



## OFFICIAL STATEMENT IGAD Media Awards 2024

---

H.E. Workneh Gebeyehu, IGAD Executive Secretary  
23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024

- Our chief guest Hon. **Aden Bare Duale**, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry, representing His Excellency, **Dr. William Samoei Ruto**, President of the Republic of Kenya,
- Hon. **Dr. Korir Sing'oei** Principal Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Kenya
- Mr. **David Goseny**, Mission Director USAID Kenya and East Africa,
- Members of the **Diplomatic Corps**,
- **Distinguished Guests**,
- **Esteemed Journalists, and Media Practitioners**,
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**,

1. It is with great honor and pride that I stand before you today, as we celebrate an extraordinary community of storytellers; you journalists, filmmakers, and content creators whose work shapes the narratives of our region and beyond.



2. Our first act is to most **graciously thank the Cabinet Secretaries Hon. Aden Bare Duale** and PS Dr. **Korir Sing'oei**, and the **people of the Republic of Kenya** for their warmth, hospitality, and unremitting generosity in hosting us for this event.
3. This is the **second edition of the IGAD Media Awards**, following our inaugural event held at our headquarters in the Republic of Djibouti. Since we established these Media Awards our vision has grown to **leverage the power of media to unite us by rotating this prestigious event annually** in the capitals of our Member States.
4. The media plays a critical role in supporting IGAD's mission by reflecting the realities of our region. It **highlights not only the challenges we face together** but also, more importantly, our **remarkable resilience and substantial successes** in promoting our mandate of peace, security, and regional integration.
5. Tonight, we have indeed come together to **celebrate the strength of our media as a force for unity and progress**. We gather not only to reward excellence but also to reflect on the power of media in building resilient societies that inspire hope and further peace across the IGAD region.



## Honourable Cabinet Secretary, Ladies and Gentlemen,

6. This year's theme, "**Narratives of Hope: Towards Inspiring Peaceful, Secure, Inclusive Futures,**" speaks directly to the role that the media plays in constructing a world we want to live in; this is a world where dialogue triumphs over conflict, understanding overcomes division, and inclusion is our collective compass.
7. Conflicts, displacement, polarization and climate crises have highly challenged us across the IGAD region. But in the process, stories of resilience, solidarity, and courage have been emerged in defiance to our difficulties.
8. These are the stories **that must be told and told again until they are heard.** These are the stories to which you, our media professionals, give voice and amplify for the voiceless and shed light on the dark corners of our societies.
9. In the year since the last Media awards, **IGAD has concentrated on our core function of consolidating peace and security while promoting regional development and integration.** We have been working tirelessly to manage conflicts and assisted our Member States in restoring stability through various initiatives.



10. However, in spite of our achievements, **we continue to face numerous peace and security challenges.** In addressing these issues, **we draw inspiration from the philosophy of our founding fathers,** who established IGAD with a vision for a regional approach to peace, security, and development rooted in co-operation through multilateralism.
  
11. Their **commitment and that of our current IGAD Heads of States and Government** to unity and solidarity guides our efforts as we work together to overcome obstacles and build a brighter future for our region.
  
12. Our collaboration with Member States, our communities, and partners has been the guiding principle of IGAD in our region. However, **these efforts can only thrive in a media landscape that promotes transparency, accountability, and trust.**
  
13. The media operate not only as a mirror to society but are also the torchbearers of change. As we celebrate tonight's winners, let us recognize that these awards will remind us of our collective duty to nurture the stories that will **heal, unite, and inspire.**



14. You craft the stories that collectively uplift our communities and make the notion of **peace, security and development not just dreams but an achievable reality**. Stories told through you remind one that even in the face of adversity, hope is alive.

### **Honourable Cabinet Secretary, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

15. As professionals in our respective fields, I take advantage of this opportunity to draw the **attentions** of both the media fraternity and us in public policy to be alive to the changing landscape in which these stories are being told. And I call upon us to proactively adjust ourselves accordingly to the emerging realities when it comes to media and public information.
16. For example, the 2023/2024 State Media Report published by the Media Council of Kenya reveals that traditional media still dominates with **47%** of our audience relies on television as their primary news source, followed by **31%** for radio but digital media is also notably on the rise.
17. Similarly, as we experience significant demographic changes with a growing youth audience, growth in digital media consumption has increased significantly with **over half (52%)** of young people consuming news from both online news websites and social media platforms.



18. This ties with the increase in the use of Smartphones, with **91%** of young people using handheld devices to access news access and other forms of information, compared to newspapers and other forms of legacy media.
19. While I anticipate that media consumption patterns may vary across IGAD Member States, we are beginning to see a convergence in preferences as our world becomes increasingly interconnected.
20. And now, as we unite in recognizing the role of media houses, journalists, and content creators here today, let us applaud the courage and resourcefulness that have come to distinguish them. At the same time, **we have a duty as policymakers and practitioners to address the challenges that serve as obstacles to media independence.**

**Honourable Cabinet Secretary, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

21. At this moment, I would like to express **my heartfelt appreciation to my IGAD media team,** led with dedication by my spokesperson, Patience Nyange, and my head of communications Austine Opata.



22. The industrious effort of the entire team have been instrumental in **fostering collaboration and strengthening our partnership with the media fraternity** as fundamental allies in our development journey.
23. I also want to extend our **gratitude to our partners at USAID**. Your unwavering support has been vital in making this event not only possible, but truly remarkable in its scale, vibrancy, and significance.
24. Together, we celebrate the profound impact of media on our society and the shared commitment to progress. Thank you all for your invaluable contributions.
25. **Finally, please allow me to thank you members the fourth estate both established and emerging** across all our IGAD Member States, and further **extend my warmest congratulations to all of tonight's awardees**, whose work shows us the power of media; a power that transcends barriers, changes societies, and fosters peace.
26. And so, **building on our inaugural media awards, let this be the continuation of new and more influential stories, inspiring our region to the world**. Let us continue to jointly highlight the stories that matter, the stories that build our future.  
**Thank you very much.**