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Peace is not an absence of war; it is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence and justice. (Baruch Spinoza)

Priming Peace, Integration & Livelihood Security in the Horn of Africa

The Greater Horn of Africa 'Manifesto'

A Horn of Africa dialogue Primer - RL Vol XIII No 374 MMXIX

Costantinos Berhutesfa Costantinos, PhD
Professor of Public Policy & Sustainable Institutional Reforms
https://addisababa.academia.edu/CostyCostantinos

Abstract

Leaders of Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea who have never come face to face to build peace in the Horn have now been invited by the charismatic Premier, Abiy. Now that the Horn of Africa nations have pledged to make peace, this paper builds the case for building a peace constituency for in the Greater Horn of Africa nations that share the same history. Regional integration involves hard infrastructure - large physical networks necessary for the functioning of modern industrial nations and soft infrastructure refers to all the institutions, which are required to maintain the economic, health, and cultural and social standards of a sub-region. Recently, people of the Horn of Africa, have been engaged in debates about new bold ideas of reform presented by the new populist, energetic leader of Ethiopia Abiy who has embarked on a wide-ranging transformative reform in Ethiopia and a regional integration initiative in the Horn of Africa region. Nonetheless, questions arise. Which model of confederation, timing, actors, governing rules and institutions will be established? Will the populations of the three states have a say in this? Is the proposed confederacy owned and led by the three countries or are there other actors who move the levers of power behind the scenes? The paper recommends the development of a code of practice. The guiding principle of the code hence is that concrete processes need to be established to enable politics to be transparent, accountable, predictable and exercise a level of excellence transcending personal motives and boundaries. It also recommends Alternative conflict management approaches derive from several basic premises about the nature of conflict, change and power. While most Horn of Africa conflicts are state driven, the Somalia case presents itself for ACM where the author argues for creating avenues for speaking to al Shabaab as potential partners in peace. PM Abiy has thrown a blowlamp into the heart of Horn of Africa and Ethiopian society and polity, nerve-wracking the terms of engagement of martial titans and thrown the centre of gravity of the Red Sea arena of war into unprecedented peace trajectory. The way he deconstructed the power monsters of the Horn region is purely ontological. This strategy of conjectural rise of political liberalisation in a rough neighbourhood of the Horn is going to be a seminal lesson in international relations and in political science for a long time to come. To reduce this action to some power mongering aim on behalf of the PM, as constructed by the supermen of the Horn, is too simplistic. There was a sense of aggravation among the citizens of the Horn that have not seen peace in decades and he seems to be tending to this vexation with gales that are fuelling the inferno of political transformation. There are costs to be paid but as is usual with such change, it enters politics and society in relatively abstract and plain form, yet pundits expect it to land itself to the immediate and vital local polity's socio-political experience. It suggests itself, and seems within reach, only to elude and appears readily practicable only to resist realisation (Costantinos, 2018).


Afwerki, Farmajo & Abiy

Key words: *Horn of Africa, Abiy, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, peace, integration, confederation,*

Ethiopian Premier Abiy has erupted something akin to The Big Bang Theory, something sudden, big, powerful, and majestic. His arrival has brokered a mysterious conception and miracle birth of a brand-new universe in a sub-region not known for and spectacularly lacking in the foundational traditions and critical capabilities required to embark on and adeptly manage such monumental transformation. (Kenan, 2018)

1. Introduction

The Horn of Africa is one of the most geostrategic regions in the world due to its location along the Bab el Mandeb strait that connects the Gulf of Aden with the Red Sea. It is one of two maritime chokepoints (the other being the Suez Canals) that link Europe with South, Southeast, and East Asia. All sea bound trade between Europe and Eurasia must transit through its narrow passage. As could be expected, this makes control over the strait a heightened prize for any power or combination thereof, and it is not for naught that most Great Powers scrambled their navies to the region ostensibly to *combat piracy* (Korybko, 2015). The Horn nations adequately fulfilled the criteria of failing polities as the indicators of the Fund for Peace -- demographic 'pressures, refugees and IDPs, vengeance-seeking group, human flight, uneven economic development, severe economic decline, de-legitimisation of the state, state within a state, public services deterioration, violation of human rights, factionalised elites rise, and external political actors. These are states, which lack viable institutional pillars and a robust meritocratic system consequential as a tried and tested route to success in constitutional self-governance[i].'

Alex De Waal (2016:1) writing in Foreign Policy states that the "Horn of Africa region, central to the world's maritime trade, is beginning to fall apart. Indeed, the human rights norms and principles of stemming the tide of human and especially women and children's vulnerability to violence are the bedrock of the modern notion of human security today. While the Horn states have greatly expanded since independence, especially in terms of the number of public employees and the share of public consumption in the government budget, this growth has not usually been accompanied by a concomitant improvement in the capacity of the state to extend authority throughout the territory to deliver public services. With few exceptions, African state institutions have failed to win popular legitimacy.

> *Powerful as the state is in most of Africa, it is often quite irrelevant. The state is not really a res publicae, the quintessential shared foundation of common will and common benefits, that it is assumed to be. Similarly, its administrative apparatus is not really a public service, more than not; it is just an administrative apparatus. In the context of this type of relation between the state and society, politics is not a peaceful competition for the control and exercise of state power ostensibly in the public interest. It is rather a bitter struggle among political factions for the appropriation and privatisation of state power. This is aptly expressed in impersonal rule, phenomena of exclusion, longevity in office, and hostility to pluralism. Paradoxically, this practice underlines the privatisation of the public realm as the groups share high offices given out to members of a 'clan'. Guerrilla and separatist leaders who came to power replacing colonial regimes or military establishments decided to inherit the colonial state rather than transform it in accordance with the national purpose. Having been de-linked from national aspirations, they isolated themselves and became increasingly dependent on the power of the gun to suppress a population that was inclined to revolt against duplicity, infidelity and treachery. The alienation of state from society and the perception of the state as a hostile force have bred a crop of informal polities parallel to and in competition with the state. Well-meaning freedom fighters have politicised groups, primary loyalties, ethnic groups, and nationalities as a political force to shield themselves against the state and to compete for the appropriation and exploitation of its power* (Ake, 1990:4)

> *The inscrutability of power in the Horn is closely linked to the lack of political culture, rules of the political game and political institutions. The inability to build institutions and the distortion of the role and influence of existing ones, such as the human right commissions, office of the ombudsman, office of the inspector general, offices of the auditor general, the judiciary, traditional societies, public associations and other pillars of civil society. The pathology of personal and individual power must be replaced by an ideology of institutional power and the fostering of communicative competence at all levels of the social system. In the experiences of the great nations, institutional power has always been legitimated by dialogic and democratic voices including all citizens.*

Leaders of Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea who have never come face to face to build peace in the Horn have now been invited by Premier Abiy, a soldier who has fought in the Ethio-Eritrean war calling for peace and integration. Now that the Horn of Africa nations have pledged to make peace, this paper builds the case for building a peace constituency for in the Greater Horn of Africa nations that share the same history. Nonetheless, questions arise. *Which model of confederation, timing, actors, governing rules and institutions will be established? Will the populations of the three states have a say in this? Is the proposed confederacy owned and led by the three countries or are there other actors who move the levers of power behind the scenes?*

2. Regional Integration

2.1. Economic & Social

Hard infrastructure refers to the large physical networks necessary for the functioning of modern industrial nations. *Soft infrastructure* refers to all the institutions, which are required to maintain the economic, health, and cultural and social standards of a sub-region, such as the financial system, the education system, and the health care system, the system of government, and law enforcement, as well as emergency services. Engineers generally limit the use of the term *infrastructure* to describe fixed assets that are in the form of a large network, in other words, *hard* infrastructure. Recent efforts to devise definitions that are more generic have typically referred to the network aspects of most of the structures, and to the accumulated value of investments in the networks as assets. One such effort defines infrastructure as *the network of assets where the system as a whole with the intention of maintaining it indefinitely at a specified standard of service by the continuing replacement and refurbishment of its components*.

> *Civil defence planners and developmental economists generally refer to both hard and soft infrastructure, including public services such as schools and hospitals, emergency services such as police and fire fighting, and basic financial services. The notion of infrastructure-based development combining long-term infrastructure investments by government agencies with public private partnerships has proven popular among fast growing nations. Military strategists use the term to refer to all building and permanent installations necessary for the support of military forces, whether they are stationed in bases, being deployed or engaged in operations, such as barracks, headquarters, airfields, communications facilities, stores of military equipment, port installations, and maintenance stations. The term critical infrastructure has been widely adopted to distinguish those infrastructure elements that, if significantly damaged or destroyed, would cause serious disruption of the dependent system. Urban or municipal infrastructure refers to hard infrastructure systems generally owned and operated by municipalities, such as streets, water distribution, and sewers. It may also include some of the facilities associated with soft infrastructure, such as parks, public pools and libraries. Green infrastructure is a concept that highlights the importance of the natural environment in decisions about land use planning. In particular, there is an emphasis on the life support functions provided by a network of natural ecosystems including their sustainability: clean water and healthy soils, as well as the more anthropocentric functions such as recreation and providing shade and shelter in and around cities* (Costantinos, 2018).

In other applications, the term infrastructure may refer to information technology, informal and formal channels of communication, software development tools, political and social networks, or beliefs held by members of particular groups. Still underlying these more conceptual uses is the idea that infrastructure provides organising structure and support for the system or organisation it serves, whether it is a city, a nation, a corporation, or a collection of people with common interests. Examples include IT infrastructure, research infrastructure, terrorist infrastructure, employment infrastructure and tourism infrastructure (Duvall, Green, & Kerlin, 2015:1-2).

2.2. Confederation & Federation

Confederations are voluntary associations of independent states that, to secure some common purpose agree to certain limitations on their freedom of action and establish some joint machinery of consultation or deliberation. The limitations on the freedom of action of the member states may be as trivial as an acknowledgment of their duty to consult with each other before taking some independent action or as significant as the obligation to be bound by majority decisions of the member states (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2018).

> *Confederations usually fail to provide for an effective executive authority and lack viable central governments; their member states typically retain their separate military establishments and separate diplomatic representation; and members are generally accorded equal status with an acknowledged right of secession from the confederation. The term federation is used to refer to groupings of states, often on a regional basis, that establish central executive machinery to implement policies or to supervise joint activities. In some cases, such groupings are motivated primarily by political or economic concerns; in others, military objectives are paramount. Historically, confederations have often proved to be a first or second step toward the establishment of a national state, usually as a federal union. Thus, the federal union of modern Switzerland was preceded by a confederation of the Swiss cantons; Germany's modern federal arrangements may be traced to the German Confederation of the 19th century (the Deutsche Bund); and the federal*

constitution of the United States is the successor to the government of the Articles of Confederation. In some other cases, confederations have replaced more centralised arrangements, as, for example, when empires disintegrate to be are replaced by voluntary associations of their former colonies. The British Commonwealth, or Commonwealth of Nations, and the French Community are cases of this type. The European Union (EU) is a supranational organisation that, while resisting strict classification as either a confederation or a federation, has both confederal and federal aspects[ii]. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), a military alliance established in April 1949, also is endowed with complex and permanent executive machinery, employing multilateral procedures and involving the continuous elaboration of plans for the conduct of joint military action by its member states[iii]. Another supranational political system that does not precisely fit any of the conventional classifications of such systems is the United Nations, a voluntary association of most of the world's nation-states. Its membership had grown from an original 51 states to more than 190 by the early 21st century.

3. What is on the table

3.1. Horn of Africa Economic Integration

Recently, people of the Horn of Africa, have been engaged in debates about new bold ideas of reform presented by the new populist, energetic leader of Ethiopia Abiy Ahmed. The new premier has embarked on (1) a wide-ranging transformative economic and political reform in Ethiopia and (2) a regional integration initiative in the Horn of Africa region. The former part attracted both praise and criticism. Regional economic integration has not yet fully been scrutinised. The author Abdul Ahmed III discusses Abiy's vision for the region, the pace with which the premier thrusts his vision and the reality in the region (Ahmed III, 2018).

To the prime minister's credit, the region needs new fresh ideas. Indeed, some form of economic coordination can facilitate economic growth and political stability in the region. It is quite plausible that some form of economic coordination, may pave the way for a gradual slow rapprochement. On the other hand, attempting a quick implementation of a full-fledged political integration will only produce grave risks to the stability of the region by exasperating the existing ethnic tensions, especially if such attempts proceed with the current hurried pace. This is certain because there are serious political and practical problems with the idea of political integration in the Horn. A region mired by conflict, social unrest and distrust amongst the inhabitants. There are also contentious technical issues that require unambiguous determination prior the formulation of any regional integration. Questions remain today, about how equitable are the stakeholders engaged in the process? What kind of economic bloc and an impartial common space for economic and political action for parties concerned?

An equitable participation in formulating these policies and designing the future of the region is crucial for successful regional economic cooperation. It is worth noting that countries in the region failed to realise economic integration partially because of political issues, rivalry, state-society relations, and questions of sovereignty, exclusionary policies and parochial interests. Therefore, it is unclear if and how Abiy's enthusiasm can single-handedly overcome these long-standing challenges. Yes! The region needs some form of economic grouping, to compete globally, and, yes, there are many possible arrangements to aspire solidarity, cooperation in the region, but the last thing the region needs is a hasty process and uncertain future brought about by ill-conceived vision and mandates signed by inequitable entities[iv]. Finally, economic integration is a long ardent process that culminates in collectively accepted and complete harmonisation of economic policies. It is not an instrument for a shock therapy or is it a single cure-all solution for all the region's economic problems. An economic integration requires staged, careful, long-term deliberative process[v]. All concerned countries should question if the proposed initiative is trustworthy, if it can lead to an equitable arrangement for the people in the Horn of Africa region.

Do ask what is the rush for anyways?

3.2. Who confederates with whom in the Horn of Africa? On who's terms?

Professor Hassan Kenan's write up on *Wardheer News,* (15 Nov 2018) undergirds the narrative that is evolving in the Horn of Africa as mindboggling; in a region known as the gate of hell just a few months back. Ethiopian Premier Abiy, from the moment he assumed office, something akin to *The Big Bang Theory* erupted in Ethiopia, something *sudden, big, powerful, and majestic* (Keynan, 2018).

Premier Ahmed's arrival seems to have brokered a mysterious conception and miracle birth of a brand-new

universe in a sub-region not known for and spectacularly lacking in the foundational traditions and critical capabilities required to embark on and adeptly manage such monumental transformation. In just eight months, the Abiy phenomenon has convulsed the political landscape in Ethiopia, turned the geopolitical calculus of the Horn of Africa topsy-turvy, and re-set broader international relations. At the same time, there is a fog of mystery, even unreality, surrounding crucial aspects of this great and potentially transformative endeavour. The Abiy juggernaut is real but it seems to defy conventional wisdom, rational explanation, and temporal logic. It can be heard, seen, or felt. Yet it does not lend itself easily to objective and robust scrutiny. Premier Abiy has preached and promised peace, freedom, justice and prosperity for Africans, the region and beyond. He has even taken decisive actions and produced a number of remarkable results in record time. Yet, provocative questions and critical unknowns abound regarding core issues underlying PM Ahmed's campaign, its overall strategic direction, and the speed with which it moves in giant leaps.[vi]

However, Professor Kenan raises some serious questions that are being asked about this grand project and how it is going to be implemented.

- *Who confederates with whom and on what terms?*
- *Which model of confederation, governing rules and institutions will be established?*
- *How will such key issues as president, capital, official language(s), and currency be determined?*
- *Will the populations of the three states have a say, like referendum, in the proposed confederation?*
- *What will be the timeframe of this grand project?*
- *Is the proposed confederacy owned and led by the three countries or are there other actors who move the levers of power behind the scenes as partners, sponsors or patrons?*

Then there are questions specific to Somalia's role, capacity and readiness. Is Somalia a full and equal partner in the three-state confederation? Somalia has just begun the long and arduous journey from a failed state to a sovereign and fully functional state. It is struggling with the implementation of the new federal system of governance. The Government has juridical sovereignty over territory, population and strategic assets it cannot control and protect. Somalia's institutions are fragile and extremely vulnerable to infiltration or complete capture by internal criminal networks and/or external predators.

In addition, the Federal Government and the Federal Member States (FMS) have engaged in a protracted and savage tussle over power and resources. Questions are therefore being asked as to who has the legitimate authority and the mandate to represent Somalia and negotiate on its behalf. The jury is out as to what will become of this grand project. Given the history of the region and the complex and messy situation prevailing in Somalia, it would be difficult to see how the proposed three-state confederacy could be implemented successfully and sustainably. It is quite possible that a secret mission to pacify and take over Somalia through massive military and administrative occupation is on the cards. However, what could such risky scheme lead to is not entirely clear? The likelihood of such intervention producing a positive outcome is zero. In fact, a more plausible assessment is that it would trigger a new round of insurgency wars that could make the relentless and destructive attacks by al-Shabaab look like small skirmishes. A better and safer option would be to start with a two-state confederation involving Eritrea and Ethiopia. Somalia and hopefully Djibouti could be invited to join later.

3.3. Unlocking The Implications of Dr. Abiy's Strategy towards Somalia

Awil Mohamed's write up on *Wardheer News,* (18 Aug 2018) undergirds the fact that Premier Abiy was in Mogadishu in mid-June where he signed a joint communique with the President of Somalia's - Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo. The climax of the pact was the use of Somali seaports for Ethiopian collaborative venture. Other consequential points in the compact included launching diplomatic offices in major cities in both countries, trade barriers to be removed and the nations to respect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity[vii].

Dr Abiy's sudden readiness to engage the Somali federal government as the absolute sovereign of the sub-region provides Mogadishu with a rare wiggle room and much-needed ammunition to repossess power from the clan-based regional actors. Given the shifting phase the Horn region is experiencing, Ethiopia's fundamental foreign policy adjustment from zero-sum game to collaborative positive-sum is worthy of analytical scrutiny because of its profound implications and far-reaching consequence. Many of those who closely follow the geopolitics of the Horn region almost euphorically believe that Dr Abiy's reforms will usher in a new era of cooperation between Ethiopia and its neighbours. Somali government officials are urging sceptics to disregard the relevance of history and embrace Abiy's reforms

because the memory of past animosities might entrap us into narrow nationalism and that might not be helpful going forward. They also call attention to the prospective economic opportunities that are attached to this new approach as the impetus for a new chapter in the bilateral relations. In response to the notion of disregarding the past, one must remember in international relations, history emerges with an elegant inevitability as the best frame of reference when it comes to inferring state intentions. Intent is a private business in international relations; states have good reasons to misrepresent their intentions. Since enough is not known about states intentions they are presumed to be treacherous in nature and expected to contain destabilising actions if past behaviour displayed these features. As for the argument of economic prosperity that might materialise from Abiy's new approach, one has to admit Somalia faces a protracted road ahead in establishing an effective and legitimate state, therefore, economic incentives are indeed in great demand, just look at how Somali stakeholders were grovelling to donors at the recent conference in Brussels. Nevertheless, getting financially entangled with a much larger and more powerful regional hegemon who is notoriously mercantilist when it comes to trade is a proposition that also could come with great perils[viii].

3.4. The Greater Horn of Africa & the GCC

Alexander Rondos (2016:1), asserts so varied is the *Greater Horn of Africa*, a diversity of geography, history, population, politics, and culture that has made the region so prone to conflict within its societies and between its countries that people pluck what they wish from that variety to generalise. Those differences have allowed outsiders to play proxy politics with the region that has been at an historical crossroads. Traders have travelled through the region, north to south and west to east. Empires have grown and subsided. Islam and Christianity embedded themselves in the region from the earliest days of each faith. The river Nile rises in the region and flows through to Egypt, linking all the countries in a mortal sorority for existence.

Along its eastern coast, it gives on to the *Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the Indian Ocean*, *its people engaged in trade for millennia, linking to the Gulf and beyond. Nevertheless, there is one overriding truth about the greater Horn. It straddles a geographical space of such strategic importance that those who treat it with indifference pay a price for their neglect, whilst those who try to manipulate it get their fingers burnt. The Horn comprising of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia & Somalia has attracted once again the attention of greater powers. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have contracted Eritrea's government for assistance in the War on Yemen, using the East African state as a transit and logistics base for their operations, as well as 4000 of its troops for cannon fodder in Aden*. Add to it the Qatar, the most important members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) *have unexpectedly converged in what many might think to be among one of the most unlikely of places.* While it may have been difficult to foresee this happening in hindsight, it actually makes quite a lot of sense. *Contrary to the conventional wisdom that this is about Yemen, argument can be made that it is also about the Horn* (Korybko, 2015:1).

> *The confrontation within the Muslim world has led to a realignment of loyalties in the region. The conflict in Yemen has raised concerns about the security of trade through the Red Sea. The jugular vein of trade between East and West is less protected than ever. In geopolitical terms, the Horn is the fragile and much-fractured neighbourhood. It is also the backyard of countries in the Muslim world. Confronted by conflicts, the latter have decided to secure actively their interests in the Horn. The people of the Horn will have to steer a delicate path from the vagaries of strategic clientelism. Outsiders will also do well to understand the region its history and politics lest they think that the greater Horn is an easy proxy* (Rothkopf, 2016).

Ethiopia sits at the centre of a martial cauldron. *Devastated by civil war, the test for Somalia is to interlace a united state out of a collapsed nation, torn into pieces.* To the west lies Sudan, a power that espoused Sha'ria sustains conflicts in the Blue Nile, Kordofan, and Darfur and South Sudan's civil war. To the north lies Eritrea, isolated and subject to international sanctions, it is accused of gross rights violations (Rondos, 2016). This lecture questions the martial and security scenarios in the *Greater Horn of Africa.*

4. Bringing in opponents to the political negotiating table

All Horn nations must develop inclusive politics by widening the political space for negotiation, reconciliation and peace

4.1. Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, Abiy released thousands of political detainees, including opposition leaders, and at the start of June, he lifted the state of emergency, two months early. A few days after that, he started

a peace declaration with Eritrea when he said Ethiopia would at long last accept the 2002 border ruling which gives chunks of land along the border to its neighbour. On 11 September, the land border between the two countries was re-opened. These steps have also led to the return of many political groups and expats. Once that was done, Abiy started a shake-up in his government.

4.2. South Sudan

South Sudan's nearly five-year conflict began after Kiir accused his then-vice president Machar of plotting a coup against him in 2013. Several ceasefire agreements were signed and breached over the course of 2014, with millions of civilians being displaced as a result of the ensuing violence. The two sides first agreed to share power in mid-2015. Peace reigned for a year before renewed fighting led Machar to flee the capital and declare the deal dead. Earlier in July, the two leaders preliminarily agreed to the power-sharing arrangement they signed on Sunday but 12 hours later, fighting resumed. Sunday's deal is the 12th ceasefire and second power-sharing agreement.

> *South Sudan's warring parties have reached a power-sharing deal to end a civil war that has killed tens of thousands of people and displaced millions in the world's youngest country. President Salva Kiir and his rival Riek Machar were in neighbouring Sudan on Sunday to sign the deal, under which the rebel leader is set to return to a unity government as the first of five vice presidents. The deal, which paves the way to a final peace accord, was signed in the presence of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and his counterparts from Kenya, Uganda and Djibouti, along with foreign dignitaries. Once a final peace deal is signed, the foes will have three months to form a transitional government under the new format, which will then take effect for a further 36 months. A similar arrangement fell apart in July 2016 when fighting erupted in the capital, Juba, and Machar fled the country.*[ix] *The rival groups have already agreed on a permanent ceasefire and withdrawing of their forces from civilian areas, in talks mediated by Khartoum in series of dialogues hosted by al-Bashir. The power-sharing deal stipulates that there will be 35 ministers in the bloated transitional government, including 20 Kiir allies and nine backers of Machar along with representatives of other rebel factions* (Adam, 2018: 1-2).

4.3. Eritrea

Allegedly, Eritrea holds thousands of political prisoners and the country is rife with human rights abuses, which the Eritrean Government denies. According to the Economist (2018)

> *The Eritrean regime hates being likened to North Korea's—and it does not have nuclear weapons—but the comparison is unavoidable. Eritrea split from Ethiopia in 1993, after a 30-year guerrilla struggle. The two countries fought a pointless war in 1998-2000 over a desolate border town; perhaps 70,000 people died. Eritrea is ruled by a despot-for-life whose critics wind up dead or sweating in a gulag of shipping crates in the desert. The regime is isolated, mysterious, and paranoid, has a history of stirring up trouble in the region and has always used the threat of war as a pretext for oppressing its people. National service is compulsory and indefinite—many Eritreans serve more than 20 years either bearing arms or digging ditches for a pittance. Those who try to flee the country risk being shot. Many bribe border guards to look the other way; hence the large number of Eritreans who have sought asylum in Europe. Isolation, or "self- reliance" as the regime calls it, has kept Eritrea wretchedly poor. Only nine countries score worse on the UN's human-development index. Could things be about to improve? As we report from inside Eritrea, (the mood is suddenly unsettled. Peace, if it sticks, would remove the regime's main excuse for its atrocious behaviour. If Ethiopia is no longer a threat, why should Eritreans spend decades doing national service? If Eritrea is no longer on a war footing, why does it need a military strongman to keep it safe? Strange to recall, before it seized power 27 years ago, the ruling party promised Eritreans multiparty democracy with all the trimmings, including freedom of speech and religion.*

4.4. Quo vadis Al Shabaab

There are better ways to prevent the rise of terrorist groups in Somalia. A strategy of *constructive disengagement* in which the international community would extricate itself from Somali politics, but continue to provide development and humanitarian aid would probably be enough to pull the rug out from under *al Shabaab. This group, led mostly by foreign extremists, fresh from the battlefields of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq, is internally divided, and is hated in Somalia. It has recruited thousands of Somali children into its militias. It uses them to impose a foreign ideology brutally on the religiously moderate Somali people. The "child judges,"*

as they are known, are responsible for many of al Shabaab's worst human rights violations, including stoning and amputation (Bruton, 2010).

> *The only way al Shabaab can flourish, or even survive in the long term, is to hold itself up as an alternative to the government and the peacekeepers. If the Somali public did not have to face this grim choice, the thousands of clan and business militiamen would eventually put up a fight against al Shabaab's repressive religious edicts and taxes. Somalia's sheer ungovernability is both its curse and its blessing; without a battle against peacekeepers to unite it, al Shabaab would likely splinter into nationalist and transnational factions. To stabilise Somalia by force would require 100,000 troops. Putting another few thousand on the ground — as the African Union has done has only increased the violence. It could also necessitate sending soldiers from bordering states, bolstering al Shabaab's best argument for popular support. Because plans to send more soldiers to Somalia cannot succeed without American support, the administration is at a significant crossroads. It is essential that it resist the temptation to allow history to repeat itself. Instead, the international community and Horn states should negotiate with the moderate elements within al Shabaab. It is not a monolithic movement, after all. Extremists from all over have spoken publicly for the group. Nevertheless, al Shabaab also includes many of the same Somali religious leaders who controlled the Union of Islamic Courts in 2006. Some are extremists, and the idea of talking with them is unappetising, by such an effort would be supported by most Somalis, who are desperate to be rid of violence. It is the best alternative to escalating the violence and strengthening al Shabaab.*

4.5. A Code of Practice for a Greater Horn of Africa 'Manifesto'

4.5.1. Preamble

A major constraint to the peace and integration in the Horn states is that they remain institutionally weak and highly dependent on economic and political forces outside. The competition among 'politicians' in the Horn for political position greatly erodes their capacity and commitment to mobilise collaborative action and achieve consensus around issues of common interest for the sub-region's autonomous development. The external pressures, which often characterise nations to search for finance and military hardware and the difficulty, which many in society experience in dealing with malgovernance structures are, result of their institutional incoherence and limited capacity for advocacy.

The guiding principle of the code hence is that concrete processes need to be established to enable politics to be transparent, accountable, predictable and exercise a level of excellence transcending personal motives and boundaries. While some are aware of the contribution of integration to the Horn's development efforts, civil societies of the Horn should be alive and equally conscious of the need to secure a strong capacity for advocacy; without which, they will be ill prepared to enhance peace among states. The civil society sector can only support the efforts of states in the Horn's most vulnerable populations in meeting the development challenges of the third millennium only when there is a voluntary code of ethical practice that transcends personal gains.

4.5.2. Objectives of the Code

This Manifesto Code of Practice is a statement of institutional principles and ethics for practice, designed as a reference document for all 'politicians' in the Horn, to enhance peace and integration in the Horn at the intra-organisational and inter-organisational levels. It encourages qualitative improvement in their relationship with their constituencies. As such, its objectives are to contribute to on-going efforts by 'politicians' in the Horn towards peace and integration in the Horn and commitment to standard democratic practices. It encourages 'politicians' in the Horn to develop a collective capacity for advocacy, so as to effectively articulate the needs of the constituencies they serve. It serves as a guide document for improving the partnership between 'politicians' in the Horn and their collaborators in state and society. By setting out institutional modalities aimed at enhancing pluralistic and entrepreneurial development processes in the sub-region as quickly as possible and back up the establishment and operation of an effective process of institutional strengthening and horizontal linkages among 'politicians' in the Horn.

In addition, it fosters a genuine commitment on the part both of 'politicians' in the Horn and their partners to a locally-driven approach to the challenges of African development. It will help in focussing

the attention and development resources to eradicating the grinding poverty witnessed in many quarters today and enable 'politicians' in the Horn to be aware of acts of public offence, which customarily pass unnoticed by law enforcement, whenever it exits.

4.5.3. The Code: addressed to 'politicians' in the Horn –

As a system-wide input to progress and excellence, states must clearly demonstrate their professionalism; with clear testament of commitment to excellence, prudence in their modes of communication, transparency in their operational relationships, accountability to all stakeholders and predictability of their actions. In connection with this, 'politicians' in the Horn must respect established rules codified in the national legal system.

- They must demonstrate their commitment to empowerment, taking trouble to mention some of the areas in which their intended work would enhance business and national development; and endeavour to promote participation and, as much as efficiently, possible must establish a democratic process for in-house decision-making on the programmes they lead;
- They must actively support and mobilise all collaborative efforts possible for the establishment of acceptable standards of systems in The Horn's fledgling business sector and popular organisations;
- As a first step in promoting self-assertion and upholding their own development vision and objectives, every politician in the Horn must decide on a number of values related to honesty, public welfare, professionalism, which must be upheld in any partnership. Acceptance and respect of such principles by partners must be regarded as the starting point of negotiations for appointments.
- In their requirements of technical assistance or other input of a specialised nature, nations should prioritise the use of locally available expert resources. At all times, they should also, seek local mediation channels for inter-organisational or personality conflicts arising in the course of their work. They must totally refrain from disseminating rumours or misinformation capable of bringing disrepute and disrespect to the Horn's politics.
- They must work to attain increased institutional efficiency and clarity in designing, managing and determining the course of their operations in order to safeguard nations. In particular, 'politicians' in the Horn must demonstrate a practical commitment to prudence, modesty and honesty in all transactions, both institutionally and individually.

4.5.4. The Code: addressed to the civil society professional associations –

They must carry out regular advocacy activities on behalf of the Horn's politics to actively promote and publicise the work of their members; and in particular, they must produce annual reports designed to document in detail the positive contributions made by the Horn's politics to national development in any particular year;

- *They must undertake the task of promoting the Horn's politics as a channel for supplementing official development efforts - to do that, they must engage in advocacy and dialogue with relevant authorities to secure access to the national media, which will be vital for publicising the sector's contribution to national development and promoting its image as a useful development partner of government;*
- *They should initiate public dialogue with a view to establish appropriate forums for discussion leaders of prevailing economic and social policies and programmes affecting their work, and the constituencies they serve.*

4.5.5. Government support to the objectives of the Code:

The Horn states must pursue a goal of reinforcing the contribution to the Hon nation's development process by creating an enabling environment for civil society so that the sector can effectively supplement official development efforts. Such an enabling environment would be *inter alia*

- *the evolution of a political culture reinforcing the separation of powers in State and the strengthening of the judiciary to act as a pillar of justice in fighting graft, nepotism, corruption;*
- *the continued education of legislators to pursue their historical mandates with competency and efficiency and the reduction of the role of the executive branch of the state;*

- *appointments to public office must be based on merit and not based on clientelistic exchanges and political / nepotic favouritism in the need for transparency required in the assignment of the leadership of public enterprises; with the executive sensitive to political considerations but must not let this eclipse the objective;*

While people greatly appreciate and support the ethical standards that are being promoted by the Government, adequate attention must be given to enhance the implementation of these principles through mechanisms and tools that ensure adequate monitoring. We shall assist in this endeavour and we express our sincerity of purpose as contributors to national development. We are committed to supplementing the development efforts of Government, NGOs, donors and civil society organisations through dialogue. Our goal is improved quality of life for the most vulnerable and deprived people and communities and the simultaneous promotion of entrepreneurship. 'Politicians' in the Horn believe that peace is crucial for a people-centred development. In view of this, we strongly urge the continued promotion of a pluralistic society as a necessary condition for peace and development. When the creative energies of civil society are released in a democratic environment, substantial 'peace dividends' will no doubt be available to society at large.

4.5.6. Monitoring of observance of the Code Of Practice

While it is expected that communication channels will play a role in highlighting cases of persistent failure to observe the above codes, professional associations are strongly advised to establish their own monitoring mechanisms as appropriate including the establishment of an *Ethics Endowment Committee.*

- *A channel specifically advised for monitoring observance of the Code is the Annual Report on the Code, which published regularly, could highlight as many proven cases as possible of disregard of the Code during any year.*
- *It will also be useful to promote observance of the Code by making periodic evaluations of how they are contributing to the goal of peace and integration, and by highlighting the groups, that have been observing them.*

Finally, the purpose of the Code is to enable 'politicians' in the Horn to achieve excellence and to help them in the challenge of building a strong and sustainable foundation for peace and integration in the nation. Needless to say, the most crucial and effective factor in making the Code serve its intended objective will be the positive commitment of all African 'politicians' in the Horn to its functioning. To that end, 'politicians' in the Horn and professional associations are invited to work for, and defend the principles of the Code. That effort will ultimately be in their interest.

5. Speak to al Shabaab

5.1. Premises of Alternative Conflict Management (ACM)

Alternative conflict management approaches derive from several basic premises about the nature of conflict, change and power. While most Horn of Africa conflicts are state driven, the Somalia case presents itself for ACM where the author argues for creating avenues for speaking to *al Shabaab* – labelled as '*terrorist*' groups that controls most of Somalia, as potential partners in peace.

5.1.1. Conflict often serves as an important impetus for positive change

While attitudes about conflict can differ radically from one cultural context to another, it is assumed here that conflict is a normal process in society; that is, it is a *given.* In many societies, conflict is seen as a normal element of social interaction. In some, it is seen as a positive and necessary force, desirable because individuals and groups are naturally seen as having different needs and interests, valued because it is realised that conflict often serves as an important impetus for positive change. In others, while its potential for creating change is acknowledged, dominance patterns in the society are such that conflict can be very destructive e. More homogeneous and tradition-oriented societies often do not place a positive value on conflict.[x] *Patterns of reciprocity and exchange engender a feeling of security, and a high value is placed upon quick resolution of public disputes, even if agreements reached might not address the underlying issues. Within these small face-to-face rural communities, whether in Africa, Asia or Latin America, conflict is seen as being dysfunctional* (Pendzich, Thomas & Wohlgenant, 1994)

5.1.2. Participation of all legitimate parties or "stakeholders" in a dispute:

Successful ACM relies on the participation of all legitimate parties or *stakeholders* in a dispute such as *al Shabaab*. Different stakeholders must accept the right of other stakeholders to take part. No conflict can be considered resolved if any group whose interests are affected has been left out of the

negotiation of mediation. Accordingly, this importance to inclusiveness stems from a philosophical commitment to participatory processes, as well as from several practical considerations (Ibid).[xi]

5.1.3. Power imbalances

Power imbalances are virtually always an issue in a negotiation, and problems that result from negotiating in situations of unequal power may seriously undermine efforts at reaching a lasting accord. Parties will not negotiate in good faith or submit a dispute to mediation unless they believe it is in their best interest to do so. Stakeholders may differ in wealth, numbers, education and eloquence, familiarity with the process, extent of preparation and focus, or recognised legitimacy as an entity or institution. It is often difficult for very unequal parties to engage in productive, let alone fair, negotiation, which could lead to mutual gain. This is obviously a risk that a mediator or facilitator incurs in including all parties to a dispute. However, less powerful parties, such as members of a local community, might be in a position to oppose resistance or withhold compliance, frustrating some of the interests of more powerful stakeholders. There are cases where powerful stakeholders might find it in their best interest to compromise, yielding on some interest in order to gain on others, often because the status quo is untenable and they recognise that more collaborative solutions might serve their needs better (Ibid).

5.1.4. Opposing stakeholders are neither monolithic nor uniformly adversarial

However intransigent a more powerful party might appear (*al Shabaab*), it is useful for weaker parties to realise that opposing stakeholders are neither monolithic nor uniformly adversarial. The state, for example, is made up of different agencies, actors and levels of administration, all with different and sometimes conflicting interests. Parties of unequal power enter into negotiations with different motivations and different expectations. Where the more powerful party to a dispute is the stake or a commercial interest, ACM might be attractive because approaches different from a negotiated settlement (legal action or the use of force, for example) are often unattractive, ineffective and expensive. The weaker party, such as a community, might agree to participate in such a negotiation because a negotiated agreement is presumably more in its interest than the existing situation. Furthermore, the legitimisation of the weaker party's perspective and the validation of its position through the negotiation process can also result in community empowerment and transformation (Ibid).

5.2. Factors that Shape the ACM Process

Six key factors may help in analysing a conflict, to decide whether it could be addressed through an ACM approach. If careful analysis suggests that a dispute could be negotiated or mediated, these same factors are important in determining the structure and conduct of the dispute resolution process.

- *What are the al Shabaab's best alternatives to a negotiated agreement?*
- *What are the basic interests of each of the parties or stakeholders involved in the dispute?*
- *What are several options for solution of the problem that could be presented at the negotiation table?*
- *How can competition with other stakeholders be balanced with some degree of co-operation?*
- *Can implementation of an agreement be ensured with al Shabaab?*
- *How should the process of reaching an agreement be structured? What are the "rules of the game" for a specific dispute resolution process?*

In the process of employing ACM strategies, participants generally make a series of rapid decisions, more often than not with limited information. Understanding and applying these six key ideas will assist a community in deciding, first, whether to enter into a negotiation, mediation or conciliation, and second, how to engage in the process more successfully (Ibid).

5.3. **Negotiation, Mediation and Conciliation:**

5.3.1. **Negotiation:**

Negotiations are typically unstructured and often lack formal procedures, suggesting a format, which caters to the uniqueness of each negotiation. If the parties have received training in negotiation skills, they will have learned, among other things, how to gather and organise information how to distinguish phases of the negotiations, how to move from a discussion of positions to a discussion of specific interests, how to develop options and search for common ground, and how to work towards implementable agreements. Often a convenor or facilitator might emerge during a negotiation, perhaps

from one of the parties themselves, who assists in moving the negotiation from phase to phase, helps in time management, keeps track of agreements, and generally helps give the process some structure. Nevertheless, if the strength of negotiation (as a dispute management approach) is that it can be carried out by the parties, using procedures appropriate to each situation, its lack of formal structure can also be its weakness (Ibid).

5.3.2. **Mediation and Conciliation:**

Trained, neutral, third-party mediators and conciliators are engaged to facilitate ACM processes for a variety of reasons. One important reason regards the complexities inherent in the unstructured nature of many negotiations, mentioned above. Another is that it is unlikely that a facilitator or convenor that comes from one of the opposing negotiating parties will have the necessary detachment and neutrality to ensure that all parties are heard equally. Nor is such a person likely to have the skill to deal with power inequities. Professional mediators and conciliators are trained in these areas, as well as in such skills as discerning interests from positions, reframing issues and questions, giving fair consideration to different options, assisting in finding mutual-gain ("win-win") solutions, and writing up agreements in contractual language that can facilitate implementation. All of these are strong arguments for resorting to mediation or conciliation rather than employing simple negotiation (Ibid).

5.4. **Building Community Capacity for Alternative Conflict Management**:

There are a variety of ways to begin building local capacity for conflict management, including training in specific conflict management skills such as negotiation and mediation, developing training material for inclusion in broader grass roots planning and development strategies, and establishing networks and information systems (Ibid).

5.4.1. **Negotiation Training**:

The decision to develop training in negotiation for representatives of politicised groups raises several issues. Accepting the premise that negotiations are more effective if all sides are well prepared implies that representatives of all communities raise several issues. Accepting the premise that negotiations are more effective if all sides are well prepared implies that representatives of all parties involved in the dispute would benefit from training in conflict analysis and techniques of negotiation.

5.4.2. **Mediation and Conciliation Training:**

The decision to train mediators and conciliators raises other issues. It is important that the mediators and conciliators merely facilitate the process and not direct the parties, who must fashion and "own" the agreements that come out of the mediation process every bit as much as if there were no facilitator present. However, the reality is that the mediator or conciliator does, to a large extent, direct the process, working within a set of guidelines and a formal structure. The tools of mediation and conciliation training are more easily defined than is the case in negotiation, but identifying whom to train for this delicate role.

5.4.3. **Development of ACM centres and peer mediation or conciliation training**:

Alternative conflict management centres could be developed in different countries, using existing environmental CSOs for the training of specific individuals. For example, people with backgrounds and work experience in natural resource management, such as retired civil servants from the forestry sector, might be good candidates. After acquiring the needed training, these individuals could gain experience mediating and conciliating conflicts throughout the region. Eventually, the centres could conduct training in conflict management and serve as regional resource centres for this activity. The availability of a cadre of trained third-party mediators and conciliators would probably tend to make conflict management efforts less participatory and more efficient -- and in the process, perhaps, less empowering and transforming for politicised groups. The presence of professional facilitators should not be used as a substitute for politicised groups' involvement in conflict analysis and conflict management. The use of trained peer mediators and conciliators from within the community is one method for reducing this effect.

5.4.4. **Participatory Diagnostic Training:**

Participatory local planning plays a central role in the strengthening of general organisational skills. Planning can help a community identify and build consensus around the objectives that it would like to promote through negotiation. Such a planning process can also elicit information about the local culture and resource base

that can be important in the negotiation. A number of participatory diagnostic approaches and methodologies have been developed in the last decades, which are compatible with training for ACM, including Participatory Rural Appraisal, Participatory Research Methods and Participatory Technology Development. All of these approaches transfer initiative and responsibility for action from outside entities to motivated community members.

5.4.5. **Training Methods:**

Additional training materials need to be developed in the area of community conflict management. Training materials should be prepared with the specific social and cultural aspects of the audience in mind. For instance, an indigenous group should have materials in its own language. In addition, many communities would benefit most from training that does not require a high level of literacy. An appropriate training approach for communities might be based on an integrated method, which deals with many complexities at once, rather than seeking to build skills in a sequence of increasing complexity. Ideally, it would build on styles already familiar to communities, through a participatory method, which elicits existing local knowledge, rather than a didactic training method. The participatory approach might start from informal discussions of conflict with community groups, its significance in their lives and the role it plays. Then, through a series of meetings over a length of time, the community would gradually develop a sense of its own ability and skills in addressing disputes. This would also allow the conflict management approach to be based on values closer to those held by the community[xii].

5.4.6. **Networking and Information Systems:**

Here is a clear need to improve the flow of information among people involved and interested in ACM, both within and between regions. Useful information exchange would include data on the status of current and past disputes, the processes employed, the parties involved and the nature of the conflict, and the outcomes of the conflicts. A network of ACM centres would facilitate this exchange of information, as would the use of computer networks and electronic mail.

5.5. Conclusion

Since he assumed office, Premier Abiy as something akin to *The Big Bang Theory* erupted in Ethiopia, something *sudden, big, powerful, and majestic.* His clarion call for peace and integration is indeed a unique endowment for the Horn, something that has never happened in the past century.

PM Abiy has thrown a blowlamp into the heart of Horn of Africa and Ethiopian society and polity, nerve-wracking the terms of engagement of martial titans and thrown the centre of gravity of the Red Sea arena of war into unprecedented peace trajectory. The way he deconstructed the power monsters of the Horn region is purely ontological. This strategy of conjectural rise of political liberalisation in a rough neighbourhood of the Horn is going to be a seminal lesson in international relations and in political science for a long time to come. To reduce this action to some power mongering aim on behalf of the PM, as constructed by the supermen of the Horn, is too simplistic. There was a sense of aggravation among the citizens of the Horn that have not seen peace in decades and he seems to be tending to this vexation with gales that are fuelling the inferno of political transformation. There are costs to be paid but as is usual with such change, it enters politics and society in relatively abstract and plain form, yet pundits expect it to land itself to the immediate and vital local polity's socio-political experience. It suggests itself, and seems within reach, only to elude and appears readily practicable only to resist realisation (Costantinos, 2018).

The paper has recommended that states must work on a Manifesto Code of Practice as a statement of institutional principles and ethics for practice, designed as a reference document for all 'politicians' in the Horn, to enhance peace and integration in the Horn at the intra-organisational and inter-organisational levels. They must also develop alternative conflict management approaches that derive from several basic premises about the nature of conflict, change and power. While most Horn of Africa conflicts are state driven, the Somalia case presents itself for ACM where the author argues for creating avenues for speaking to *al Shabaab* – labelled as '*terrorist*' groups that controls most of Somalia, as potential partners in peace.

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[i] Historically, Abyssinia (Ethiopia) has been the target of attack for religious and territorial gain reasons. Dervish, Mahadists and Italian invaders have challenged Ethiopia's Emperors Yohannes and Menelique. The Greater Somalia project of Ziad Barre had challenged Ethiopia several times. Egypt under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, led by Isma'il Pasha, the Khedive of Egypt, who became the ruler of Egypt in 1863, sought to expand his reign to the land of Abyssinia and control the Blue Nile. The armies of Yohannes and Isma'il met at Gundat on the morning of 16 Nov 1875. The Egyptians were destroyed. News of this huge defeat was suppressed in Egypt for fear that it would undermine the Khedive. They tried again to invade from the north, but were again defeated at the battle of Guræ in March 1876. On 7 Dec 1895, Ethiopia gained her victory at Amba Alage, Mequelle on 21 Jan 1986 and at Adwa on 1st of March 1896 against Italy (Gebresellasie, 2006).

[ii] *. Its predecessor, the European Communities (EC)—comprising the European Coal and Steel Community, established in 1952; the European Economic Community (Common Market), established in 1958; and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom)—quickly developed executive machinery exercising significant regulatory and directive authority over the governments and private business firms of the member countries. When the communities were subsumed under the EU in 1993, the EU inherited this executive authority. Yet, despite the EU's central executive machinery (a key feature of a federal system), each of the member governments retains a substantial measure of national sovereignty—an important aspect of confederal arrangements.*

[iii] *As stated in its treaty, the purpose of NATO is to maintain the security of the North Atlantic area by exercise of the right of collective security recognised in the Charter of the United Nations. An impressive array of institutional mechanisms was established, including a secretary-general and a permanent staff, a council, a military command structure, and liaison staffs; and an ongoing system of collaboration in planning and joint military exercises was brought into being. With the continued development of its organisation, NATO gradually added a number of economic and cultural activities to its functions until it came to possess several of the features of a multipurpose supranational organisation. As in the EU, however, membership in NATO does not override national sovereignty.*

[iv] *It is also surprising that Abiy Ahmed's initiative excludes Kenya from the proposed economic integration in the region. Kenya is politically the most stable and economically most advanced in the region, excluding Kenya makes no*

rational sense (economically and politically). Moreover, it is not clear why should the region introduce a new initiative outside – the Intergovernmental Authority for Development – IGAD's Pillar 2 strategic objectives, especially one that excludes Kenya the region's economic powerhouse. The exclusion of IGAD countries from the current initiative and the furious pace of this may plunge the region into a disastrous region-wide conflict in which ethnic groups engage perpetual competition for dominance and/or survival. This is not implausible in a region that is characterised by ethnic narratives and trust-deficit. There are already claims that the current initiative is an Oromo driven plan to dominate the region and annex of the former Somalia (including Puntland, and Somaliland), Djibouti, and Eritrea to form a Greater Ethiopia. A dangerous narrative! For sure, yet, the underlying apprehension is reasonable given the transitive nature of power and Byzantine politics in the region!

[v] *Participants and stakeholder need to weigh thoughtfully up technical issues – from designing rules for factor integration to systems of supranational enforcement. It took Western Europe nearly 50-years to actualise the European Union (EU) – a process that continues! It is therefore utmost important to question the diligence of Abiy Ahmed's initiative in its current format.*

[vi] *A key element in Project Abiy is the proposed initiative to herd Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia into a closer political and economic integration. Although the scheme involves three sovereign countries, PM Ahmed has made it his favourite pet project. He is into this grand project so much so that he comes across as a man in a hurry and on messianic mission. When he returned from his short four-hour visit to Mogadishu early this year, PM Ahmed began talking about Ethiopia and Somalia uniting as one country. Following the meeting concluded in Gondar, Ethiopia, last week, the Prime Minister spoke about a promised future in which Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia would become one country with one leader. In attendance were the presidents of Eritrea and Somalia. Neither was in any rush to openly second PM Ahmed's winged proposition. Of course, the adult in the room is resident Afewerki, a veteran politician and shrewd strategist with vast and first-hand knowledge about the troubled history of and latest developments in the Horn of Africa region. He seems to keep all his strategic cards close to his heart. The excitement, energy and optimism powering PM Ahmed's juggernaut know no bounds. This has led to a plethora of initiatives aimed at quickly translating PM Ahmed's imagined political dispensation into a possible and actionable governance framework. In 2002, the University of South Florida (USF) at Tampa hosted an International Conference on Prospects of a Horn of Africa Confederation: Integrating Our Common Future. Soon we may see similar events organised in many parts of the world.*

[vii] *As far as the Somali federal government is concerned the agreement could not have come in a better time, it is no secret that Mogadishu has no national-level security force able to assert its authority throughout the country. The government's lack of power-amplified by Ethiopia's meddling- allowed the regional para-state actors to exercise unchecked autonomy and conduct their affairs with complete disregard to Mogadishu's sovereignty and legitimacy.*

[viii] *Researchers have suggested that hegemon led regional trade strategy will not necessarily result in increased economic benefits for the other members in the region. The construction of regional "hubs" and economic "corridors"- the likes Ethiopia is promising to establish in the region- has led the world bank for example to conclude would create disproportionate gains for the hegemon. Then there is the other side of the coin, the subtle properties of coercive power embedded within the economic dependency configuration. Several scholars have been coming to the conclusion that economic coercion is as a useful tool as a military force when utilised in the context of regional interaction. Daniel Drezner of the University of Chicago even suggests since the use of force and the use of economic coercion have similar dynamics; economic coercion might have more appealing virtues than military force in the context of regional interaction considering how using force perpetuates regional insecurity. Addis Ababa has indeed learned how effective economic coercion can be, it applied it to Eritrea, and the outcome was devastating for Eritrea's economy.*

[ix] *"The agreement we have signed today must map the road to end the conflict and war in our country,"* Kiir said. *"We have to concentrate on the implementation of the agreement and we have to work on uniting our people."* Machar urged the regional east African bloc IGAD, which is pushing the latest peace talks, to ensure that the deal is implemented. *I want IGAD to focus on the implementation of the deal because devil lies always in the implementation,* he said in his address. The talks come as part of a regional push aimed at achieving peace in the country, which plunged into a devastating conflict just two years after its independence from Sudan.

[x] In some preliterate societies, for example, agreements about water, grazing rights or the use of forest resources are rooted in common understandings and expectations based on the shared value system, and possibly in mutual perceptions of shared vulnerability to vagaries of the physical and institutional environment.

[xi] For example, those involved in a conflict tend to be highly informed about the technical and institutional issues of the conflict. In the process of resolving a dispute, this information can be shared among the different parties, and this might lead to more in-depth and creative exploration of potential innovative options for solving the problem. Some parties' knowledge of the local area may make the others more sensitive to implementation concerns. Conversely, if one of the stakeholders is poorly represented or unprepared in the negotiation process, there is little reason to believe that any agreement reached will be implemented. Solving the problem of representation improves the possibilities for parties to make decisions that are informed, appropriate and likely to be implemented.

[xii]One specific tool that could build on a learning approach, which is already familiar to many forest-based communities, is the use of "socio-drama" or plays to analyse conflicts. In this approach, a community would be encouraged to select a conflict of immediate concern for group analysis. Using a list of "motivating questions," the community could then analyse the roles of different actors, their interests, their positions, their alternatives and their likely strategies, and propose options for resolving the conflict. In one type of play-acting, the members of the community could take on the roles of the different parties in the dispute. The members themselves would then play out possible solutions. This would make the process of evaluating strategies very dynamic and engaging. In a variation on this method, the community could use this type of play to analyse a past conflict that has already been successfully resolved, then draw lessons learned from it and test these ideas in a dramatized analysis of a different, still unresolved conflict.