilitated the successful conclusion of the process. This was mainly due to the fact that there was minimal competition among the member states as to who should lead the process, as all those involved shared varying degrees of sympathy with the cause pursued by the SPLM/A and the common objective of putting pressure on the government of Sudan to change its ways.

The methodology adopted by the mediator and his team turned out to be judicious, in the sense that he was able to get together, face to face, the two people who were considered to be the decision-makers on either side, Garang and Taha. This method was helpful in reaching an agreement, despite the highly contentious issues and the mistrust that prevailed between the two sides. Paradoxically, what was seen as a positive aspect of the methodology of the talks turned into a disadvantage in the implementation phase, particularly after the death of Garang in 2005 and the resistance of hardliners on both sides to the full implementation of the agreement, particularly the clauses on "Making Unity Attractive."

This highlights the importance of involving all stakeholders in peace talks, which has been difficult to achieve in the case of the CPA due to the refusal of the two belligerents to include other parties. This attitude continued into the implementation phase, where the two parties never sought to explain the agreement to the people or involve them in its implementation. On the contrary, they did everything they could to render unity unattractive.

Too many contentious issues were left unresolved during the interim period (2005–2011), such as that of the borders between north and south; the issue of

the oil-rich border area of Abyei and the popular consultations in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states; security arrangements and the development of the south; as well as passing some of the laws that were crucial for the implementation process, such as the National Security Law. Even though the CPA included detailed implementation protocols, IGAD's role in the implementation phase was minimal. This poses the question as to whether more should have been done to ensure better integration and continuity between the negotiation phase and that of the implementation. This also takes us back to questions over the all-inclusiveness of the peace process, a better reading of the prevailing political situation, and a better assessment of the potential negative impact of the spoilers.

The CPA talks have once more brought to the forefront the dependency of IGAD on external financial, technical, and intellectual assistance and attempts by IGAD partners to control or influence the process. While political influence is inevitable, whatever we do, due to the interlinkages between local, regional, and international affairs, all should be done to minimise that influence, particularly by ensuring the financial, technical, and intellectual independence of IGAD.

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