



Geo-Political Rivalry Among External Powers, Governance Deficiencies And Conflicts In The Horn Of Africa: Implications For Cooperation For Durable Peace And Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT

The Horn of Africa, one of the regions of the world that has high geopolitical importance, is endowed with huge natural resources. Notwithstanding the resource endowments, the region is one of the most conflict-prone regions in the world. Deficiencies in governance systems, deprivations and poverty, resource-based inter-communal conflicts and unduly interventions of external powers in the internal affairs of the countries have been the main triggers of conflicts. Rival external powers have been unduly intervening in the Horn of Africa under the coverage of conflict resolution. The extensive conflict management initiatives of the external powers, particularly the USA and EU have been futile because conflicts of different nature and in different scales still persist in the region. The true objectives of the external powers have been to control the geo-strategically important and natural resource rich Horn of Africa region by incorporating the countries into Western-styled governance system that promote neoliberalism and to pave the way for their natural resource-seeking multinational corporations to exploit the region's abundant resources. With the persistence of conflicts of different intensities and duration, the development progress in most Horn of African countries have been far below expectations during the study periods. The Horn of Africa has wide spread human insecurity which has acted as force that pushes people to leave their country or to remain internally displaced within their countries. The real GDP growth rates among the countries were not robust during the period 2011-2019. The level of poverty has been high in the countries. Their HDI were lower than the average HDI of Sub-Saharan African countries, which was 0.549 in 2020.

Their external debt- the debt service have limited their investment capabilities.

At present, the Horn of African countries are in a vicious cycle of conflicts and underdevelopment. The grave social and economic situations have to be reversed through genuine cooperation among the countries. The trajectory of regional cooperation for durable peace and sustainable development would require multifaceted transition entailing a move from conflict to peace and improved security; from political exclusion to a participatory system based on democratic principles and respect for the rule of law and human dignity; from ethnic, religious, or ideological confrontation to national reconciliation of the different groups involved in conflict; and from an economy based on stagnation and damaged infrastructure to economic reconstruction through inclusive –growth that would lead to sustained development. For the achievement of regional durable peace and sustainable development, the following measures are suggested (i) Political recommitment and political willingness of leaderships in the Horn of African countries for broader regional cooperation for durable peace and development to address regional issues jointly. (ii) Promote good governance and democratic principles in order to ensure social justice and harmony among the peoples. (iii) Strengthen regional cooperation among institutions of higher education to facilitate access to global knowledge, and subsequently enhance knowledge-based



competitiveness of the countries. (iv) Establishment of regional media that promotes good images of the Horn of Africa by providing information on the high economic potentials of the region and its peace-loving peoples. (v) Establishment of Horn of Africa Institute for Peace and Development with focus on providing training on governance, regional cooperation, development and conflict management. (iv) Provision of civic education at all levels of education in order to promote tolerance, understanding among different religions, ethnicities and social classes. (iv) Increase investments to improve the livelihoods of marginalized groups such as nomadic communities and unemployed youth. (vii) Refrainment of external powers from meddling in the internal affairs of the Horn of African countries as the countries and their peoples have the wisdom and capability of solving the various conflicts in the region.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Horn of Africa consists of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Djibouti and the Sudan. The region is hemmed by large bodies of water; the Nile River in the West; the Red Sea in the North, and the Indian Ocean in the East with the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean defining the clusters of maritime limits (Munene, 2022,

p. 2). The Horn of Africa links the oil-rich countries of the Persian Gulf and the vital commercial lanes that transit the Bab al-Mandab and the Gulf of Aden, reinforce the region as a crucial maritime chokepoint and port of call in an increasingly connected global economy (IGD, 2020, p.1). In addition to its geostrategic importance, the region is endowed with diverse natural resources such as vast arable land, marine resources, water , livestock resources, wildlife and various energy resources such as oil and gas reserves, hydroelectric, solar and geothermal (IGAD, 2016, p.18). Although decolonization of Africa marked the formal end of Europe's dominant security role in the Horn of Africa, the former colonial powers have still maintained dominant security roles in the region (Melvin, 2019,p.3).

Contrary to the expectations of their peoples, since their independence, the systems of governance in the Horn of African countries have wide deficiencies, unable to achieve inclusive and equitable development that ensure social justice. The faulty lines in the governance systems have resulted to differentiated economic, social and political opportunities of their peoples and have created fertile grounds for the external powers' unduly interventions in their internal affairs that

overtly trigger intra-state and inter-state conflicts (Melvin, 2019, p.2). During the Cold War period, the USA and the former Soviet Union emerged as the main external powers in the Horn of Africa and they continued to fuel conflicts by creating ideological factions among the Horn of African countries. They continued to provide military support to their allies with the objective to secure their geopolitical interests in the Horn of Africa which added fuel to intra-state and inter-state conflicts (Melvin, 2019, p.2). To date, the Horn of African countries have been immersed in cycles of intra-state and inter-state conflicts while facing multi-faced development challenges, including human insecurity, internal displacement of peoples and massive outmigration, high incidence of poverty and food insecurity, climate change-induced droughts (Delozier, 2021,p.1).

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Horn of African countries like other SSA countries were integrated into the global system during the period of colonialism as peripheral actors. Formal de-colonialism process did not fundamentally alter the peripheral position of the Horn of African countries and they have remained on the fringes of the international system both in political and economic terms (Engel and Olsen, 2005, p.3). Since the end of 2nd World War, the USA particularly has been projecting its power using its economic, political and military levers on the Horn of Africa countries. For instance, the USA managed to conclude contract agreement with the Imperial Governmental Ethiopia in 1953 which allowed the USA to establish a military communication base in Eritrea known as Kagnev Station in Asmara and naval facilities in Massawa (Bereketeab ,2013, P.486). The USA would then be able to control the Red Sea, Indian Ocean, the Middle East and curb activities of the Soviet Bloc. Ethiopia's reward for allowing the USA to have the base consisted of two rewards. The first reward was support of the USA for realizing the forced federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia. Eritrea was forcefully federated with Ethiopia through USA leveraged UN resolution that opened the way for annexation of Eritrea, which led to a thirty-year of independence struggle (1961-1991), at huge human, material and foregone development costs (Bereketeab ,2013, P.486). The second reward was that Ethiopia continued to receive military support from the USA in the amount of USD 280 million over 25 years that stretched until 1977 (Bereketeab ,2013,P.486).



Deficiencies in the governance systems of the Horn of African countries have also created fertile grounds for unduly interventions of the Western global powers to openly exercise their divisive policies. In the name of democracy, the Western powers systematically have intensified elite power rivalry in the Horn of African countries where mobilization of people has been based on ethnicity, religion, clan, language or other differentiating factors in defining their political and development agenda (Woodward, 1996; Mengisteab, 2011, p.14; IGD, 2020, p.4). Recently, the separation of South Sudan from the rest of the country resulted to border problems between the two Sudans as the contested areas are sources of oil in which the external global powers have competing interests for controlling the oil resource areas (Mengisteab, 2011, p.13). Although the OAU/AU have endorsed colonial borders, global powers have been fueling inter-state conflicts of different scales within the objective to secure their geopolitical interests in the Horn of Africa countries. Since the disintegration of Soviet Union in 1990, the USA-led Western powers unduly interventions in the Horn of African countries has continued through systematic and divisive foreign policy by categorizing the Horn of African countries as ally and non-ally (Bereketeab, 2013, P.484). For instance, encouraged by the USA-led global western powers, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) dominated Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) Government declared war on Eritrea in 1998 on the pretext of border dispute which continued till 2000 (Mengisteab, 2011, p.12). When declaring war on Eritrea, the objective of the TPLF-dominated Ethiopian government was to derail the rapid socio-economic progress of Eritrea under self-reliant development strategy, which the West considers undesired lesson for other African countries (Mengisteab, 2011, p.12). On 13 April, 2002, the Border Commission gave its ruling, which delineated the entire border between the two countries and the town of Badme, the flashpoint of the war, was declared as part of Eritrea sovereign territory (Mengisteab, 2011, p.12). However, the Ethiopian government refused to implement the Border Commission's ruling and the international community, particularly the USA and EU, the guarantors of the Algiers agreement between the two countries have failed to enforce Ethiopia to implement the Border Commission's ruling, indicating that the Western powers continued to appease TPLF dominated government of Ethiopia. The present regional organization such as

IGAD has also been unable to impartially solve the 1998–2000 border war between Ethiopia and Eritrean. The periodically erupting intra-ethnic conflict of South Sudan, the conflict between South Kordofan and Blue Nile, the conflict between the Sudan and South Sudan, border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the persistence of internal conflict in Somalia are some of the conflicts in the Horn of Africa in which IGAD, a regional organization has been unable to settle the conflicts (Mengistu, 2018, p.20). This suggests that IGAD member's states have maintained their belligerent stance, making IGAD as ineffective regional organization for promoting peace and political stability and economic integration in the Horn of Africa.

Recently, there has been increasing interest of external powers in exploiting the huge and untapped natural resources in the Red Sea, including metals such as zinc, copper, silver, gold, cadmium, cobalt and hydrocarbons as well as abundant varieties of fisheries (AL-anazi, 2001, p.9). The emergence of Middle Eastern and Gulf states as key powers in the Horn of Africa has increased with varied economic and political interests. Moreover, major Asian powers have also established significant security engagements in and around the Horn of Africa as part of Indo-Pacific security strategies. Djibouti has particularly remained militarily congested, with foreign forces from the United States, France, Germany, Japan, and China (AGSIW, 2020, p. 10). The rapid militarization in the Horn of Africa implies growing possibility of the return to geopolitical rivalry among external powers (Chun, 2020, p.6). The increasing external security politics of the Horn of Africa has several effects: (i) Overlap of commercial and military interests of the external powers which increase the risk of confrontation among the external actors in the region (IGD, 2020, p.4). (ii) Integration of the Horn of African countries into broader geostrategic and geopolitical agendas such as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) rivalries and the Indo-Pacific strategic competition involving India, China and the USA. (iii) Raising regional security in the Horn on political agenda, moving away from a narrow focus on continental security to a broader emphasis on maritime and transcontinental security dynamics (IGD, 2020, p.4). (iv) Higher risk of further regional conflicts due to geopolitical competition of external powers. Conflicts in any one country in the Horn of Africa is likely to spillover to neighboring countries because of the high degree of



interdependence of the countries in theregion.

With the removal of TPLF from power by the Ethiopian people, and since the starting of reform in Ethiopia in 2018, the USA and the EU have also been openly meddling in the internal affairs of Ethiopia. The Trump administration, for example, failed to impartially mediate the Nile dispute between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt over the construction of Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile (Atlantic Council, 2022). The attempt of USA to coerce Ethiopia into signing a three-way peace agreement made Ethiopia to withdraw from the negotiations because the USA was perceived a partial broker. Following the war in the Tigray Regional Administration, in 2020, the USA and EU have been meddling in the internal affairs of Ethiopia. The USA and EU refrained from condemning the TPLF's assault on the democratically elected Government. They have continued to side with the TPLF, making the conflict to persist and has increased the suffering of the Ethiopian population (Atlantic Council, 2022; Abbink, 2021, p.6). A huge number of social media exchanges regarding the conflict in Tigray were unfounded. Global media have also been bias which lack factual appraisal regarding the conflict in the Tigray Regional Administration (Abbink, 2021, p. 6). There is a danger that demonstrable lies and misrepresented facts regarding the conflict in Tigray will pass into history and is likely to bias even for the future generations (Abbink, 2021, p. 6). Contrary to the TPLF extension of the conflict towards Afar and Amhara Regional Administrations, the dominant global media and many Western policy-makers responses have been negative towards the Federal Government of Ethiopia and mild on the TPLF's belligerent stance (Abbink, 2021, p.6). Ethiopia has received high global media, diplomatic and economic pressures, particularly from aid donor countries of Europe and the USA. The USA particularly has terminated the agreement it had with the Ethiopian Government with respect to the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), a punitive economic policy because an AGOA termination has undermined the livelihoods of millions of low-income workers employed in different enterprises which were beneficiaries of AGOA.

A timely response is required by the Horn of African countries to insulate the increasing risk conflicts on a regional level through establishment of genuine regional cooperation for durable peace

and development. In line with this, in January 2020, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia proposed to form a new regional bloc, referred to as the Horn of Africa Cooperation (Henneberg and Stapel, 2021, p.339). The cooperation emanated from genuine interest of the leaderships in the countries to jointly and cooperatively address their development challenges that would bring durable peace and sustainable development in the region (Henneberg and Stapel, 2021, p.341). Genuine cooperation among the countries in the Horn of Africa while reducing unduly interventions external powers in their internal affairs is expected to promote development and ensure durable peace and stability in the region, a precondition for achieving inclusive- growth and sustainable development.

III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The goal of economic and social development in the Horn of African countries is to set in motion the process of self-reliant and sustainable development through which social justice will be realized. Self-reliant development means building national capacities that would enable the Horn of African countries to achieve inclusive- growth without foreign aid. The realization of social justice means equalizing and ensuring opportunities for peoples to participate in their economic, social and political affairs and eliminate disparities between regions, income levels, and gender and ethnic groups (Friedrich-Ebert- Stiftung, 2013, p.6). The role of the state in promoting a just society is central in shaping the social justice agenda, not only through domestic policies but also through mediating with external forces (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2013, p.6)

Inclusive economic growth and social justice underpins investment-growth-employment nexus in which investment plays a critical role. The Horn of African countries would be required to mobilize their domestic resources so that investment levels would reach 25% or above of their respective GDP to sustain 7% -8% growth rates that would have a high impact on reducing poverty (UNCTAD, 2011; ECA, 1999). However, low domestic savings have been their main constraint to growth-enhancing investments in the region (UNCTAD, 2013, p.173). Thus, for the structurally weak economies of the Horn of African countries, acceleration of inclusive-economic growth and creation of employment opportunities for the large youth labor force and for enhancing entrepreneurship and innovation would require the building of their productive capacities. Productive capacities are the productive resources,



entrepreneurial capacities and production linkages which together determine a country's capacity to produce goods and services and enable it to grow and develop sustainably (UNCTAD, 2013, p.viii).

From a political economic perspective, good governance is a prime requisite for developing productive capacity, promoting development and social justice for durable peace and stability of societies (Koski, 2005, p.160). Good governance is characterized by the rule of law, transparency, and democratic participation, and the use of professional and meritocratic civil service (Ganahl, 2013, P.24). Good governance helps to translate societal demands into reality through implementing people-centered development projects. The four principles of good governance which are key to a country's development are accountability, transparency, popular participation and predictability of development outcomes (Sebudubudu., 2010, p.3). A democratic government is more responsive to the needs of the population in providing education, health, social welfare, better housing, equitable opportunism for employment and distribution national wealth (Sebudubudu., 2010, p.3) Good governance thrives on two factors: First, the wealth and power of the state must depend and thrive of private sector. Second, economic activities of private sector must depend and thrive on the rule of law, the impartial exercise of state power, rather than the use of that power in the interest of a particular clientele (Ganahl, 2013, P.19). The issues of good governance systems are so essential for the Horn of African countries' development because deficient governance systems which breed internal political shocks are impediments to development.

Notwithstanding their huge resources endowments, the Horn of African countries have continued to be one of the crisis regions in the 21st century. The faulty lines in their governance systems and their high vulnerability to external aids have created favorable condition for undue interventions of the external powers by manipulating the sources of conflicts such as border conflicts, ethnic, religion or clan-based conflicts (Woodward, 1996; Mengisteab, 2011, p.14). Conflict entails enormous and multifaceted costs, including human loss and suffering and catastrophic socioeconomic disruptions, while compromising the achievement of the SDGs (Hong, 2015, p.5). Peoples in the conflict-affected countries of the Horn of African countries are deprived of their rights to live in dignity through developing their

productive capacities. Comparative studies indicate that children born in conflict-affected countries such as the Horn of African countries are twice as likely to be undernourished and nearly twice as likely to lack access to improved water compared to countries without major conflicts (Hong, 2015 p.6). Those of primary-school age are three times as likely not to be enrolled in school; and they are twice as likely to die before their fifth birthday (Hong, 2015p.6).

All triggers of conflict in the Horn of African countries: externally engineered or internal - structural, political, economic, social and cultural at play, have brought immense development challenges. Thus in order to reverse the persistent conflicts, economic degeneration, poverty, leaderships in the Horn of African countries must commit to strengthen the historical and cultural bonds tying the diverse peoples in the region. To this end, the leaderships in the Horn of African countries must commit for genuine cooperation that pave the way for durable and lasting peace and sustainable development. Such genuine cooperation is in line with SDG 16 which states: promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (UN, 2015). Regional cooperation and people-centered development strategy would ensure inclusive-economic growth. Thus regional cooperation promises to bring about lasting peaceful relations among the states in the Horn of African countries; it would also insulate the countries from meddling of external powers in their internal affairs. It is underpinned that the Horn of African region is likely to remain a major conflict zone unless the countries change their behavior and engage constructively through formulating genuine regional cooperation for durable peace and sustainable development. Thus, genuine cooperation among the Horn of African countries is the only option for durable peace and sustainable development and diffuse meddling of external powers in their internal affairs. The problem of our time is not how to keep countries of the Horn of African countries peacefully apart but how to bring them together to handle disputes peacefully and maintain good relations by creating genuine cooperation. The overall objective of the study is to underpin the centrality of genuine regional cooperation among the Horn of African countries for transforming vicious cycle of conflict and underdevelopment to a virtuous cycle regional peace and inclusive economic growth. The specific objectives are:



- To analyses the development outcomes in the Horn of African countries that have been affected one way or the other by conflicts of different intensities;
- Analyze the major driving forces of conflicts in the Horn of Africa; and
- Suggest measures that would change the conflict trajectory in the Horn of Africa to durable peace and development trajectory.

Based on the problem statement and objectives of the study, this paper will address the following research questions: (i) How the Horn of African countries can make a transition from a state of conflict situation to a state of lasting peace and prosperity in which all citizens benefit? (ii) What are the main triggers of conflict in the Horn of Africa? (iii) how can meddling of external powers in the internal affairs of the countries of the Horn of Africa be reduced? (iv) What measures are required to transform the region from its current state of conflict to region of durable peace and development?

IV. METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted through extensive literature review and use of secondary data. This involves reviewing, analyzing and synthesizing different sources such as books, scholarly articles, reports of regional and international organizations as well as Google search engine in the internet. In addition, observation of the writer of this article, particularly while teaching development challenges of Sub-Saharan African countries in general and the Horn of African countries has also been used as input in conducting this research work. The secondary data gathered from different sources were contextualized and analyzed using excel sheet.

Following sections 1-4, (introduction, problem statement, objectives and methodology), Section 5 deals with conceptual framework on regional cooperation, regional durable peace and development. Section 6 is the main body of the paper; it deals with the empirical evidence on development outcomes of the Horn of African countries and exploration of possible areas for renewed cooperation among the states for a new Horn of Africa order that would ensure durable peace and sustainable development. Section 7 focuses on discussion and recommendations.

V. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

One characteristic feature of contemporary international system is the creation of Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) through formal agreements among countries which have mutual interests (Befekadu, 2014: 2). Cooperation among member countries through creating IGO that intends to promote regional trade, peace and development draws mainly on two theories: (i) the first cooperation emanates from international economic relations, particularly from classical theory of free trade or liberal international trade which underpins mutual benefits for the trading nations (Dunn and Ingram, 1996, p.181; IISD, 2007, p.23). Engaging in free trade is a form of economic cooperation among trading nations and is expected to spur their economic growth, create more employment opportunities, and subsequently increase stability among the trading nations (Siitonen, 1990, p.20). (ii) The second cooperation springs from theories of international relations (IR) among the countries. From IR theories perspectives, there are two main views with respect to inter-state cooperation and inter-state conflict: "Theory of realism versus theory of liberalism. Proponents of realism consider international relations as a tool to advance national interests in the anarchic hierarchy of the states ordered based on their relative power. In the anarchic environment, independent actions of one state can foster insecurity in another state, particularly when its interests do not coincide with the interests of the other state. (Roehrs, 2005, p.5). Proponents of realism thus envision a world or a region in which states remain fundamentally competitive and with conflict of national interests. Realists, therefore, believe that regional institutions are not important factors for maintaining regional peace because regional organizations are not a form of regional governments (Rana, 2015, p.3). From realism perspective, regional organizations have minimal influence on the behavior of member countries, and thus hold little promise for promoting peace and stability through genuine regional cooperation (Mearsheimer, 1994/95, p.7). Realists believe that states are motivated mainly by their desire to ensure military and economic power rather than cooperation for achieving mutual benefits (Rana, 2015, p.3). Thus from the perspective of realism, international trade by itself is not sufficient to eliminate conflicts among trading nations. If a country perceives that its trading partners will gain more from trading, it can decide not to liberalize its trade. In certain cases, it can exacerbate trade wars. Proponents of realism argue that the gains from trade are likely to be asymmetrical among the



trading countries, and are unlikely to ensure harmonious relationships among the trading countries (IISD, 2007, p.23). Thus, a country's decision to trade or go to trade war depends on its potential gains from international trade and on its expected volume of trade in the future (IISD, 2007, p. 23) . Taking realism as perspective, the focus of each country in the Horn of Africa will be on maximizing its national interests which undermine genuine cooperation among the countries for durable peace and sustainable development. Neorealism as an extension of realism also sees little prospect for broader cooperation among countries for mutual benefits (Rana, 2015,p.3).

Neoliberalism, an extension of liberalism underlines that even in an anarchic system, cooperation is possible among states through building mutual trust, norms, rules and institutions which guide the behavior of nations towards constructive engagement. Institutionalists also challenge the premise of realists and argue that institutions can alter the preferences of countries and therefore can change their behavior in favor of broader cooperation. In their view, institutions can discourage states from their belligerent behavior or from entering into destructive war/conflict that has negative effects at national and regional levels (Mearsheimer, 1994/95, p.7) . Supporters of liberal institutionalist theory, particularly underpin that regional arrangements among countries can contribute to regional peace and stability by promoting constructive cooperation among the countries. Countries which are members of a regional organization are likely to commit to institutionalized cooperation that would serve their mutual interests. Through cooperation, the member countries would achieve regional objectives or solve problems which have region dimensions (Nathan, 2010, p. 4). Similarly, neo-functional theory of integration which is based on the Post World War II European experience, underpins that increasing economic cooperation and functional interdependence among member countries within a region have a pacifying effect which reduce the risk of hostilities among the member countries (Nathan, 2010, p.4) . Regional organizations created voluntarily by member states could also contribute to conflict prevention through: (i) Building trust among member states, by creating an environment for frequency interactions to have a greater grasp of the historical background of a conflict, thereby avoiding conflicts that have destructive effects on human, economic and environmental resources. (ii) Providing opportunity

for organizing forums for member states to decrease tensions and promote and facilitate a comprehensive regional approach to cross-border security, trade and other regional issues. (iii) Encouraging member states to maintain security and social harmony in their respective countries and (iv) Providing platforms for strengthening cooperation among the member states and coordination on cross-border security problems such as illegal trade in goods and arms trafficking (UN, 2001, p.32).

Moreover, the Horn of Africa region is considered as "regional security complex", consisting a group of countries whose primary security concerns are linked together sufficiently and that their national securities cannot realistically be considered separately from one another (Buzan, 1991:190). From regional security complex perspective, the Horn of African countries would need to cooperate in order to realize a peaceful and prosperous region. Furthermore, all the countries in the Horn of African countries have subscribed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which has three interconnected elements of development: economic, social and environmental (UN, 2015). Thus, there is a convergence of the overall development objectives of the Horn of African countries and objective basis for revitalizing their cooperation for regional peace, inclusive- economic growth and sustainable development.

The prime prerequisite for genuine regional cooperation, durable peace and sustainable development would require political will and recommitment of leaderships in the Horn of African countries. In the envisioned new era of renewed cooperation among the Horn of African countries , there should be a shift of stance from mistrust and belligerent relation to peaceful cooperative relation to achieve durable peace and sustainable development. The term cooperative approach connotes consultation rather than confrontation, reassurance rather than deterrence, transparency rather than secrecy, prevention rather than correction, and interdependence rather than unilateralism (Solomon, 2015, p.57). In the constructivist-inspired cooperative approach, the Horn of African countries would need to renew their cooperation because it is in their common interest and the expected results of the renewed cooperation would be national prosperity and regional stability. Thus, the constructivist, cooperative approach fits well and is used as a conceptual framework for mutual beneficial renewed cooperation among the Horn of Africa



countries in order to transform the region into a new Horn of Africa order that maintain durable peace and sustainable development without meddling of Western global powers in their internal affairs. Establishing regional cooperation that enhances cooperative relations among the Horn of African countries has a number of advantages. First, cooperation would enable the countries to focus on their development which benefits the region and beyond. Second, it would reduce outmigration of the youth to the West in search of the perceived better opportunities. Third, with improved socio-economic conditions in the Horn of Africa countries, the regional cooperation would reduce the emergence of radicalized groups of various orientations which have the potential of destabilizing the region. Fourth, it would strengthen economic ties with other regions of the world which have mutual benefits.

VI. EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

6.1 ECONOMIC GROWTH

The main requisite for increasing per capita income and well-being of people is sustained increase in the real gross domestic product (GDP). Sustained increase in the economic growth rates also allow developing countries to increase their investments, and subsequently build their productive capacities, speed up their structural transformations and diversify their exports that would have positive impacts on their balance of payments, while reducing their dependency on external financing (UNCTAD, 2019, p.161). The sustainability and inclusiveness of growth rates in the Horn of African countries hinge on the structural transformation of their economies, through enhanced productivity and greater diversification of production and exports in which investment, good governance, peace and stability play central role. While considerable productivity gains could be

attained by more intensive and efficient use of available resources in a country, such gains would be short lived unless more investments are injected into the economy under stable environment (UNCTAD, 2001, p.17).

Table 1 depicts that real GDP growth rates among the Horn of African countries showed significant variations and substantial fluctuations annually in each country during the period 2011- 2019. The real growth rates in Ethiopia which was 11.2% in 2011 decreased to 8.6% with a declining trend. Despite high growth rates in Ethiopia during the study period, the growths were in the non- transformative or pro-poor as the growths were not translated effectively into substantial poverty reduction and improvement of human development through trickledown effects. This was because as of 2022, 68.7% of the Ethiopian people were categorized as poor (UNDP, 2022, p.296). Economic growth rates in South Sudan were poor as growths in most of the years were negative rates, where the highest negative growth rate (-52.4%) was recorded in 2012. In the Sudan, the growth rates were not even robust, in which the highest growth rate of 4.7% was recorded in 2014 and with a declining trend. In Djibouti, the growth rate which was 7.3% in 2011 reached to 7.8% in 2019, higher than the average growth rates of Africa (3.3%). The growth rates in Djibouti were mainly driven by the port services and that the growths were vulnerable to external shocks. With the prevailing intra-state conflicts in most of the Horn of African countries and with the likelihood of decrease of investments in the foreseeable future due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the countries are likely to face serious development challenges, particularly in achieving SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere; and SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture by 2030.

Table 1: Real GDP Growth Rate in the horn of Africa countries, 2011-2019

	year								
COUNTRY	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Djibouti	7.3	4.8	5	7.1	7.7	6.7	5.4	8.4	7.8
Eritrea	8.7	7	4.6	2.9	2.6	7.4	-9.6	13	3.8
Ethiopia	11.2	8.6	10.6	10.3	10.4	7.6	9.6	6.8	8.3
Somalia	2.6	1.2	1.9	2.4	3.5	2.9	1.4	2.8	2.9
South Sudan	0.1	-52.4	29.3	2.9	-0.2	-10	-7.7	0.5	5.8
Sudan	-2.8	-17	2	4.7	1.9	2.9	17	-2.3	-2.5



Africa	2.9	6.9	3.5	3.9	3.3	2.1	3.8	3.4	3.3
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Source: ECA, AFDB and AUC, 2020, p.78

Most Horn of African countries had inadequate investments. The trend in the inflow of foreign direct investments is not promising with the ongoing conflicts in the region. The inflow of foreign aid from donors is likely to decrease due to increasing financial pressures associated with COVID-19. Hence, the Horn of African countries would be forced to depend on extensive mobilization of their domestic resources to finance their development programs. The countries would also need to improve efficiency of their public investments through capacity building, strengthening expenditure governance frameworks, and proper planning and monitoring for their investment projects. Studies indicate that efficiency of public investments in Africa is around 65 percent, implying that 35 per cent on every dollar invested is lost to inefficiency in each implemented project (AfDB, 2020,p.19).

6.2 HUMANDEVELOPMENT

At the center of development objective is human development, the realization of full

potentials of each human being in which investments in education and health care and their accessibility play central role (Todaro and Smith, 2015, p.778). A country's human development is measured by a composite Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI integrates three basic dimensions of human development. (i) Life expectancy at birth -reflects the ability to lead a long and healthy life. (ii) Mean years of schooling- average number of years of education received by people ages 25 and older, reflect the ability to acquire knowledge. (iii) Gross national income per capita- reflects the ability to achieve a decent standard of living. The value of HDI ranges between zero (lowest) and one (highest) human development (UNDP, 2016, p.17). As shown in Table 2, in 2020, the highest HDI was 0.51 in the Sudan and Djibouti, and the lowest was 0.387 in South Sudan. On the average, the HDI in the Horn Africa countries were lower than the average HDI of Sub-Saharan African countries, which was 0.549 in 2020.

Table 2: Human Development Index in the horn of Africa countries 1990-2020, selected years

COUNTRY	YEAR			
	1990	2000	2010	2020
Djibouti	....	0.361	0.458	0.51
Eritrea	...	...	0.463	0.494
Ethiopia	...	0.287	0.412	0.498
Somalia	...	...	...	...
South Sudan	...	...	0.43	0.386
Sudan	0.336	0.424	0.486	0.51
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.407	0.430	0.503	0.549

Source: UNDP, 2022, pp.279-280

As human development is the building of human capabilities through investments in education, health care and income earning employment opportunities, the low HDI in the Horn of African countries suggests that human deprivations and poverty are still major development challenges in the countries. The policy implication is that the countries have to increase their public investments for building their human capabilities.

6.3 EXTERNAL DEBT AND EXTERNAL DEBTSERVICE

The main exports of the Horn of Africa countries are primary commodities whose demands are price and income inelastic. With the decline in the international terms of trade, the countries have faced large deficits in their balance of payments, forcing them to borrow from external sources to relax their foreign exchange constraints and with the expectation to promote their economic growth through increasing their investments in export-



oriented industrial and agricultural activities. Contrary to the expectations, the countries have continued to accumulate external debt and to pay debt services for decades, while their economies still have remained undiversified and with weak export capabilities. Table 3 shows that the Sudan has the highest external debt to GDP ratio, 77.5% in 2014 and the ratio increased to 168% in 2019. The external debt in Djibouti which was 36.2% of its GDP in 2014 reached to 66% in 2019. In Eritrea, the external debt to GDP ratio which was 49.2% in 2014 reached to 61.7% in 2019. With the exception of the Sudan, the external debt as percentage of GDP in all the Horn of African countries were significantly lower than the critical limit of 80 percent used by international financial institutions for classifying countries as highly indebted developing countries (UNCTAD, 2004, p.44). The low debt to GDP ratios in most of the countries were mainly because of debt relief initiatives in the

early 2000 under the frameworks of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI (AUC & OECD, 2018,p.45).

The debt service as a percentage of export revenue and the magnitude indicates the extent of debt payment burden of a country (ECA, AFDB & AUC, 2020, p.25) . Debt-service ratios that exceed threshold level of 25% of exports of goods and services, is considered a burden that significantly hinders a country's development process by limiting its import capacities (AERC, 1990, p.7). As shown in Table 3, the debt-service ratios as percentage of exporters in the Horn of African countries were below the 25%, a threshold used for determining debt service burden of countries. The debt-service ratio in Ethiopia was 28.7% in 2019, exceeding the 25% threshold level. In Eritrea the debt service ratio increased from 6.9% in 2014 to 11.3 % in 2019.

Table 3: External debt and debt service in the horn of Africa countries, 2014-2019

Country	Debt outstanding as % of GDP						Debt Service as % of Exports					
	Year						Year					
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Djibouti	36.2	50.1	63.3	70.9	69.2	66	1.8	1.2	2.6	1.6	1.5	1.3
Eritrea	49.2	65.9	59.6	70.9	64.4	61.7	6.9	9.9	14.7	11.8	11.4	11.3
Ethiopia	26	29.5	31.4	31.7	33.4	31.4	10.5	17.5	22.8	24.9	22.7	28.7
Somalia	126.8	124.4	121.1	115.1	111.3	106.4	....	....	....	....	...	....
SouthSudan	...	....	..	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
Sudan	77.5	77	94.5	117.7	153.7	168	2.1	8	3.4	3.3	4.3	4.1
Africa	25.5	28.2	32.6	37.8	39	40.7	15	25.5	24.5	23.8	27.3	30.7

Source: ECA, AFDB and AUC, 2020, p.91; ... data not available

Taking into account the poor performance of the economies of the Horn of African countries, the external debt services take up large parts of their foreign exchange earnings. As a consequence , debt services have limited their development process by limiting their investments. This implies the prospects for achieving rapid inclusive-economic growth would depend on the complete cancelation of all external debts of the Horn of Africa countries by all creditors so that the resources released would be invested in their economies.

6.4 HUMANSECURITY

The ultimate goal of the Horn of African countries is ensuring human security, that is, ensure safety of their peoples through protection from fear

and threat and empowerment of the people through creation of economic, social and political opportunities (Francis, 2006 p.4). In the absence of human security, individuals are unlikely to meet their basic needs because of deprivations from social, economic and political dimensions of life (Francis, 2006:4). Wide spread human insecurity thus acts as a force that pushes people to leave their country or to remain internally displaced within their countries (Francis, 2006:4). The Horn of African region is conflict-prone region with multifaceted socio-economic, political, environmental and security challenges (Institute for Environmental Security , 2011, p.12). The 2016 Report of Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) indicated that there were 2,728,503 refugees by



origin and 6,575,230 Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs), making the Horn of Africa the region of the world with the highest population of refugees and IDPs (ECA, 2016, p.12). A major impact of the refugee is felt on female gender because 70%-80% of the refugee households are headed by women (ECA, 2016, p. 12). Intrastate conflicts, particularly in Somalia, Ethiopia, South Sudan and the Sudan have produced refugees and IDPs in the region. Conflicts transform people from being self-sufficient in food and other public amenities into refugees and IDPs who depend on humanitarian

emergency programs. Table 4 indicates that in 2017, 2,439,800 people left South Sudan to reside as refugees in different parts of the world; 986, 400 people left Somalia and those Somalis were forced to seek refuge in Kenya and other parts of the world. Djibouti was the lowest source of refugees, constituting 1,800 people. With respect to the internally displaced people, with the exception of Djibouti and Eritrea, all Horn of Africa countries had large IDPs. South Sudan, and Ethiopia had the largest internally displaced peoples, constituting 1,899,000 and 1,078,000, respectively.

Table 4: Refugees and Internally Displaced People in the horn of Africa countries, 2017

Country	Refugees by country of origin, (Thousand)	Internally displaced persons(thous)
Djibouti	1.8	0
Eritrea	464.1	0
Ethiopia	87.5	1078
Somali	986.4	825
South Sudan	2439.8	1899
Sudan	691.4	2072

Source: Source: UNDP, 2018, pp., 65-67

For real development to hold ground, the Horn of African countries should focus on policies that foster good governance with a focus on policies that promote social, economic and political inclusion. Policy of social inclusion would require interventions in three major areas: education, health and other social services such as clean water and sanitation to all, while economic inclusion should focus on increasing investments in building the capital assets of those people facing multiple deprivations to improve their livelihoods.

VII. MAIN DRIVERS OF CONFLICTS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

7.1 DEFICIENCIES IN GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS

Socio-economic development and good governance are inseparable because good governance is a critical factor for providing equal opportunities for all citizens, ensuring inclusive-economic growth and breaking vicious cycle of conflict and underdevelopment. According to Hong (2015, p.15), deficiencies in governance systems create development stresses in three dimensions: economic stresses, social stresses and environmental stress. Economic stresses emerge because of sudden rise in the prices of food and energy and rapid increase in youth unemployment,

which significantly increases the risk of violence. Economic stresses are thus sources of conflicts, particularly when popular violence emerges due to inadequate livelihoods and lack of economic opportunity for the growing youth populations. Social stresses are associated with high inequality in social opportunities such as health care and education which increase the risk of violence. Environmental stresses which emanate from environmental degradation which often leads to natural resource use-based conflict, particularly conflicts among nomadic communities on grazing lands and water resources (Hong, 2015, p.15). Thus, deficiencies in governance systems which marginalize some social groups trigger intra-state conflicts (Adetoye, 2016, p.1). In a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural Horn of African countries, deficiencies in their governance systems result to spatial and social development disparities, creating a combustible mix that periodically erupt into open conflicts of different nature, intensities and duration. The different ethnic-based conflict in Ethiopia, clan/tribe, religion- based conflicts in the Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia to a greater extent are rooted in deficient governance systems which have not been able to create cohesive societies, guided by the principle of social justice. The persistence of conflicts in the Horn of African countries suggest that the countries have been



unable to build politically, economically and technologically viable national economies because poor governance systems. Erosion of governance capacities, increased embezzlement of public resources and inequitable opportunities among citizens have become core development and security challenges for the countries. Thus, making a transition from deficient governance systems to good governance systems with effective institutions would promote social justice, inclusive-economic growth and stability. With good governance systems in place, it is possible for countries affected by conflicts to restore peace and stability and to break vicious cycle of deficiency governance, economic stresses and conflict to virtuous cycle of good governance, social justice and inclusive-economic growth and sustained national prosperity.

7.2 POVERTY AND DEPRIVATIONS

All nations have adopted 2030 Agenda for sustainable development which has 17 development goals expected to be achieved in all member states by 2030 (UN, 2015, p.12). However, economic theory underlines several factors such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, falling income and lack of opportunities as triggers of intra-state conflicts of different nature and intensities, particularly when governance deficiencies are pervasive (Todaro and Smith, 2015, p.760). Poverty is a serious development challenge and is said to exist when people are deprived of economic and social opportunities and thus lack the means to satisfy their basic needs. Poverty, deprivations and marginalization of certain social groups, particularly tend to trigger inter-clan or inter-ethnic conflicts (Ikejiaku, 2012 p.128). In the context of the Horn of Africa, most people in the conflict-affected countries are deprived of their economic and social opportunities and as a result large segments of the populations are impoverished. They lack access to basic health services, employment opportunities and millions of school-age children are unable to attend schools. The unemployed youth are particularly easily mobilized by opportunistic political elites to engage in violence in order to promote their parochial political interests. In poverty hard hit South Sudan, for instance, inter-communal violence has posed a challenge to the new country's stability and social cohesion. Continuous conflict in South Sudan has driven millions of people into a state of poverty and hunger, and has even reversed developmental gains in the country (CHA, 2020,p.3).

In many Sub-Sahara African countries, the poverty rate is close to 40 per cent (UNU-WIDER, 2022, p.9). The COVID-19 pandemic and consequent economic slowdown in the countries has increased the number of people living in poverty with negative effect on their political stability. Investments in health care, education and employment creation in agricultural and non-agricultural activities are fundamental to poverty reduction. In the conflict affected Horn of African countries, providing humanitarian supports for the people is well received universal value of providing humanitarian aids for peoples affected by conflicts who seek urgent supports. However, in the Horn of Africa, where conflicts of different intensities persist, the region has become the domain of humanitarian agencies of the West which have been operating for decades but with little contribution to the building of resilient livelihood systems of the aid recipients. Thus, reducing poverty through promoting inclusive-economic growth and maintaining political stability still remain major challenges of the Horn of African countries. The pathway is through addressing conflicts at their roots peacefully and building resilient livelihood systems by increasing their investments to overcome poverty.

7.3 MEDDLING OF EXTERNAL POWERS IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

The Horn of Africa is located along one of the busiest sea trade routes, where over 10 per cent of global sea-borne trade passes through this route (HORN Institute, 2019, p.8). The Horn of Africa is also a fertile ground for geopolitical power struggles (i) from Middle Eastern powers Saudi Arabia-United Arab Emirates -Egypt alliance against the Qatar-Turkey-Iran axis; (ii) Euro-Atlantic alliance against Eurasian power, namely Russia; (iii) competition between the Far-East powers, particularly between China and Japan and (iv) competition between USA and China (HORN Institute, 2019, p.9.). Increased external interests have thus emerged as serious influencers of domestic politics in the Horn of Africa. The rival external powers have been intervening in the Horn of Africa based on ideology and politics of the Cold War, war on terror in post-cold war and to ensure maritime security and to defuse threats of piracy of major global powers' sea trade along the Somali coast as well as to explore investment opportunities. The ongoing intra-state conflicts of different intensities and faulty lines in the governance systems in the Horn of African countries have also



created favorable environment for the intervention of external powers under the coverage of resolving conflicts and combating terrorism in the region. However, the objectives of interventions of external powers in the Horn of Africa go beyond technical support in conflict resolution. For instance, the objectives of interventions of EU in the Horn of Africa are (i) promotion of political, human, social, economic and cultural rights. (ii) Addressing humanitarian crises and advancing economic development. (iii) Seeking peace and security, including protection of people from all forms of organized violence. (iv) Promoting legitimate political authority and good governance. (v) Deepen and broaden multilateral principles with a regional focus and civil society engagement. (v) Designing and implementing peace missions with a focus on human right (SIT, 2016, p.5). Similarly, the objectives of interventions of USA in the Horn of Africa are: (1) strengthening democratic institutions; (2) spurring economic growth, trade, and investment; (3) advancing peace and security; and (4) promoting opportunity and development (The White House, 2012,p.3).

Experiences to date indicate that external powers play dominant role in brokering peace agreements while the Horn of African countries have peripheral role. This has been because the external powers have military, economic, diplomatic and media leverages which enable them to exert strong influences on the countries. Despite their interventions, most peace agreements reached have not been fully implemented as the external powers use their leverages in partial way based on their national and geopolitical interests. Guided by the international relations theory of realism, the main objectives of external powers have been to secure their national economic and geopolitical interests in the Horn of Africa. To these ends, they systematically use their leverages to deepen mistrust and misunderstanding among the Horn of African countries, which have hindered formation of genuine cooperation among the countries , a prime requisite for transformation to regional durable peace and sustainable development (Perry World House , 2017 , p.1) . The US-led global powers of the West, particularly have continued to meddle in the internal affairs of the Horn of Africa with the objective of dominating the region by incorporating the countries into Western-styled governance system that promote neoliberalism and to pave the way for their natural resource-seeking multinational corporations to control the region's abundant natural resources (Medvedev, 2015,

p.110). The Horn of African countries' governments are thus cautioned against increased vulnerability and exposure to external powers machinations in the evolving multipolar world order. The high degree of interdependence

among the Horn of African countries would be expected to dictate the countries to find appropriate avenue for cooperative relations than conflict relation. Through genuine regional cooperation, the Horn of African countries would be able to jointly identify regional priorities of common interest such as dealing with the threat of terrorism and extremism, climate change -induced environmental degradation and settling conflicts through a peaceful way.

7.4 RESOURCE- BASED CONFLICT

Scarcity of natural resources, particularly shortages of grazing lands, arable lands and water are drivers of conflicts among pastoral communities (Todaro and Smith, 2015, p.762). The Horn of Africa contains large nomadic pastoral communities who live primarily in arid or semi-arid areas, and depend for their livelihoods on livestock – cattle, sheep, goats and camels (Inter-Agency Regional Analysis Net Work, 2017, p.5). The Horn of Africa is also experiencing a high rate of environmental degradation, shrinking natural resource base, rapid population growth and changes in land-use patterns which have culminated in economic and social dislocation, displacement and widespread resource-based conflicts (Institute for Environmental Security, 2011 p.12). Often unfulfilled demands for grazing land and water points for animal consumption fuel disputes between pastoral groups such as in Sudan's Darfur and South Sudan's inter-communal conflicts in the Jonglei area (Mengisteab, 2011, p.16). In the Ilemi Triangle, for instance, a disputed territory that seats where the border of southeastern Sudan joins with northwestern Kenya and southwestern Ethiopia conflict among nomadic communities erupt periodically (Mengisteab, 2011, p.16). With increasing adverse effects of climate change, pastoralists had to cross over into each other's grazing grounds, thereby disrupting traditional co-existence in the transborder region and resorting to inter-communal conflicts (Hoste and Vlassenroot, 2009, p.9). Thus, in the poorly diversified economies of Horn of African countries, the high dependence on rain-fed agriculture, inadequate support for adaptations to climate change, vicious cycle of resource-based conflicts have very serious destabilizing effects on a regional scale (Institute for Environmental Security, 2011 p.12). Opportunist elitists also inflame inter-communal conflicts for their political objectives



(Mengisteab, 2011, p.16). From a political economy perspective, conflicts among nomadic communities over the use of natural resources suggest the weaknesses of the governments' policies to reduce livestock mobility by promoting sedentary life through provision of supports for agro-pastoral production and through the building of the capital assets of nomadic communities that would strengthen their resilience to effects of rapidly changing climate.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Horn of Africa is one of the regions of the world which has a high geostrategic and natural resource attraction. The region is endowed with abundant natural resources such as vast arable land, marine, water, livestock resources and wildlife and various energy resources. Notwithstanding the huge resource endowments, the Horn of Africa is one of the most conflict-prone regions in the world. Deficiencies in governance systems, high level of poverty, resource-based inter-communal conflicts and unduly interventions of external powers in the internal affairs of the countries have been the main triggers of conflicts in the region.

Since their independence, faulty lines in the governance systems in the Horn of African countries have diminished their capacities to effectively deliver basic services such as clean water, basic health care and education, promote inclusive-economic growth and broad-based political participation. The deficiencies in the governance systems in the countries have been manipulated by opportunist political elites through creating tensions and conflicts resulting from ethnicity and religious differences that exist in the countries. With pervasive deficiencies in their governance systems, polarization of political groups periodically ignite ethnic-based conflicts which has opened the gate for unduly interventions of external powers in their internal affairs under the coverage of conflict resolution and maintaining peace and supporting development in the region. However, the true objectives of the external powers have been to ensure their dominance in the geo-strategically important Horn of Africa. The extensive involvements of the external powers, particularly the USA and EU in conflict resolution in the Horn of Africa have been fruitless because conflicts of different nature and in different scale still persist in the region.

With persistence of conflicts of different

intensities and duration, the development processes have been far below expectations. The real GDP growth rates among the Horn of African countries were not robust; the growth rates showed significant variations and substantial fluctuations annually in each country during the period 2011-2019. In 2020, the HDI in the Horn African countries were lower than the average HDI of Sub-Saharan African countries, which was 0.549. During the 2014-2019 periods, the debt-service ratios as percentage of exporters were below the 25% threshold level above which is considered a constraint for development. Taking into account the poor performance of their economies, the external debt services have limited investment capabilities of the countries. The Horn of Africa has also a wide spread human insecurity which has acted as force that pushes people to leave their countries or to remain internally displaced within their countries. The poor deprived of economic opportunities in their respective countries also periodically engage in uprising because they are easily mobilized by opportunist elites for the achievement of their political objectives.

With rapid population growth and less diversified economies of Horn African countries, the countries have been experiencing high rate of environmental degradation. As a result, conflicts on resource use in which climate change has acted as negative multiplier has increasingly become a trigger of conflicts, particularly among nomadic communities in the Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia. Conflicts over resource use are embedded in the evolution of natural resource management practices. Thus from a wider political economy perspective, the implication is that governments' interventions have been ineffective to reduce livestock mobility, promote sedentary life and practice of mixed agro-pastoral production or build nomadic communities capital assets through providing education, health care and various supports to practice modern farming that would strengthen their adaptability to rapidly changing climatic conditions. All triggers of conflicts in the Horn of African countries: deficiencies in governance systems, high level of poverty, competitions on resource use, particularly competition on grazing lands and water among nomadic communities and unduly interventions of external powers interventions have brought immense security and development challenges in the region.

Over the past seven decades, the meddling of external powers in the Horn of Africa have never been as part of their constructive international



cooperation to contribute to the development humanity via building human capital, local capacity-building, employment creation, and transfer of technology that contribute to inclusive-economic growth and poverty eradication. Based on their geopolitical calculations, the US-led global powers have continued to meddle in the internal affairs of the Horn of African countries with the objective of dominating the region by incorporating the countries into Western-styled governance system that promote neoliberalism that would enable their natural resource- seeking multinational corporations to dominate and exploit their natural resources. To these ends, external powers have been systematically sabotaging genuine cooperation among the Horn of African countries and systematically igniting conflicts of different nature and scales. Guided by the principles of international relation theory of realism, the external powers' priority have been to promote their own economic and political agenda with the objectives of dominating the region using their military, economic, media and technological leverages, while systematically escalating conflicts such as territorial disputes, ethnic or clan-based conflicts which undermine sustainable development and dignified life for the people in the region. Since recent, the Horn of Africa has been undergoing far-reaching changes in its external security environment. A variety of international security actors: EU, the United States, Middle East and Gulf countries, and countries from Asia have been operating in the Horn of Africa region. Geopolitical competition of external powers in the Horn of Africa has escalated the risk of further regional instability and fragmentation. The militarization of the Horn of Africa has posed a major concern with respect to future security and stability of the region. In the foreseeable future, there are two possible trajectories of the Horn of Africa: (i) persistence of belligerent stance of the countries which trigger intra-state and inter-state conflicts which would be unfortunate for the countries affected by conflicts because conflicts will result to social and economic misery for the populations, while keeping their doors open for undue interventions of external powers with conflicting interests. The economic costs of the various conflicts will be huge in terms of losses of human lives, massive destruction of property and profound socioeconomic disruptions. (ii) Reversed of belligerent through genuine cooperation among the countries for durable peace and development. Cooperative approach among the countries would overcome the legacy of mutual destabilization which has generated so much

mistrust among the countries. The realization of the desired trajectory of sustained economic growth through regional cooperation, would require multifaceted transition to entailing a move from conflict to peace and improved security; from political exclusion to a participatory system based on democratic principles and respect for the rule of law and human dignity; from ethnic, religious, or ideological confrontation to national reconciliation of the different groups involved in conflict; and from an economy based on stagnation and damaged infrastructure to the economic reconstruction through inclusive-growth that would lead to sustained development. This paper underpins genuine regional cooperation among the Horn of African countries, regional peace and development are intrinsically linked and that one cannot be achieved without the other. With genuine cooperation and regional peace on the horizon, it is possible to break the vicious cycle between conflict and underdevelopment and embark on virtuous cycle of cooperation, peace and sustained economic growth. It is also possible realize the dividends of peace in terms of better public services, inclusive-economic growth, reduced poverty and better living conditions of the populations, diffused external interventions and durable national and regional peace in the Horn of Africa. For the achievement of regional durable peace and sustainable development, the following measures are suggested (i) Political recommitment and political willingness of leaderships in the Horn of African countries for broader regional cooperation for durable peace and development to address regional issues jointly. (ii) Promote good governance and democratic principles in order to ensure social justice and harmony among the peoples. (iii) Strengthen regional cooperation among institutions of higher education to facilitate access to global knowledge, and subsequently enhance knowledge-based competitiveness of the countries. (iv) Establishment of regional media that promotes good images of the Horn of Africa by providing information on the high economic potentials of the region and its peace-loving peoples. (v) Establishment of Horn of Africa Institute for Peace and Development with focus on providing training on governance, regional cooperation, development and conflict management. (iv) Provision of civic education at all levels of education in order to promote tolerance, understanding among different religions, ethnicities and social classes. (iv) Increase investments to improve the livelihoods of marginalized groups such as nomadic communities and unemployed youth. (vii) Refrainment of external powers from



meddling in the internal affairs of the Horn of African countries as the countries and their peoples have the wisdom and capability of solving the various conflicts in the region.

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