



REVIEW ARTICLE

SOMALILAND – ETHIOPIA RELATIONSHIP: AN INITIATIVE FOR REGIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION AND DEEPENING POLITICAL STABILITY IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

*Mohamed A. Mohamoud-Barawani

University for Peace, Costa Rica

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 22nd April, 2017
Received in revised form
10th May, 2017
Accepted 15th June, 2017
Published online 31st July, 2017

Key words:

Trade cooperation,
Transit passage,
Berbera corridor and regional economic
integration.

ABSTRACT

This paper is going to analyze and light on the political, economic, and trade cooperation between Somaliland and Ethiopia, the paper explores how Somaliland and Ethiopia's bilateral relations to be sustained to the existing political context based on the status of de jure concept of statehood and de facto statehood Ethiopia and Somaliland respectively. The paper will also attempt to find out the political and trade implications encountered by both parts in their performance of diplomacy, security and economic relations. Despite that Somaliland is unrecognized state, it is notable to highlight that the prolonged sustained de facto status had led political maturity of Somaliland over the period, which de facto state sustaining its display for more than two decades and half created an international customary law in the eyes of international community, which Somaliland has proved its competence to contribute security interests of its neighboring states, regional and international and because of this, Somaliland is gaining political legitimacy and becoming an important hub of trade cooperation because of its geopolitical strategic location in the Horn of Africa and Gulf of Aden. Somaliland has also demonstrated the capacity and capability to enter bilateral and multilateral deals and there are many regional states and wider international community members who are dedicated to promote the democratic credentials and peacefulness in Somaliland, in the meantime, Ethiopia is second largest population in Africa, fastest economic growing and diplomatic home of the African Union.

Copyright©2017, Mohamed A. Mohamoud-Barawani. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Citation: Mohamed A. Mohamoud-Barawani, 2017. "Somaliland – Ethiopia relationship: An initiative for regional economic integration and deepening political stability in the horn of Africa", *International Journal of Current Research*, 9, (07), 55300-55308.

INTRODUCTION

Since the reinstatement of Somaliland's sovereignty in 1991 and on the borders inherited on date of attainment of independence on 26 June 1960. Somaliland has made notable progress in building peace, security and constitutional democracy within its de facto borders.¹ The reestablishment of Somaliland has reduced tensions and border conflict between Ethiopia and Somali Republic before in 1991 and this has paved the way laying the foundation of long lasting peace in the horn. Somaliland and Ethiopia share a long border with 850 kilometers which is secure, safe and peaceful. The existing relations between Ethiopia and Somaliland at various fronts among them economic, diplomatic and security have been won through the concerted efforts of many people from both governments with my part being genuine and timely facilitation and the like.²

*Corresponding author: Mohamed A. Mohamoud-Barawani,
University for Peace, Costa Rica

¹ International Crisis Group – Somaliland: Time for African Union Leadership – African report No.110- 23 May 2006

² www.Somalilandsun.com Ethiopia and Somaliland set for a new chapter of cooperation Interview with Ethiopia General Consulate in Somaliland , by Yusuf M Hassan, 2014

Many Somaliland intellectuals and politicians are optimistic that Somaliland – Ethiopia relationship is indispensable and avenue to advance widening East Africa regional economic integration, political stability, security cooperation and people to people relations. Similarly Ethiopian policy-makers many times repeated that Ethiopia is committed that it is strengthening its security and economic ties with Somaliland. In the meantime, it is unavoidable reality that Somaliland and Ethiopia are in a region characterized by violent conflicts, droughts, civil wars and instability which made the Horn of African Region more vulnerable, chaotic and underdeveloped. Moreover, it is clear that this vibrant bilateral relationship between Somaliland and Ethiopia has extensively contributed in deepening peace, security and attempting to facilitate regional economic and political cooperation, in the East African region, there are initiatives encouraging mitigating barriers of the cross- border trade and utilizing the full potentiality of the regional and subregional market. And this is the reason that subregional organizations have been established included the common market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC) and Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) to promote regional economic integration and strengthening economic cooperation between these countries. Regional integration in East Africa is a

complex and uneven process: some regional organisations and policy areas have recorded significant progress, while others are lagging behind.³ Somaliland and Ethiopia also share some historical relations because the current government of Somaliland and current government of Ethiopia were all emanated from liberation movement and social uprising led by Somali National Movement (SNM) and Tigrayan People's liberation Front (TPLF) later on Ethiopian people's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) both rebel movements fought regimes of Mengistu Haile Marian and Mohamed Siyad Barre which were concurrently overthrown in 1991 through deadly and bloody civil war. Moreover, the two countries share experiences in managing this conflict prone region. Ethiopia is attributed as a regional power that plays very vital role in the regional stability, development and economic integration. On the other hand, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is the first country among other African states to open its consulate in Hargeisa Somaliland.

This consulate general is now issuing visas to Ethiopia with the Somaliland passport and Ethiopian Airline was also the first international commercial airline transport landed in the Somaliland soil. It should be noted that Ethiopia's diplomatic relations with Somaliland is more trustworthy in many ways⁴, whilst Somaliland as de facto state sees Ethiopia as ally and strategic partner in the Horn of Africa. Hence, the diplomatic and trade relations between two countries revealed a level of political maturity that currently driving by the mega projects of the economic development as infrastructure of the roads development and ports modernization, electricity and improving trade incentives marketable across the globe. Ahmed Shide, Minister of Transport, told Capital that Ethiopia wants port expansion and development in every corner of the region. "The port at Berbera will be an alternative for the big population and fast growing country like Ethiopia. The issue has been notified by Ethiopia to its regional partners," he said.⁵ Somaliland and Ethiopia have reached some strategic partnership framework of agreements in order to boost the regional economic development, infrastructure and security cooperation, both countries are committed to strengthening their bilateral relations and maintaining the peace and stability in the region of the greater Horn of Africa. Holding talks with Somaliland President Ahmed Mohamed Mohamoud yesterday, Prime Minister Hailemariam said the economic and political cooperation between the two countries would be strengthened⁶. Subsequently the two countries also share a long border where the pastoral and nomadic communities live side by side and the livestock cross-border trade has substantial economic contribution and trade flow. The cross-border livestock trade between Somali Region of Ethiopia and Somaliland passes through two major clan areas, and has long been influenced by them. The cross-border livestock trade -CBLT between the

two goes through the Berbera corridor, coming through different trade routes⁷

Therefore, it is incontestable that Somaliland and Ethiopia relationship fascinated some international opportunities such as United Arab Emirates investment to the Berbera port and Berbera corridor in which Ethiopia wants to shift some of its commercial activities and this tripartite deal between Somaliland, Ethiopia and United Arab Emirates has significant potential economic impact throughout the region in the Horn and East of Africa at large. The Ethiopian Minister of Transport Ahmed Shide stated the following "In the case of Berbera we are not just considering using the port we are also looking at the tripartite investment possibilities," he added.⁸ Moreover, this paper discusses how this bilateral relationship between two countries is sustained and how the wider region of the greater Horn of Africa can be benefited and utilized this mutual diplomatic, security and trade agreements between Somaliland and Ethiopia, the paper will also explore what are legal and political implications that each party has faced so far, for instance Somaliland is a de facto state which the African Union has not yet recognized where Ethiopia is playing a leading role in the issues of the continent and greater Horn of Africa particularly and the African Union Head Quarter is located in the capital city of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia where Ethiopia involves numerous interventions in the region as AMISOM troops in Somalia. In addition, Somaliland situates the whole heart of Ethiopia in terms of economy, trade, security and fight against terrorism, Somaliland is a coastal state and it manages longest red sea close to the international shipping system of Baba- Mabda and Gulf of Aden where Ethiopia is landlocked country with more than population of 90 million. "At present time Somaliland and Ethiopia are cooperating macroeconomic development projects that will contribute the wider regional economic integration, infrastructure, networking and import and export trade activities said" Somaliland Minister of Trade and Investment Dr. Omar Shucayb.⁹

Somaliland has recently signed a landmark trade deal between the Republic of Somaliland and Dubai's Port World on May 2016, which was intended to expand and modernize the Berbera port facilities and road infrastructure in order to sustain the cross-border trade and transit agreements between two countries whereas the Berbera Port is heading as a regional hub and the main getaway for Ethiopian and other landlocked countries such as South Sudan. Finally, the recent diplomatic activities of exchange delegations and trade deals between two sides are indicating opening a new chapter of trade and economic development that may enlarge the peaceful co-existence and mutually understandable relations of the two countries. Somaliland and Ethiopia relationship can be an instrumental either political or establishing well-connected economic atmosphere which the rest of the region is beneficial. The two countries collaborate a number of areas including regional stability, security, intelligence sharing, migration, human trafficking and promoting regional economic integration and infrastructure development initiative underway. Fundamentally, the Somaliland Government has paid special

³ European Parliament, East Africa: Competing dynamics in a rapidly changing region, 2014, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/briefing_note/join/2014/522321/EXPO-DEVE_SP\(2014\)522321_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/briefing_note/join/2014/522321/EXPO-DEVE_SP(2014)522321_EN.pdf)

⁴ Najah M Adam- Berbera basing politics: Understanding actors, interests, and animosities, 2017 Department of Diplomacy and International Relations, EUCLID University, Gambia, African Journal of political Science and International Relations, <http://www.academicjournals.org/AJPSIR>

⁵ The capital Newspaper - Ethiopia eyes obtaining partial share of Berbera port, 2017 <http://capitalethiopia.com/2017/05/29/13017/#.WWJXHGiGPIV>
6 allAfrica .com Somalia: Ethiopia, Somaliland to Bolster Ties, 2016, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201611010170.html>

⁷ Abdurehman Eid, Jostling for Trade: The Politics of Livestock Marketing on the Ethiopia – Somaliland Border, 2014, Future agriculture

⁸ The capital Newspaper - Ethiopia eyes obtaining partial share of Berbera port, 2017 <http://capitalethiopia.com/2017/05/29/13017/#.WWJXHGiGPIV>

⁹ Interview with Somaliland Minister of Trade and International Investment Dr. Omar Shucayb, 2017

attention to the situation of Ethiopia's landlocked status and the opportunities that entails.¹⁰ Nonetheless, it is indisputable that Somaliland and Ethiopia share exceptional history of successfully managing the post-conflict arena in the volatile region in the Horn, in addition, they share communal interests that strategically fundamental, politically viable, and economically advantageous, the paper gives more emphasis on the growing diplomatic and economic ties which the expansion of the Berbera port invested by the Dubai Port World is one of the accelerating benchmark of this mutual relationship of the two countries. The Republic of Somaliland is angling to become a trade and transit hub for East Africa, pouring millions of dollars into infrastructural development with the help of international financiers.¹¹

Somaliland - Ethiopian Trade Relations

Somaliland and Ethiopia share a long border that both legal and illegal trade movements cross on daily basis, Somaliland owns largest maritime resources in the Horn of Africa where Ethiopia is demographically growing, and Ethiopia ranked the second population country in the Sub-Saharan Africa, estimated 100million with rising economy. Ethiopia and Somaliland agree on importance of transit cooperation mechanisms Ethiopia and Somaliland agreed on Monday (January 6) to exercise maximum effort to establish short and long-term transit cooperation mechanisms.¹² Notwithstanding, aftermath of the peace and political stability in Somaliland was sustained, there was a growing aspirations towards developing a comprehensive transit and trade agreement between Somaliland and Ethiopia. Some series of bilateral discussions mainly started in 2002 to scale up the trade cooperation. If anything can be termed as the most impactful of my tenure as the Ethiopian Consul General in Somaliland, then it is this currently operational Pact Enhancing Economic interdependence between the two neighboring and friendly sides.¹³ In fact, the trade partnership between Somaliland and Ethiopia has concurrently increased when some international investors committed to invest the Berbera port as major hub of transit to Ethiopia and other landlocked countries in the East Africa. At moment there is an optimistic sign that there are a lot of opportunities that both sides can maximize. Ethiopia government and Somaliland government cooperate in many areas which may facilitate the way forward and trusted relations of economic integration and political cooperation is necessary whilst the region of the Horn of Africa is too behind due to persistent violent conflict which invariably affected socioeconomic, security and political stability. On the other hand, the disparity of the two nations in terms of population and size is an indicator that trade deals between two countries are asymmetric and should require more in depth negotiations and series bilateral conciliations. Measurable trade flows can enhance balancing the transactions of cross-border trade as

import and export activities. It is notable that Ethiopia government seeks alternative routes of its trade activities and Somaliland seems to be a best option and suitable route of trading since this natural port of Berbera is too closer compared to many ports in the region as EU Berbera corridor feasibility study (2003) revealed. The trade cooperation between two sides is progressive but the absence of required economic infrastructure and regulatory framework which both sides are needed to demand assistance from the Africa Union, World Bank, EU and intergovernmental organization of IGAD help parts to set up more comprehensive trade deals.

States with integrated and interdependent economies are less likely to get into conflict with more integration and interdependence.¹⁴ The Kumiye Party chairman and presidential candidate 2017 elections in Somaliland Muse Bihi Abdi stated while he was mobilizing his supporters in Haji Salah district on July 10, 2017 "the struggle of Somali National Movement (SNM) was not only aimed to overthrow the Siyad regime who made crimes against humanity but to bring a long lasting peace in the Horn of Africa between Somalis and Ethiopians and to get rid of the hostile attitudes among those who are living side by side." Nonetheless, the market of both sides Somaliland and Ethiopia seem to be exhausted how to regularize trade deals that should foster the marketability and potentiality of this competition. The Horn of Africa region experienced so many conflicts that constantly undermine the potentiality of the natural resources and attainment of the foreign direct investments. Over the decade, Eastern Africa has been plagued by civil wars, cross-border conflicts, social strife, and arms trafficking. Current security concerns in the region include the volatile situation in Somalia, conflict in Darfur, stalemate between Ethiopia and Eritrea, Djibouti-Eritrea conflict, piracy off the coast of Somalia.¹⁵ Foremost, Ethiopia and Somaliland were struggling many years to set up an enabling economic environment, from this long term efforts, there were trade negotiations and ongoing dialogue which mainly looking forward trade and transit agreements to be signed and implemented. "Somaliland people strongly believe that Ethiopia market is more potential and strategic whereas Ethiopia at same time is committed to use several ports included Berbera port as inevitable policy option since the country is landlocked.¹⁶ Since the independence of Eritrea, Ethiopia became a landlocked country and access to a deep sea port became a major constraint for its foreign trade and for the provision of food aid. The Government of Ethiopia is therefore anxious to secure as many routes to access sea ports as possible.¹⁷ Indeed, the economic integration, transit management, transport connectivity and establishment of the institutional framework for trafficking passage of goods and safe corridors are all commonly workable regionally, internationally and at global scale of economic activity. But Somaliland and Ethiopia still far behind to accommodate such interconnectivity and fostering the scale of transit passage. Market position-Somaliland's geographic position plays to its favor in multiple directions. Berbera is well-placed to serve shipping though the Red Sea and enjoys excellent access to the

¹⁰Nasir M. Ali and Abdikadir A. Ismail – ISS Researchers, Trade and Transit between Somaliland and Ethiopia: Actual, Potential and Impact, 2013, Institute for Social Studies. This study was conducted by the Institute for Social Studies (ISS) and commissioned by the Government of Somaliland.

¹¹Somaliland: Becoming East Africa's Next Big Commercial Hub As Somalia Struggles, 2013, <http://www.somalilandsun.com/in-depth/3793-somaliland-becoming-east-africas-next-big-commercial-hub-as-somalia-struggles>, sources, IBTIMES

¹²Ethiopia and Somaliland agree on importance of transit cooperation mechanisms, 2014 <http://hornaffairs.com/en/2014/01/14/ethiopia-and-somaliland-agree-on-importance-of-transit-cooperation-mechanisms-jan-ten/>

¹³www.somalilandsun.com Ethiopia and Somaliland set for a new chapter of cooperation Interview with Ethiopia General Consulate in Somaliland, by Yusuf M Hassan, 2014

¹⁴Mulugeta Gebrehiwot Berhe, Economic Integration as a Peacebuilding Strategy in the Horn of Africa with Particular Focus on Ethiopia and Its Four Neighbours, AfSol Journal 1 Volume 1 Issues 63

¹⁵ African Development Bank, African Development Fund, EASTERN AFRICA REGIONAL INTEGRATION STRATEGY PAPER, 2011,

¹⁶ Ibid.1

¹⁷ The European Commission Delegation of the European Commission in Kenya, Pre- Feasibility Study of the Regional Transport Sector in the Berbera Corridor, 2003

booming economies of South Asia, the affluent economies of the Gulf States, and the emerging economy of Ethiopia¹⁸. One of the trade incentives is the peacefulness of Somaliland as well as the willingness of the society to pursue the trade cooperation between the two countries. In addition, the military base agreement between Somaliland and UAE signed on March 2017, the Somaliland Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Sacad Ali Shire declared that UAE government will invest the Berbera corridor which is the main trade exit between Somaliland and Ethiopia.

Khat Trading between Somaliland and Ethiopia

Somaliland has become a biggest market of the Ethiopia khat selling and exporting site, and the khat products reach in everywhere of Somaliland either small towns or large cities and there are thousands of people addicted where the khat has become one of the society daily lives and cultural gathering. The khat trading flow is estimated \$530 million a year as Ministry of finance of Somaliland revealed, in fact, this is more deeply rooted habit across the Somaliland and the khat business transactions is highly pressurizing the outflow of hard currency in everyday and truly speaking this is a capital fly. Khat trading was going on many years and Somaliland local communities values it as promoter of the social integration and in deepening cultural ties as marriage and other cultural festival. The largest khat trade network in Somaliland was established in the late 80s and early 90s,¹⁹ one can point out that accessibility and reliable security of border between Somaliland and Ethiopia scaled up the level of khat delivery through effective transport networking and communication. From this trade point of view, Somaliland is arguing that khat needs to be exchanged other natural products that Somaliland bestowed such as fish and salt. Hence, any trade negotiation is required to give more attention this open and unregulated market of khat. However, critics warn that the flipside to this economic uplift is that Somaliland's fragile economy loses a large percentage of its foreign currency through this trade. The country reportedly spends \$524m a year – about 30% of GDP – on khat imported from Ethiopia.²⁰ On the other hand, Somaliland government generates a revenue estimated 500million of Somaliland shilling on daily basis as Ministry of Finance has confirmed it which is yearly 30million USD. Furthermore, there are also a lot of criticisms on khat chewing which affects the working hours of the countries because anyone who chews khat cannot tolerate along working day hours, it may also directly affect health of individuals due to consumption of the khat, there are other consequences of socioeconomic and human productivity, some doctors say the khat is more dangerous than the alcohol. The prevalent view about khat indicates the chewing khat has truly become one of the social problems that Somaliland today is struggling with and this bitter leaf proved its harmfulness and economic negative impact. Some people here in Hargeisa the capital city of Somaliland, expressed their views that the khat is the loss of the economy because everyday consumption and there are some explicitly and implicitly factors that khat causes at family

level and society in general. In the meantime, the khat generates some income at household level because there are a lot of people work for khat trading but the remittances transfers abroad is more viable at household income generation and boosting the economy at macro and micro level. Remittances inflows to over 40 percent of households are a major economic lifeline to Somaliland. Remittances estimates for Somaliland range from US\$500–900million per year, equivalent to 35–70 percent of GDP²¹. As far as many Somalilanders are concerned the khat trading from Ethiopia is most effective cross – border trade transactions and it is outstanding issues how the khat trading moves from Ethiopia to Somaliland across regions smoothly with less taxation, peaceful and deregulated environment.

Eventually, Somaliland often demands return from Ethiopia in the exchange of khat, and this can be a valid argument when you observe the situation of Somaliland, but Ethiopia is also arguing that Somaliland did not yet succeed to prepare reliable supply of chain like fish to provide Ethiopian growing market, and this is not the fault of Ethiopia but Somaliland must develop its natural resources that Ethiopia needs and this may create a trade balance and sustain the trade cooperation between two countries.

Livestock Trade between Somaliland and Ethiopia

Considering the livestock trade, the Somali region in Ethiopia has access to all markets of Somaliland, despite the political and border management of the two countries, the livestock traders cross the border is myriad throughout seasons and Berbera port is naturally the hub of the livestock trading across the Somali peninsula because the livestock comes from all Somali regions as Kenya Somali region as well as Ethiopia Somali region ended up to Berbera port. Somali Region and Somaliland share similar ecological conditions, strong economic and social ties and clan affinities. Customarily, pastoralists utilized grazing areas on both sides of the border as part of seasonal movements with herds to access key resource sites.²² Thus, the livestock trade contributes the GDP in Somaliland nearly 30% as the World Bank study (2016) indicated, hence, the livestock trade between Somaliland and Ethiopia is not much regulated because the nature of the society who are mostly nomadic that depends on the rainfall seasons without considering the cross border protocols and regulations that both countries developed to control the border. Ethiopia is committed to regulate the cross- border livestock trade where Ethiopia authorities hardly struggling to control outflow of the livestock from Ethiopian Somali region to Somaliland. The Ethiopian government has long considered the cross-border livestock trade to be illegal²³ but it cannot be dismissed the realities surrounding the environmental connectivity and people to people relations based on the Somali culture as blood relations, marriage and kingship.

In Somaliland, the livestock export is a major domestic product which is exported widely. Livestock production has been the mainstay for the people of Somaliland. Livestock production is

¹⁸ A World Bank Study, Somaliland's Private Sector at a Crossroads POLITICAL ECONOMY AND POLICY CHOICES FOR PROSPERITY AND JOB CREATION, 2016

¹⁹ Peter Hansen, Governing Khat – Drug and Democracy in Somaliland DIIS Working Paper, 2009:24

²⁰ JAMES JEFFREY, Khat in Somaliland: economic cure or curse, 2015, <http://africanbusinessmagazine.com/sectors/agriculture/khat-in-somaliland-economic-cure-or-curse/>

²¹ A World Bank Study, Somaliland's Private Sector at a Crossroads POLITICAL ECONOMY AND POLICY CHOICES FOR PROSPERITY AND JOB CREATION, 2016

²² Abdurehman Eid, Jostling for Trade: The Politics of Livestock Marketing on the Ethiopia – Somaliland Border, 2014, Future agriculture

²³ Abdurehman Eid, Jostling for Trade: The Politics of Livestock Marketing on the Ethiopia – Somaliland Border, 2014, Future agriculture

predominantly pastoral and agro pastoral employing over 70% of the population. Livestock production contributes 60% of GDP and about 85% of foreign export earnings.²⁴ But the climate change, environmental degradation and incessant droughts seriously affected the potential market of the livestock in the recent years. As far as the nomadic pastoralists are concerned, there are enormous challenges and problems of the livestock trade market which is designed more natural type of trading because of several times the livestock trade was banned by the Saudi Arabia. Since then there is no agreement between Somaliland and Saudi Arabia, the livestock trading is presumably has unpredictable trends upward and downward compared to khat trading which is constant in terms of amount export to Somaliland from Ethiopia and Khat includes cross border trade items between two countries. Therefore, the Somaliland government and Ethiopia government are being required to collaborate tackling the challenges around the livestock trading and livestock development as well. Any regulations that both government attempt to develop for the control of the livestock trading should be needed to further examine the characteristics of the society, geographical understanding of the nomadic people and their perception of the state control of the territory.

The free passage movement of the livestock seeking pasture and water throughout cross border which entirely adopted by rural communities in both sides, it has been very difficult for the Ethiopian Customs and Revenue Authority (ECRA) to strictly police and control this trade.²⁵ Thus, understanding the livelihood of the nomadic people in both countries in this contemporary period is complex and very dynamic to the extent that state restrictions are contrary to the way of life which some social norms and traditional values dictate to those attributes of socioeconomic and political grounds. Despite, livestock trading, the nomadic communities in Ethiopia and Somaliland are the major people who contribute the relationship of the two countries and in many times there are some security implications because of the clashes between these communities who come together or live together the border between both sides. In the recent past the both countries suffered the severe and recurrent droughts that potentially affected the livestock trading and supply chain of the livestock trade flow to Gulf countries such as Saud Arabia. Furthermore, in the livestock trading often accompany with other commercial activities where mostly the Somali region of Ethiopia depends on the commodities from Berbera port. On the other hand, there are some predictable constrains for the time being because the recurrent droughts, diseases, increasing rural – urbanization migration, modernization, technological advancement and the climate change affected the overall ecological conditions and marketable livestock trading and this may result the decline of the livestock market. Moreover, Somaliland and Ethiopia have diverse interest in this area of the livestock trade for example in Somaliland the livestock trading generates government revenue in its yearly budget and mobilize other opportunities. But the Nisar Majid believes that Ethiopia is looking forward to obtain more foreign hard currency because in Ethiopia is barely required foreign

currency. One of Ethiopia's major interests in the livestock trade is said to be obtaining foreign currency.²⁶

The livestock is managed similar to the ancient times, no modification of the products of the livestock production and caring for and the livestock in the greater Horn of African in general does not enjoy much infrastructure needed except recent quarantines built in Berbera, Boosaaso, Mogadishu and Djibouti, likewise the livestock did not get a substantial amount of investment and competitive market. Moreover, Yemen business people before the war in Yemen trading the Somali livestock and this has created more chances, thought, the prices of the livestock market sets by the individual traders and the free market and this has apparently posed the risks and uncertainty of the Somali livestock trading. In the meantime, Saudi Arabian ban to Somali livestock in the Horn will hugely affect the current market decline and no longer should the rural communities' resilience be maintained. Indeed, the clans' conflicts may not be a potential factor to affect the market but the global hazards such as climate change and severe ecological situation remain more invariable and unendurable. As the social structures of the nomadic people changing from time to time for intimidation of the modern livelihood, the livestock is also needed to alleviate current hardship conditions by transforming the present livelihood of the livestock in the Horn of Africa. Finally, in this area of livestock trading indicates less implication of political and legal aspects "since these business and commercial transactions are connected with more traditional and social ties which either Ethiopia or Somaliland cannot dictate in the onset."²⁷ Hence, such free passage of the livestock trading is threatened by a number of challenges included the market instability, diseases and dramatic evolution of the social livelihoods as rapid urbanization and delicate ecological conditions.

Importance of Berbera Corridor and Berbera Port Modernization

The Berbera corridor project is recognized as one of the biggest regional economic and trade infrastructure that bilateral and multilateral organizations of IGAD, AU, EU, African Development Bank and World Bank and member states are optimistic that this Berbera corridor as roads development and Berbera Port modernization should generate more employment, enhance regional interconnectivity, economic integration and safe passage of transit and trade flow of the region. "We expect Somaliland to be a growing trade centre in east Africa and are positioning ourselves to meet and cater to the demand," says deputy CEO Esayas Ethiopian Airlines Woldemariam Hailu.²⁸ Berbera is the only other port, apart from Djibouti, on the northern coast of the Horn that is able to serve the Ethiopian highlands,²⁹ thus, there are lot of regional and international attention on the Berbera corridor project, and as many studies about the Berbera corridor identified, Berbera port has a high significant route of trading both in the close distance of the international shipment and Ethiopia.

²⁴Nisar Majid, Livestock Trade in the Djibouti, Somali and Ethiopian Borderlands, 2010, CHATHAM House, briefing paper, African Programme

²⁷ Interview with Ali Diriye Ali Somaliland livestock trader, 2017

²⁸Kartina Manson, Breakaway Somaliland hopes to become gateway for Horn of Africa, 2013, Financial Time <https://www.ft.com/content/523ba386-1b93-11e3-94a3-00144feab7de?mhq5j=e2>

²⁹ European Union, IGAD and World Bank Group, Horn of Africa Initiative Bebera Corridor Programme Background Note, 2015, http://www.caasimada.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/01120516170_Berbera_Corridor.pdf

²⁴ Republic of Somaliland, National Livestock policy, 2006-2016, http://www.somalilandlaw.com/Somaliland_Livestock_Policy_2006-1.pdf

²⁵ Abdurehman Eid, Jostling for Trade: The Politics of Livestock Marketing on the Ethiopia – Somaliland Border, 2014, Future agriculture

Moreover, the history of Berbera corridor project was imminent for long time, there were attempts for different times that the corridor was extensively anticipated to implement and in the contemporary history the Republic of Somaliland and Federal democratic Republic of Ethiopia held series of talks about the infrastructure development of the Berbera Port and maximizing trade channels included transit passage management and facilitation. The Berbera Corridor idea was started in 1896 by the Somaliland Elders and UK Government, jointly they submitted the idea to the Cadan Governor and also the governor forwarded to the UK House of elders and then UK sent a high delegation to the Ethiopian King Mililk.³⁰ Therefore, the ambition of Ethiopia to have access to Berbera Port facilities as the passage of export and import which the transit corridor is more central regionally and internationally beneficial at this level of accessibility and conducive trade environment. On the other hand, Somaliland to advance its seaport of Berbera will mutually advantageous for the economic growth of the greater Horn of Africa as rapidly growing economy of Ethiopia. Nonetheless, both regional and international actors strongly believe that the Berbera corridor is a vital for regional and international shipment system since the Berbera is naturally capable to handle such international shipment in this deep water harbor, international community exceptionally encourages the development of the Berbera corridor and use of Ethiopia as workable alternative route.

The bilateral agreement between Somaliland government and Dubai Port World in 2016 was intended to scale up the level of the Berbera Port facilities as the biggest container traffic site in the East Africa and Middle East. In a meeting between Somaliland officials and Ethiopia's Consulate General Office in Hargeisa, the two sides discussed details of the opportunities and challenges on usage of transit services raised by both sides.³¹ In fact, this project of the Berbera corridor in one hand is joint venture between Somaliland, Ethiopia, UAE and regional economic development partners on the other. DP World Port of Berbera will offer East African importers and exporters a unique, additional world class deepwater port that will dramatically improve the competitiveness of their products in world markets and has the potential to transform the region's economy," added Dr. Saad Ali Shire, minister of foreign affairs and international cooperation of the Republic of Somaliland.³² The European Commission has financed the preparation of a feasibility study and detailed design for the rehabilitation of the road from Berbera to Tog Wajaale, with a total estimated cost of US\$276 million for the 268 kilometre long road.³³ As the Horn of Africa region is characterized by more backward indicators such as poverty, insecurity, droughts and conflicts, the Berbera corridor agenda is to create conducive economic partnership that should offer the rest of the region more accessible and credible port services which is

deliverable and timely. Thus looking the regional and international views about this agenda of the Berbera corridor are all constructive and portrayed continued international community engagement regarding the multiple studies and researches made for the benefit of the Horn of African region to enlarge its economic integration and trade infrastructure, the Berbera corridor is meant to be a vehicle for macroeconomic regional development that can encourage the competitiveness of the private sector innovative interventions, global trade routes, regional and international market.

Moreover, it is notable to highlight that the Horn of Africa region has more economic potentiality and natural resources endowment, despite the region has been struggling to tackle so many challenges of unemployment, lack of clean water, poor health facilities, high mortality rates, food shortage as well as poor livelihood conditions. The subregion has experienced severe economic problems especially during the last decade, emanating from a host of factors: first, climatic problems have contributed to overall decline in food production, and second, unfavorable world market prices for agricultural produce have been persistent.³⁴ Some reports discovered that the climate change hugely affected in this region in the Horn of Africa specially the livestock trading and enhancing the trust and regional cooperation is inevitable in order to sustain the regional economic initiatives which the Berbera corridor will be under the high priority category. Improving regional infrastructure connectivity can help to improve human development and business competitiveness, and can also help to strengthen trust and cross-border collaboration.³⁵ The dialogue between Ethiopia and Somaliland has commenced the earlier in 1995 since then some progress was made, although not yet matched the expectation of Ethiopia keenness of the import and export trade because the Berbera traffic is too low for the time being.

Moreover, this dialogue was recently accelerated both sides and there were ministerial meetings and technical committees that held a roundtable discussions and conferences which mostly focusing on the transit and trade issues but the need for port modernization and road development hampered the dream of the two countries to establish a viable negotiations. In fact, investing the Berbera corridor will increase the volume of economic capacity, innovation and expansionism of the trade which the free trade zones and transit arrangement are the driving modality. Economic development corridors also provide opportunities for private sector investment in the provision of transport infrastructure associated with the exploitation of some resource in another sector.³⁶ In 1995 the Government of Somaliland sent to Ethiopia first a delegation composed of vice president, Abdirahman Aw Ali Farah, Minister of Interior Muse Bihi Abdi and Ahmed Mohamed Mohamoud Silanyo Member of Parliament and the delegation

³⁰Berbera Addis Ababa Corridor History and process, Somaliland Ministry of Trade and Investment, 2012

³¹Ethiopia and Somaliland agree on importance of transit cooperation mechanisms, 2014 <http://hornaffairs.com/en/2014/01/14/ethiopia-and-somaliland-agree-on-importance-of-transit-cooperation-mechanisms-jan-ten/>

³²American Shipper, DP World to operate second port in Horn of Africa, 2016, <http://www.americanshipper.com/main/news/dp-world-to-operate-second-port-in-horn-of-africa-65264.aspx>

³³ European Union, IGAD and World Bank Group, Horn of Africa Initiative Bebera Corridor Programme Background Note, 2015, http://www.caasimada.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/01120516170Berbera_Corridor.pdf, Feasibility Study and Detailed Design for Berbera – Togochole Road: Engineering Report, Gauff for Government of Somaliland and EU, August 2014

³⁴Office of Sustainable Development Bureau for Africa, the Northern Tier Countries of the Greater Horn of Africa – Technical paper No. 61 July 1997, Gordon J. Anyango The Management Center Nairobi, Kenya

³⁵ World Bank Regional Integration Department Africa Region, (Draft) Regional Initiative in Support of the Horn of Africa, 2014 <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/571071468194354658/pdf/917830WP0Horn00Box385358B00PUBLIC0.pdf>

³⁶TRANSIT TRANSPORT COORDINATION AUTHORITY OF THE NORTHERN CORRIDOR-A PAPER PREPARED BY THE TTCA SECRETARIAT FOR PRESENTATION AT THE COMESA BUSINESS SSUMMIT KAMPALA, UGANDA, 2004, Investment Opportunities in the Northern Corridor with Emphasis in Transport Infrastructure

started the first relationship with Ethiopia³⁷, this is nearly three decades that the Ethiopia and Somaliland ongoing trade discourse underway but this time the regional actors, international investors, bilateral and multilateral institutions have all a consolidated point of view for the implementation of the Berbera corridor. It was remarkable and historical that Somaliland Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Sacad Ali Shire signed an agreement on July 2017 between Somaliland and UAE to construct 250km road connecting with Somaliland seaport of Berbera and Tog Wajale town of the border and this was the exchange of the UAE military base of Berbera as well as DP World investment to Berbera port accompanied with 30 years port management. The agreement signals the beginning of the construction of a 250-kilometre road connecting Berbera to the border town and commercial hub of Wajale, straddling the boundary between Somaliland and Ethiopia.³⁸

Therefore, to speed up the corridor project included Somaliland and Ethiopia transit and trade agreement remains high priority, the successful implementation of the Berbera Corridor could serve as a regional model for development through expanded private sector activities and a coordinated multispectral program of infrastructure investments.³⁹ Somaliland and Ethiopia also discuss how Ethiopia provides hydroelectricity to Somaliland, getting affordable energy in Somaliland is crucial and has become a pre-condition for the foreign direct investors aspiring to invest in Somaliland. Eventually, from Somaliland side many intellectuals consider that the Berbera corridor is widely contributing the sustainability and mutual relationship between two countries and this will also raise more economic opportunities that would promote the movement of people to people and linkage of other sectors development initiatives as, Fisheries, tourism, agriculture, livestock oil, gas exploration and mining, the paper will further discuss increasing the foreign direct investment about the Berbera corridor and challenges needed to mitigate across this program. Some initial views pointed out that the financial sector is an important instrument for international investors, in contrary, Somaliland which is 100% Muslim country, opening the conventional banks has become impracticable because Islamic shari'a prohibits the interest rates so there is a big dilemma in this area of financial institutions and many people are arguing that Somaliland needs conventional banks with Islamic window or Islamic system, insurance and competent transport networking is imminent and vital at this time. The EU feasibility study has made this classification for the corridors in the region, in which specifies the entailed comparative benchmarks as distance and accessibility to Ethiopia, Addis Ababa hence, this below data analysis gives us more insightful and generated options of cost-effective and transport viability, in this regard, Berbera corridor is more competitive than the rest of corridors in below, Currently Djibouti is the major route that Ethiopia trade activity depends on and in terms of distance Djibouti corridor is about "781" while Berbera is "937" however, the Berbera corridor is the second competitive trade site in Ethiopia since the political relationship between Ethiopia and Eritrea is not

unhealthy and this EU study has also pointed out that in the future reopening the Assab and Massawa will not be considerably upsetting the Berbera "traffic" but Djibouti is likely since it provides the "Northern regions of Ethiopia." The corresponding corridors are:

- The road to Port Sudan (distance between Addis Ababa and Port Sudan is 1,900 km);
- The road to Mombasa (distance between Addis Ababa and Mombasa is 2,067 km);
- The road to Assab (distance between Addis Ababa and Assab is 882 km);
- The road to Massawa (distance between Addis Ababa and Massawa is 1163 km); and
- The road to Berbera (distance between Addis Ababa and Berbera is 937 km) via

Harar, Jijiga, Togochale, Kalabeit and Hargeisa.⁴⁰

To this end, advancing Berbera port facilities may revitalize the current attempts to improve wider regional and subregion economic integration and increasing the size and the volume of the transactions and mode of transmission, there are some apparent challenges of poor infrastructure as roads, low handling capacity of the port at moment as well as competing political views both regional and international arena on issues of the Berbera corridor.

Somaliland and Ethiopia Dialogue on Transit Passage

Ethiopia as a landlocked country, the second populous in Africa and fastest economic growing country in Sub-Saharan region, access to sea and enjoying trade connectivity as transit passage is a central objective and economic incentive that Ethiopia is maximizing its efforts to get multiple routes of trade sources, in 2016 Somaliland and Ethiopia signed a memorandum of understanding of opening the transit from Berbera port to Ethiopia and one of the technical committee from Somaliland side stated that this was a major step forward. Despite the MOU signed, there were several rounds of negotiations that Ethiopia was pushing forward its goods to be facilitated through transit means and as the convention, Statute on Freedom of Transit (1921) indicated that landlocked countries have a right to access to the sea and safe passage for their goods and transport. Article (1) illustrates what type of goods to be transferred and how this process is coordinated "Persons, baggage and goods, and also vessels, coaching and good stock, and other means of transport, shall be deemed to be in transit across territory under the sovereignty or authority of one of the Contracting States."⁴¹ Somaliland and Ethiopia need to increase the level of negotiation in this transit management bearing in mind the international declarations and regional instruments on the freedom of the transit goods which should require more structured, competent institutions and consolidated legal and policy framework. From this point forward what matters the issues is in one hand the – the imbalance of power of two states, although, Somaliland enjoys peace, democracy and demonstrated its willingness to foster East Africa economic integration despite the absence of the international recognition, there are strong historical, social, economic, political and

³⁷Berbera_Addis Ababa Corridor History and process, Somaliland Ministry of Trade and Investment, 2012

³⁸Somtribune- Republic of Somaliland – UAE formalize Development, 2017, <http://www.somtribune.com/2017/07/03/republic-somaliland-uae-formalize-development-deal/>

³⁹ European Union, IGAD and World Bank Group, Horn of Africa Initiative Berbera Corridor Programme Background Note, 2015, http://www.caasimada.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/01120516170Berbera_Corridor.pdf,

⁴⁰ The European Commission Delegation of the European Commission in Kenya, Pre- Feasibility Study of the Regional Transport Sector in the Berbera Corridor, 2003

⁴¹Convention and Statute on Freedom of Transit, 1921, http://www.wipo.int/edocs/trtdocs/en/lon-ft/trt_lon_ft.pdf

cultural ties between the two countries which primarily enhanced the current maneuvering of Ethiopia to access this deep-water port of Berbera. Furthermore, the trade and transit dialogue took many years; one could realistically justify that geopolitical dynamics and the greater political disparity of the states structures can be reasonably a factor of the perpetuating the trade deals, when you talk the Somaliland politicians they are all 100% confident this growing relationship between Somaliland and Ethiopia particularly the trade and economic integration and from Ethiopia side the successive Prime Ministers demonstrated a good faith and momentum to advance this significant deal of the transit agreement and improving the corridor infrastructure. In the light of the continued interest of Ethiopia to use the Berbera port has also entertained more international competitive investors to seek the management of the port facilities and the DP World based on Dubai has made a landmark agreement with Somaliland in 2016. Somaliland government signed a deal with \$442 million with DP World to modernize the Berbera Port aimed at delivering transit goods to Ethiopia, and this will rapidly transform the chain of trade activities between the two countries.

Thus, Somaliland's focus was many years to create a trade atmosphere between two nations but this deal of the DP World has fascinated Somaliland to realize its long term dream of economic partnership with its largest Horn of Africa neighbor country of Ethiopia and modernization and expanding Berbera Port facilities as a new container terminals and road development from Berbera to Tog Wajaale is a big deal that can absorb more international investors. "We are delighted to extend our African footprint with a major investment in Somaliland. Investment in this natural deepwater port will attract more shipping lines to East Africa and its modernization will act as a catalyst for the growth of the country and the region's economy," DP World Group Chairman and CEO Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem said in a statement.⁴² The deals with the UAE could help return Berbera to its former prominence. The \$442 million, 30-year port deal with Dubai Ports World (DPWorld), passed by Somaliland's parliament in August 2016, would boost annual container capacity twenty-fold.⁴³ However, the transit deal with Ethiopia is yet under negotiation circles which are unfinished business for long time, the pursuit of the Berbera modern container terminals following the free trade zone for all commercial goods are included this deal of the DP World. In the meantime, this discourse of the transit corridor has both economic and political scope that Somaliland can maximize for the quest of recognition as member states of the African Union. The overdue of the transit and trade agreement between Somaliland and Ethiopia is not encouraging the amicable relations and growing economic trends of the two countries, in fact, the rhetoric and reality is different.

For instance the two countries have been pursuing these trade negotiations for so long with good faith, one of the important trade negotiations was held at Berbera city on Feb. 27 2016, in this occasion, Somaliland Minister of Trade and Investment

Hussein Adam Egeh that time extensively repeated how this negotiation is crucial for both countries and he pointed out that "Ethiopia has been a constant friend to Somaliland and a true ally for along time, a friendship it has maintained even to the extent of establishing a Diplomatic Missions in Hargeisa and Addis Ababa."

More important, the attainment of the international standard criteria of the transit lanes will be most pressing agenda in every negotiation; some technical persons from both sides argue that genuine dialogue and greater political involvement should be inevitable in order to materialize this compact of the transit and trade agreement.

In addition, Somaliland business communities are very optimistic that realization and rationalization in this trade and transit agreement will be the foundation of the successful economic integration that both countries put forward. Speak to ministers and business folk in Somaliland and you'll hear a lot of talk about Berbera Port's potential and what might be achieved with the market opportunity offered by Ethiopia's 100 million population – set to reach 130 million by 2025, according to the United Nations.⁴⁴ This potential market of Ethiopia is more predictable to contribute significantly to the regional economic development, infrastructure and free passage of trade.

Moreover, there is a wider regional and international outlook in this transit passage which Somaliland and Ethiopia are necessary to further illustrate the provision of the rights of the passage considering the regional and international legal and policy initiative on the transit corridor. For transit, General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade GATT borrowed from the principles of, and at times reproduced verbatim, the provisions of the 1921 Barcelona Convention and Statute on Freedom of Transit⁴⁵, therefore, these international instrument of tariffs and trade, the rights of transit for landlocked countries, customs and maritime are all encapsulating and illustrating the heavy responsibility and international obligation that Ethiopia and Somaliland must collaborate until a comprehensive agreement to be reached.

Since Ethiopia and Somaliland commenced this initiative of the trade and transit cooperation, the international investors were dedicated to invest the Berbera corridor such as Port expansion included new container terminals and road development, may be in the near future the railway is likely to start because the trade and cargo volumes and transit transport is often an issues such conditions of the landlocked countries in order to upgrade the scale of effectiveness and competition. The two countries are also needed to create an institutional framework for better understanding the corridor administration by visualizing the challenges of this trade scale and transit facilitation. At present time the road between Berbera and Tog Wajaale border of Ethiopia is subject to be upgraded by the United Arab Emirate, though the European Union has been advocating the Berbera corridor for long time and secured some funds but the domestic frustration of the poor economic performance and high rate of unemployment triggered Somaliland to evaluate a menu of options that international

⁴²American Shipper, DP World to operate second port in Horn of Africa, 2016, <http://www.americanshipper.com/main/news/dp-world-to-operate-second-port-in-horn-of-africa-65264.aspx>

⁴³ THE MESSENGER, Testing the waters: Somaliland dives into the international arena, 2017, THE MESSENGER, NEWS & INVESTIGATION FROM EAST AFRICA, <https://messengerofafrica.com/2017/04/03/testing-the-waters-somaliland-dives-into-the-international-arena/>

⁴⁴James Jeffrey, Scramble in the Horn, 2016, <http://newafricanmagazine.com/scrambleinthehorn/>

⁴⁵Jean Grosdidier de Matons, A Review of International Legal Instrument, 2014, Facilitation of Transport and Trade in Africa, SSATP Africa Transport Policy Program

investors presented which finally the DP World succeeded to manage these large –scale of projects under the Berbera corridor.

Finally, there is a considerable economic interdependence at regional level this time, Ethiopia and Somaliland have close ties beyond the trade and transit cooperation, security and diplomatic relations may underpin the mutual negotiations to end up successful trade and transit agreement and both countries are also needed to consider that the partnership between landlocked countries and coastal states has had a long term international interventions started from the league of nations in the pursuant the united nations as well as other bilateral and multilateral trade institutions both regional and at global scale. In this regard, there are ranges of issues around this transit passage such as legal and regulatory framework where the international law is more central in the pursuit of promoting such state to state relations should occur by advancing the transit regime management and trade facilitation, on the other hand, the international community values such attainment of partnership looking forward more comprehensive steps to be carried out by regularizing the accessibility of the seaports and cost - effective transport network. Ethiopia and Somaliland proved a close distance of the cross – border trade and ingenuity of the people to people traditional trade relations which posed less restriction.

Conclusion

To this end, Somaliland – Ethiopia bilateral relations seems to be more progressive and based on mutual interests of economic development, security cooperation and diplomatic ties. Many people here in Somaliland see this relationship as fundamental and workable, whenever, you go to the teashops or marfarsh – a chewing khat places and intellectual gather places, you may discover how social and political discussions favor to this relationship going forward and the trade negotiations underway as transit passage will allow both parts to increase the level of commitment and better understanding in the regional integration and creation workable regional instrument for economic development, international investment and better trade and transit regulatory framework. Observing this relationship, one can also find out more strategic dimensions of securitization, trade cooperation and people to people relations due to this long border area between two sides. The rural communities move frequently crossing the borders of the two countries and this is more natural phenomena that state restrictions remain more elastic and difficult. In fact, Somaliland – Ethiopia relation is not an option opted by two countries but it is a type of more natural

and strategic partnership and this relationship makes more contribution and initiatives to the entire region of the greater Horn of Africa. Moreover, in deepening this relationship which was emanated from ancient to modern, from political animosity during Somali Republic umbrella to friendship in the creation of the Republic of Somaliland, the two sides are required to scale up the cultural ties, and regular studies of the context and cooperate against regional backwardness. The current Berbera corridor deal which Ethiopia is part of it, is in one hand has materialized the economic interests and political realization on the other. As far as Somaliland is a strategic de facto state, Ethiopia will face more pressures from those countries who yet aspiring to revive the dead slogan of the greater Somali Republic in the Horn of Africa, but Ethiopia must be confident that the political will of the people of Somaliland will not be an easily broken, remembering the consequences of the unification that economically devastated and politically undermined the rights of the people of Somaliland.

This communal interest of the two countries goes beyond federal level whereas Somaliland officials and Somali Ethiopian region officials meet across and this can encourage more substantial diplomatic leverage and consensus building on issues of the cross –border trade, security and human trafficking. In the meantime, the infrastructure development of the Berbera corridor is underway but the trade and transit negotiations need more constant legal and institutional joint framework. In addition any regional experiences can help both sides to accomplish more meaningful conclusion and road development specially requires both short and long term solutions since the construction may take for long period of time while Berbera traffic is moving forward soon. Indeed, the political atmosphere between Ethiopia and Somaliland is progressing and understandable at its current scale and it is substantial the Ethiopia government to be much more pragmatic and supportive in this vision that the people of Somaliland determined to regain their sovereign country and at regional level, the people of Somaliland have clear standpoint to eliminate the overall hostile attitudes between Ethiopians and Somalis, this can open a new chapter of political, regional economic cooperation and peaceful co-existence. Finally, the political and legal implications in this bilateral agreement between Somaliland and Ethiopia are needed to avoid despite the reality on ground, Somaliland enjoys a de facto state which the African Union did not yet recognize and this may often create a window of political contestation and contradictions, although, the wider international community is faithful Somaliland to continue such democratic elections, social solidarity and regional connectivity.
