

# How can the Horn be stabilised? Securitisation or Investment in development



**Samuel Tefera Alemu (PhD)**

Center for African and Asian Studies,  
Addis Ababa University



## Overview

The state of affairs in the Horn of Africa can be explained as a growing opportunity disguised in challenges from commissioned securitized projects of the West. The Horn of Africa has for long been a battle field and fertile breeding ground for radical groups and their toxic suicidal agenda and ideologies. The pretexts of intervention from the West and its allies either in the name of fighting terrorism or operations to control piracy often are chocolate coats for regime change. While pacifying the region and cleaning threats is important element of sustaining development, the targeted investment in military and security operations has not yet materialized into actions that contain the movement of terrorists' and destroy their capabilities. The long silence of African Union's security and peace architecture and the IGAD member states should not continue and due action should be taken through consultations.

Sovereign interests of states cannot be secured single-handedly by any country, powerful or powerless. Maintaining peace and stability is an all-actors' engagement requiring dynamic global actions. Over the years, the political changes in the Horn of Africa has given birth to a spirit of political and economic cooperation bringing in a new culture of regionalism. Thus, positive developing stories are evolving through the formation of strong eco-

nomic and political coalitions between member states of the Horn and IGAD region. Notable examples can be normalized relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea that put into rest decades of uncertain no peace-no war situation; and Somalia and the Berbera-Addis Ababa corridor development project between Ethiopia, Somaliland and United Arab Emirates DP world, and improved political relations between Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea.

Moreover, renewed diplomatic ties with Turkey, and China's pledge to create a trade zone and support export through financing trade by providing ten billion USD and investment through the One Belt and Road initiative will further boost needed investment in manufacturing infrastructures and improve diplomatic relations between Africa and China where the Horn is a major beneficiary. Such a development, however, is challenged by a pressure that stands against the spirit of solidarity and regionalism. This increasing motivation of states in the Horn is driven by the willingness from states to end decades of human suffering and the coming into power of a reformist government in Ethiopia that shook traditional political establishments that limited the political space of the Horn of Africa States to make decisions pertaining to their own affairs by themselves.

Cooperation in the areas of trade and infrastructural investment among states in the Horn of Africa has no bet-

ter alternative to pull the region's people out of the vicious cycle of poverty. While democratisation and respect to human rights remain at the core of building strong institutions to advance peace and stability, equally or even more strong is a believe that fundamentals of democracy and human right issues require economic development. Without economic development, expanding education services and coverages is impossible, so do the production of informed and enlightened citizens that can make decisions. The importance of power production and all-inclusive infrastructural development, therefore, becomes second to nothing.

The Horn of Africa collectively shares cultural values and a political economy of development making the transfer of knowledge and technology easier for use and dissemination. The customary form of livelihood that relies on mobile pastoralism and trade and associated networking and kinship formation is part of a culture that is widely accepted and developed for centuries despite the introduction of colonial boundaries. The rise and fall of any civilization in any of the states in the Horn can therefore be translated directly into the rise and fall of the rest of states. This is why pan African and #nomore movements should bring people together to voice their concerns against interventions and perpetual propagation of colonial propositions by the West for development to change lives of people in the region.

### **The way forward**

Unless the West challenges its self to review and revise its foreign pol-

icy to the Horn, maintaining decades of geopolitical dominance will not be advisable strategy in the Horn. Otherwise, the Horn of Africa can turn into a brewing barrel for the birth of a new political world order calling for an alternative to the existing US led international 'liberal' world order. The rise of China, the potential departure of UAE from the Arab league monophonic viewpoints and influence from Turkey coupled with Ethiopia's genuine and fraternal gesture of electrifying the region through hydropower energy from the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam would fuel economic and political integration and unity of purpose mobilising the Horn of African states to stand against any form of intervention and attempts to compromise their political spaces.

The future of the region should be guided by a strategy and modality to deal with the militarization and partition of countries like Djibouti by foreign powers in order for such bases bring no harm to the region and the host states. In conclusion, development of the Horn of Africa region is dependent on the completion of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam project and similar others to drive industrialization and improve import-export trade through port systems development where ensuring maritime security along the West Indian Ocean and Red Sea Coast is a common security and military project by all and trusted allies. Sustainable human development and greater peace is a function of investment in energy infrastructure and responsible leadership. The democratisation projects of the West would bring meaningful contribution if the long years of collaboration

takes note of the existing geopolitical dynamics Securitization projects without investment in infrastructure development alone cannot stabilise the region.

**Samuel Tefera Alemu (PhD)** is an Assistant Professor and Asian Desk Coordinator at the Center for African and Oriental Studies and Associate Dean for Research and Technology Transfer of the College of Social Sciences at Addis Ababa University (Ethiopia). He is a lead researcher and proponent in the area of the shared water arrangement of the Horn of Africa, especially on the issue of the Great Renaissance Dame of Ethiopia. He is an advocate for regional integration with human-centric development diplomacy. He can be reached at [samuelteferaalemu1983@gmail.com](mailto:samuelteferaalemu1983@gmail.com)