

The Africa - Caribbean Alliance: A Shared Legacy, A Common Future - with Ethiopia at its Core

Horn Review Editorial

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About us:

Founded in 2021, Horn Review is a premier research and publication think-tank dedicated to exploring and amplifying African voices with a goal of interlinking subject matter experts, practitioners, and academics from Ethiopia, the Horn Region, and the African continent with the broader public. With a stated mission of Africa for Africans, Horn Review aims to amplify and mainstream uniquely African ideas and perspectives on sociopolitical, economic, and geostrategic issues relevant to the continent. Horn Review aims to connect African thinkers, practitioners, and policymakers with their respective communities to create greater synergy and a people-centered discourse on African matters.



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Editor's Note

Horn Review Magazine – 12th Edition

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 12th edition of Horn Review Magazine, where we explore the shifting geopolitical, economic, and strategic landscapes shaping the Horn of Africa and beyond. In this issue, we delve into critical themes defining the region's future, from global power plays and diplomatic realignments to the pursuit of sustainable development.

Ethiopia remains at the center of key discussions, from its pivotal role in the Africa-Caribbean alliance to its quest for strategic autonomy, balancing foreign aid with self-sufficiency. We also examine Ethiopia's evolving ties with the UK, the need for revitalized partnerships with Yemen, and the broader geopolitical shifts influencing the Horn.

Energy and infrastructure are essential drivers of Africa's future. This edition explores Ethiopia's vision for smart cities and green corridors as part of its long-term development strategy. Beyond the Horn, we take a deep dive into The Congo Crucible, analyzing the power struggles in Central Africa and their ripple effects on Ethiopia and the wider region. Additionally, we reflect on the 38th AU Summit's impact on regional integration, including discussions on a potential EAC-IGAD merger.

A key feature in this issue is *The Pyromaniac's Shadow: Eritrea's Pursuit of Regional Discord in the Horn of Africa – A Tinderbox of Geopolitical Rivalry*, an in-depth analysis of Eritrea's role in destabilizing the region. This article examines its geopolitical maneuvers, the implications for neighboring states, and the broader security challenges facing the Horn.

On the global stage, we examine a controversial yet thought-provoking debate: Should Donald Trump be considered for the Nobel Peace Prize? This analysis evaluates his foreign policy, its influence on global peace efforts, particularly in the Russia-Ukraine war and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and its broader implications for international diplomacy.

As Ethiopia charts a path toward sustainability, these discussions highlight the Horn's deep interconnectedness with global dynamics. At Horn Review, we remain committed to fostering informed discourse and providing a platform for in-depth research and analysis. We hope this edition sparks meaningful conversations and offers valuable insights into the region's complex realities.

Happy reading!

Blen Mamo

Editor-in-Chief, Executive Director, Horn Review

The Africa-Caribbean Alliance: A Shared Legacy, A Common Future - With Ethiopia at its Core

By Horn Review Editorial



The deep historical and cultural ties between Africa and the Caribbean have long shaped the identity and resilience of people of African descent worldwide.

From shared struggles against colonialism to the enduring vision of Pan-Africanism, the Africa-Caribbean alliance represents more than just diplomatic relations, it is a reaffirmation of a common heritage and a shared destiny.

At the heart of this growing alliance stands Ethiopia, a nation whose symbolic and historical significance has made it a cornerstone of Pan-Africanism and African unity. As the only African country to successfully resist colonization, Ethiopia has long been a beacon of Black sovereignty and self-determination.

It remains a source of inspiration for Caribbean nations and the global African diaspora. *Today, as Africa and the Caribbean strengthen their political, economic, and cultural ties, Ethiopia's leadership and influence remain central to shaping this renewed partnership.*

The development of modern African and Caribbean states followed similar trajectories, shaped by the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism, and the subsequent abolitionist and independence movements. The Caribbean's African-descended population largely stems from the brutal system of plantation slavery, where resistance and rebellion were constant themes.

These struggles for freedom found echoes in Africa, particularly in Ethiopia's victory at the Battle of Adwa in 1896, a rare and monumental triumph of an African nation over a European colonial power.

This victory had a profound impact on anti-colonial movements worldwide, including in the Caribbean. Barbados's Prime Minister Mia Mottley, Chair of CARICOM, highlighted this shared history in her speech at the 79th African Union (AU) Summit in Addis Ababa. She emphasized how the resistance against oppression in the Caribbean was deeply connected to the struggles in Africa, with Adwa serving as a symbol of hope and possibility for liberation.

Following the abolition of slavery, the push for independence in the Caribbean closely mirrored Africa's own decolonization movements. Inspired by Ethiopia's sovereignty, Pan-Africanist leaders such as Marcus Garvey championed the idea of African unity and the "Back to Africa" movement, which encouraged the return of African descendants to their ancestral homeland.

Later, under Emperor Haile Selassie, Ethiopia further cemented its role in the Pan-African movement, hosting the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 and strengthening ties with Caribbean intellectuals and political leaders.

Despite these deep cultural and historical connections, political and economic relations between Africa and the Caribbean have remained underdeveloped. In recent years, efforts to change this have gained momentum. In 2021, the AU and CARICOM established formal cooperation mechanisms, and in late 2024, they signed a memorandum of understanding to facilitate investment and economic collaboration.



Barbados's Prime Minister Mia Motley at the 38th AU Summit, 2025

Mottley's speech at the AU Summit underscored the immense potential for partnership, calling for greater unity in addressing shared challenges and seizing mutual opportunities. One of the most promising areas is trade. Both the AU and CARICOM are implementing regional free trade agreements, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME). Bridging these two frameworks could unlock significant economic benefits, creating a new axis of South-South cooperation.

Beyond trade, political collaboration offers another opportunity. African and Caribbean nations remain underrepresented in global institutions such as the IMF and World Bank, despite their collective economic and demographic significance. A unified Africa-Caribbean front could amplify their voices in global governance and push for reforms that better reflect the interests of developing nations. UN Secretary-General António Guterres echoed this sentiment in his speech at the 38th AU Summit, advocating for greater African and Caribbean representation on the world stage.

For Ethiopia, the renewed enthusiasm for Africa-Caribbean unity presents a strategic opportunity. Historically, Ethiopian leaders have leveraged the country's unique status in the Pan-African movement to forge strong diplomatic ties.

Emperor Haile Selassie's outreach to newly independent African and Caribbean states helped solidify Ethiopia's position as a unifying force. Today, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has an opportunity to revitalize this legacy.



HIM Emperor HaileSelassie visiting Jamaica in 1966

Abiy has positioned himself as a strong advocate for Pan-Africanism, emphasizing regional integration, economic self-reliance, and diplomatic engagement. His leadership in peace efforts, infrastructure development, and support for the AfCFTA aligns with the broader goals of African unity. By hosting the upcoming AU-CARICOM Summit in September, Addis Ababa can serve as the bridge between Africa and the Caribbean, facilitating deeper collaboration in trade, diplomacy, and shared global advocacy.



Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed receiving Prime Minister Mia Motley and her delegation at the National Palace, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Furthermore, strengthening ties with CARICOM member states could pave the way for greater cultural exchanges, trade agreements, and mutual support in international forums. Ethiopia, with its deep historical connections to the African diaspora, is well-positioned to take on this leadership role.

The Africa-Caribbean alliance is not just a diplomatic arrangement, it is a reaffirmation of a shared legacy and a common future. Ethiopia, as a historical and symbolic pillar of Pan-Africanism, has a crucial role to play in deepening these ties.

By capitalizing on this moment, Ethiopia can reinforce its leadership in African and diaspora diplomacy, fostering a stronger, more united global African community.

The momentum is building, and with the upcoming AU-CARICOM Summit, the opportunity to turn historical solidarity into tangible action has never been greater. The question now is whether African nations, led by Ethiopia, will fully embrace this chance to reshape the geopolitical landscape for generations to come.

H.E. Abdi Zenebe (PHD), on Ethiopia's Pursuit for Strategic Autonomy, the Delicate Balance Between Foreign Aid and Self-Sufficiency



Horn Review's Horn Review Tesfaye sat down with H.E. Abdi Zenebe (PHD), Deputy Director, Institute of Foreign Affairs to discuss Ethiopia's pursuit for Strategic Autonomy

Horn Review: Thank you for being here, Dr. Abdi. Could you please reflect on Ethiopia's pursuit of strategic autonomy, the balance between foreign aid and self-sufficiency, the impact of homegrown economic reforms, and how these evolving policies might influence Ethiopia's diplomatic and geopolitical future?

Dr. Abdi: It's a pleasure to be here. Strategic autonomy refers to **a state's ability to make independent decisions regarding its economic, political, and social development, free from undue external influence.** As you correctly pointed out, I believe this is what we are striving for at both the national and global levels. At its core, strategic autonomy is essential for safeguarding a nation's interests while also ensuring self-sufficiency and sovereignty.

Since 2018, with the launch of our reform process, Ethiopia has aggressively pursued strategic autonomy. This effort goes beyond just material aspects like economic matters; it encompasses a broader worldview, policy orientation, and philosophy. For instance, Ethiopia's foundational philosophy since 2018 has been ምድግ (Synergy), which has significantly influenced our policy direction across various sectors.

When you look at our policies in security, politics, and economics, you'll find elements of this Synergy philosophy, which is rooted in our national reality.

It is not only about economic growth but also about shaping our political and security landscape in a way that reflects our aspirations for independence and self-reliance.

For a country to realize full strategic autonomy, a paradigm shift is required, one that redefines the source of the thought process behind every action. This shift is critical in ensuring that we are not merely reacting to external pressures but are instead taking charge of our own destiny.

You can see this in Ethiopia's efforts to enhance food and energy security, encourage domestic stability, and promote regional integration. All of these initiatives reflect Ethiopia's desire to stand on its own feet, secure its sovereignty, and shape its future on its own terms. That, in essence, is what strategic autonomy means for us. It's about acting according to our own will and capability, aligned with our national aspirations.

Horn Review: Great explanation, thank you. My second question is: Ethiopia has long relied on foreign aid, as we all know, for its development. How can the country balance the benefits of aid while maintaining true strategic autonomy, as you just explained? Additionally, what lessons can be drawn from other nations that have successfully transitioned away from aid dependency?

Dr. Abdi: It's essential to approach this matter from the right perspective. One key angle through which we should understand Ethiopia's political economy and international relations is transitology, the study of countries **during periods of transition. This is crucial because, during a transition, a country reexamines its purpose, its challenges, and the way it plans to overcome long-standing issues. Ethiopia, with its complex history, is no exception.**

The Ethiopian government views itself as having a responsibility to lead the country through this transition period towards a better democracy.

This transition is about addressing the backlogs and challenges of the past, and one of the most significant issues we've faced is excessive dependency, particularly on foreign aid. To understand this dependency, we need to examine the policies that led to it.

For instance, Ethiopia has gone through transitions before—when the country moved from the monarchy to the Derg regime, and later from the Derg to the EPRDF. These transitions were revolutionary in nature and, in many ways, created more problems than they solved. However, we have learned valuable lessons from those experiences.

Today, we are in a transition, but this time it is being managed through reform. Our approach is guided by three key principles that stem from the ምድረ (Synergy) philosophy. First, it must be people-centered. Rapid, unchecked change can lead to disaster, so we prioritize sustainable and inclusive progress. Secondly, we recognize that the means are just as important as the end. It's not enough to focus on the outcomes; the processes and steps taken are equally crucial. Third, we are grounded in reason and local wisdom. For example, whereas previous ideologies like scientific socialism were foreign to our cultural and social fabric, today, Ethiopia draws on its own sagacity and values to solve problems. We understand that the social capital within our own culture is instrumental in overcoming challenges.

Ethiopia is part of the global community and we certainly learn from the experiences of other nations, but we also recognize the importance of looking inward. Synergy, working together, within our own society, with neighboring countries, and with global partners, is at the heart of our approach. This isn't about partisanship; it's about collaboration and shared goals.

Looking at other countries in transition, we can draw lessons from the experiences of nations throughout history. For instance, Western European countries' transitions from monarchy to democracy in the 1820s, as well as the transformations seen during the Arab Spring, provide valuable insights. While every country's journey is unique, common elements emerge: transitions are often difficult, but they are essential for progress.

For Ethiopia, this transition is a democratic one. It's not about moving from one authoritarian regime to another, but about moving towards democracy through reform, not revolution. The goal is to achieve strategic autonomy from all angles, which is why projects like the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam are so crucial. This dam will ensure our energy security, a key component of our sovereignty. Additionally, securing an outlet for trade is vital for our prosperity. These interconnected elements are central to our vision for the future. If I've understood your question correctly, this is how we see the balance between foreign aid and strategic autonomy. It's not an easy path, but it's one that aligns with our long-term vision of self-reliance and independence.

Horn Review: As we know, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's administration has introduced a homegrown economic reform aimed at achieving sustainable growth. What are the key pillars of these reforms, and how have they influenced Ethiopia's economic trajectory and its push for continued development?

Dr. Abdi: *It's important to recognize that Ethiopia is part of a growing trend among African nations adopting their own policy orientations and ideologies, tailored to their unique circumstances.* This is significant because very few countries in the Global South are able to chart their own political and economic paths, based on their own ideas and aspirations. This speaks to Ethiopia's growing degree of strategic autonomy.

The question, of course, is how we can enhance this autonomy. The homegrown economic reform package plays a key role in this. The reforms have two main components: addressing macroeconomic imbalances, which has been a critical first step, and addressing strategic backlogs, deep-rooted issues that need to be unraveled for the country to move forward.

Another key goal is to ensure inclusivity and sustainability. The homegrown economic reform package focuses on these aspirations in a very structured way. It includes various elements such as fiscal policies, financial strategies, and addressing structural issues across multiple sectors, including agriculture, mining, manufacturing, tourism, and digitalization, all of which are crucial for Ethiopia's long-term development.

But why is this important? How does it connect to Ethiopia's push for strategic autonomy? The core motivation behind these reforms is to reduce dependency, especially dependency on foreign aid and foreign capital. This is a fundamental aspect of the government's approach.

One of the key outcomes of this policy shift is that the government has significantly reduced its reliance on commercial loans. Instead, through initiatives aimed at boosting domestic productivity, Ethiopia is focusing on reducing food dependency from external sources and encouraging mechanized farming, which leverages the country's vast potential. This shift is part of a broader strategy to move away from external aid.

Moreover, the reforms are promoting domestic manufacturing, encouraging local factories to produce more goods, and diversifying both export markets and the types of products being exported. This diversification is crucial because it allows Ethiopia to reduce its dependency on a single market, creating more opportunities for growth.

National security concerns are also tightly linked to infrastructure development. Completing the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, for example, is vital to ensuring the country's energy security. Similarly, Ethiopia has made significant strides in expanding its telecommunication infrastructure, which has opened up new possibilities for connectivity and development, particularly in remote areas.

In terms of transportation, significant improvements are being made, which are essential for facilitating both domestic and international trade. Additionally, the reforms are fostering greater financial inclusion by providing more access to financial services, particularly through digital means.

Another important aspect of these reforms is Ethiopia's shift in mindset regarding technology and skill development. Capacity building is a priority now, with dedicated ministries focused on encouraging startups and fostering entrepreneurship. All of these efforts are aimed at making Ethiopia more self-reliant and enhancing its sovereign status.

In essence, the homegrown economic reforms align with the broader goal of strategic autonomy, and they are paving the way for Ethiopia to stand on its own, with a more diversified, self-sustaining economy.

Horn Review: Great. Now, let's shift our focus to the U.S. With the Trump administration freezing U.S. aid funding and discussions of possibly dismantling it, what immediate and long-term effects could this have on Ethiopia and other aid-dependent nations like ourselves?

Dr. Abdi: As someone who focuses on transitions, I think it's important to be cautious when assessing the direction of any new administration. During a transition period, governments tend to use institutions to achieve their goals tactically, so it's too soon to draw definitive conclusions. We're observing the situation, but some of the changes seem quite abrupt. I want to express my heartfelt appreciation for the patience of the many Ethiopians working with USAID and USAID-related organizations. They will need to wait and see what the outcome is.

The relationship between the U.S. and Ethiopia is multifaceted. USAID is not the only point of connection; other institutions like the State Department and the Department of Defense (DOD) are also involved. USAID has had a presence in Ethiopia for decades, with a long history of partnership. Ethiopia has graduated in many areas over the years, but we still have challenges, particularly in sectors like healthcare, education, and water, where we remain dependent on U.S. support.

That said, there have been significant improvements. Ethiopia, for example, has enormous potential, particularly in agriculture. The country has an estimated land coverage ranging from 35 million to 50 million hectares. To address recovery and other needs, Ethiopia only requires a fraction of that—less than 300,000 hectares. This demonstrates the vast potential we have. With the new policies and ideas being implemented, Ethiopia is making rapid progress in reducing its dependency.

We're moving from producing one season's worth of crops to multiple harvests through initiatives launched, particularly by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and other efforts that are helping Ethiopians become more self-sufficient.

This is a testament to Ethiopia's potential. We're seeing firsthand how quickly the country can reduce aid dependency. And I believe this can apply not just to Ethiopia but to other nations as well. In the Horn of Africa, for example, our fates are deeply intertwined. We share common challenges, and our ties, through language, culture, and blood—are strong. Through greater regional integration and interdependence, we can address these issues together. We can overcome dependency and enhance intra-Africa trade, promoting the exchange of goods and services. This is a crucial step toward self-reliance.

For me, this situation with USAID serves as a wake-up call, particularly for those of us who advocate for the importance of strategic autonomy. I believe this shift can happen quickly and effectively, and it can be a positive change for the region and for Ethiopia as a whole.

Horn Review: Great. To sustain its reforms and, as you mentioned, strategic autonomy, what policy adjustments are needed? Also, what role do the private sector, entrepreneurship, and foreign direct investment play in this transformation?

Dr. Abdi: I truly believe Ethiopia is already leading a transition, and the management of how we're navigating this transition is aligned with our time. Transitions are always challenging. If we compare ourselves with neighboring countries on a similar political trajectory, Ethiopia is managing this transition well, despite the difficulties. This success is due to the policy orientation in place. I believe we are on the right path, but what's needed now is a greater degree of societal mobilization. This is especially important because Ethiopia is a country with a large youth population, and the rise of startups and entrepreneurship is remarkable.

To mobilize and address political challenges, we need innovators to step into this space and help overcome governance issues. This is where political innovation becomes crucial. Political innovation is a concept where entrepreneurs with a passion for their country contribute to improving governance structures and tackling social problems. Entrepreneurs need to be comfortable in the political sphere, which will allow them to bring their solutions to the table. The involvement of the private sector is equally critical. ***Ethiopia is transitioning from a command economy to a market-based economy, and engaging the private sector is essential.***

The private sector will help foster a competitive and productive economy, and we are eager to work with our neighbors to increase integration. I strongly believe that the correct policy orientation is in place, and societal mobilization will accelerate the process of enhancing Ethiopia's strategic autonomy.

Horn Review: Great. As Ethiopia moves away from foreign aid, as you just mentioned, how do you see its economic and foreign policy evolving? And in relation to that, what impact will this have on our relationships with major powers and financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank?

Dr. Abdi: ***One of the key aspects of strategic autonomy is knowing what you're aiming for and understanding your destination.*** This is what drives Ethiopia's foreign policy. Today, Ethiopia has a dream, a dream of prosperity, comprehensive and lasting peace, and regional integration. We believe that our fate is deeply intertwined with our neighbors, and our priority is to work with actors who share this vision.

Ethiopia has a long history of engaging with various international actors. This tradition will continue, but as we pursue prosperity, we will work with others who can contribute to this goal. Ethiopia is no longer isolated. We are opening up. This new foreign policy orientation, which prioritizes the Horn of Africa first, is unique. The "Horn First" doctrine reflects our commitment to our neighbors and fosters a policy of give-and-take with countries across the region and beyond—whether in the Middle East, the West, or the East. Ethiopia is open to working with anyone who shares our aspirations.

What defines Ethiopia's foreign policy today is its national interest. Unlike in the past, our foreign policy is no longer driven by ideological orientations or alignments with specific powers. We are focused on securing our national interests, which will drive our future engagements. A key part of that is overcoming dependency, a challenge that has been a collective issue for Ethiopia. This is not just a present challenge—it is a generational responsibility. To address it, Ethiopia will continue to work with a wide range of global partners. Ethiopia has the experience, the infrastructure, and the leadership needed to manage diverse partnerships with nations around the world. The guiding principle for our foreign policy will be our national interests, and that is the most important element moving forward.

Horn Review: In relation to this, does this shift signal a more assertive diplomatic role for Ethiopia, both regionally and globally?

Dr. Abdi: That's the most important thing, I think. When you have a dream, that's a very critical element. When you have a purpose, it's equally crucial. To achieve this dream and this goal, you have to take action. You have to engage and put in the effort. Ethiopia, as I've mentioned, has a vision, a dream, and an approach to achieving it. This approach is peaceful and built on interdependence through integration.

This vision gives Ethiopia's diplomatic sector a huge responsibility. Ethiopia is willing to engage with all different actors because we want to realize several goals: to expand our market, attract foreign direct investment, receive support from various partners, and also contribute to others.

Ethiopia is set to become a more active player regionally. We recognize the burden of responsibility, but we also want to play a crucial role. The Horn of Africa is gaining more focus now because the global economic pivot is shifting towards Africa. This makes the Horn of Africa an important player. We cannot afford to ignore this; rather, we must seize this opportunity for the betterment of our people, Africa, and the subregion as a whole. Ethiopia has an agenda, and we know where we're going. Our proactive diplomacy, driven by pragmatism and prioritizing our national interests, will guide us.

Horn Review: Great. My final question to you, Dr. Abdi, as the deputy director of a premier Ethiopian foreign policy think tank, IFA, what is your vision for the country's diplomatic future? Also, in relation to that, what key milestones should the country aim for in reducing aid dependency and asserting greater economic independence and global standing?

Dr. Abdi: That's a broad question, I must say. One of the most important elements in Ethiopia's future is realizing that we are undergoing a comprehensive reform process. ***This transition, driven by reform, requires a nuanced understanding of how to restructure institutions and incorporate new ideals. We need to create a structure that accommodates these ideals while also fostering behavioral transformations to build a consolidated democracy.***

We must all undergo self-reflection and understand that our nation, our beloved country, is not just an external concept—it emanates from within our hearts.

To end the history of dependency and aid, Ethiopia is committed to achieving that transformation. I'm proud to say that, in a very short time, we will see Ethiopian aid going out to other countries. This is a significant step forward. We have the capacity and the drive to make this happen. Knowledge production will be crucial in this process. We must produce knowledge from diverse perspectives, especially because in the past, decision-making processes lacked the depth of knowledge required to address complex issues.

As the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA), in collaboration with other esteemed institutions, our role is to provide fresh knowledge that supports decision-makers in crafting informed policies. Right now, there's a gap between policy-making and knowledge production, and we must close that gap. By mobilizing the elite and refining our knowledge, Ethiopia can better understand its potential, capabilities, and maneuver within a complex global geopolitical landscape.

AI, energy security, and other technological advancements are also crucial to our future. I'm proud to say that the Prime Minister has established an infrastructure and institutions focused on these areas. The world is increasingly competing in these sectors, and Ethiopia is preparing itself for these challenges. This foresight shows that Ethiopia is on the right trajectory.

In terms of global geopolitical developments, these are matters that warrant further discussion. What we are witnessing now is very unique. I am studying these shifts through theories like power transition theory.

We're seeing the global order being challenged in various ways, and Ethiopia is in a position to benefit from this transition, though there are challenges. We must prepare our country to respond to these global changes while also contributing to humanity with new ideas.

At the Horn of Africa level, I believe Ethiopia's enhanced strategic autonomy will positively affect the region's stability and prosperity. Given the region's importance in global trade and political-economic corridors, Ethiopia's role will be crucial in shaping these developments.

Horn Review: Thank you. We've had an important discussion.

Dr. Abdi: Thank you.

A New Chapter in Ethiopia - UK Diplomatic and Economic Cooperation

*By Ambassador Biruk Mekonnen,
Ethiopian Ambassador to the UK*



The recent visit of the Right Honourable Angela Rayner, Deputy Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, to Ethiopia marks a pivotal milestone in the deepening bilateral relations between the two nations. The February 2025 visit highlights the mutual commitment to strengthening the partnership, with a particular focus on fostering sustainable socio-economic growth and technological innovation. ***This visit was especially timely as Ethiopia undergoes a remarkable political and economic transformation, while the UK seeks to solidify its position as a key strategic partner to Africa.***



Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed receiving Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner & her delegation at the Office of the Prime Minister, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Shared Objectives for Stronger UK-Ethiopia Ties

For Ethiopia, Rayner's visit represented a critical opportunity to advance its development agenda with one of its most trusted international partners. Emerging from a period of internal conflict in the northern part of the country, Ethiopia is now prioritizing the rebuilding and transformation of its economy.

With a clear vision of transitioning towards a market-oriented economy, Ethiopia is focusing on key sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, technology, and digital innovation. These areas are seen as fundamental to the country's pursuit of sustainable economic growth and long-term prosperity. Given the UK's established expertise in these domains, Ethiopia viewed Rayner's visit as a crucial opportunity to deepen cooperation and support its ongoing reform efforts.

For the UK, the visit was a significant step in reinforcing diplomatic and economic ties with Ethiopia. Recognizing Ethiopia's growing regional influence and its evolving role in driving development, the UK aims to support Ethiopia's growth while capitalizing on the opportunities presented by Ethiopia's transformation. ***From the UK's perspective, Ethiopia's strategic location and its drive for stability and development make it an increasingly important partner.*** The visit enabled discussions not only on economic cooperation but also on areas such as technology, trade, and climate change.

Meeting Expectations and Reaching Key Milestones

Throughout her visit, Deputy Prime Minister Rayner engaged in a series of strategic activities that aligned closely with both Ethiopia's expectations and the UK's objectives, reinforcing the strong ties between the two countries. One of the central engagements was her meeting with Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, where discussions focused on enhancing political and economic collaboration, particularly regarding Ethiopia's economic transformation and the potential for future partnerships. The commitment to long-term development and shared prosperity emerged as a key theme in their discussions.

Rayner's meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen Tiruneh underscored the strategic priorities of both nations, particularly Ethiopia's economic transformation and digital revolution. The UK's support for Ethiopia's reform processes, especially in the areas of agriculture and technology, was a primary focus. Additionally, Rayner's visit to the Ethiopian Artificial Intelligence Institute (EAIL) highlighted the growing technological collaboration between the two nations.

Both countries are exploring opportunities to integrate cutting-edge technologies, such as artificial intelligence, into key Ethiopian industries, including agriculture, healthcare, and logistics, creating potential for mutual innovation and economic growth.



FDRE Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen Desalegn and UK Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Rayner's engagement with Safaricom Ethiopia, one of the largest foreign direct investments in the country, was another noteworthy highlight. Demonstrations of Safaricom's M-PESA platform showcased the potential of Ethiopia's emerging digital economy, emphasizing the UK's interest in supporting initiatives that promote financial inclusion, digital accessibility, and broad-based economic participation for Ethiopians. Digital transformation remains central to Ethiopia's vision for its future, and UK support will be pivotal in helping the country achieve its Digital Ethiopia 2025 goals.

Moreover, Rayner's visit to Ethiopian Airlines, one of Africa's largest and most successful carriers, emphasized the growing importance of aviation in the UK-Ethiopia relationship.

The airline, with its extensive global network and direct connections to the UK, plays a crucial role in facilitating the purchase of its first generation Airbus A350-1000 aircraft, as well as enhancing cultural and business exchanges.

This collaboration fosters greater opportunities not only for transportation but also for tourism, trade, and broader economic connectivity.



Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner visiting Ethiopian Airlines Headquarters, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

A significant outcome of Rayner's visit was the signing of a \$600 million partnership agreement to enhance Ethiopia's agricultural sector. The UK's Asset Green Company will collaborate with Ethiopian partners to modernize agricultural practices, focusing on large-scale dairy farming, cotton, and rice production. This investment further underscores the UK's commitment to Ethiopia's sustainable development and economic transformation, particularly in the vital agricultural sector, which remains the backbone of Ethiopia's economy. The Deputy Prime Minister has also visited the textile industries in the Hawassa Industrial Zone. Ethiopia's textile and apparel products have huge potential to harness the UK's market through the UK's Developing Countries Trading Scheme introduced in June 2023. The trading scheme has been designed to boost UK's trade with developing countries, like Ethiopia, in order to support their development.

In addition to her visits to key institutions, Rayner acknowledged Ethiopia's progress in market liberalization. Her remarks at the Ethiopian Securities Exchange (ESX) reinforced the UK's support for Ethiopia's evolving financial services sector and its efforts to integrate further into the global marketplace. ***As Ethiopia continues to diversify its economy and create a more favourable environment for foreign investments, the UK's involvement will be instrumental in ensuring the success of these reforms.***

Rayner's Visit in Shaping UK-Ethiopia Relations

Deputy Prime Minister Rayner's visit has sent a clear message about the growing strength of the UK-Ethiopia partnership. Through substantial discussions, the signing of key agreements, and direct engagement with Ethiopia's progress and challenges, Rayner highlighted the UK's unwavering commitment to supporting Ethiopia's development ambitions.

The visit has laid the foundation for an even stronger and more diversified Ethiopia- UK relationship, one that will be driven by collaboration in high-priority sectors such as agriculture, technology, and financial services. These areas hold great promise for both nations. For Ethiopia, these partnerships offer opportunities for technology transfer, capacity-building, and access to international markets. The UK stands to benefit from increased trade, strategic investments, and the chance to play a pivotal role in Ethiopia's broader economic transformation.

Ethiopia's digital economy, in particular, presents exciting prospects for future collaboration. With initiatives such as the Digital Ethiopia 2025 program, Ethiopia aims to leverage technological advancements to foster inclusive economic growth. The UK's leadership in Artificial Intelligence, renewable energy, financial sector and other emerging technologies will be crucial to supporting these ambitions. Furthermore, Ethiopia's leadership in sustainable development, exemplified by its Green Legacy initiative, aligns well with the UK's own environmental goals, providing a natural synergy for collaboration in tackling global environmental challenges.

A Vision for a Prosperous Future

The visit of Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner to Ethiopia was not just a diplomatic engagement but a strategic step toward building a more dynamic and robust partnership between the two nations. Through high-level meetings, significant investment agreements, and visits to critical institutions, Rayner underscored the UK's steadfast commitment to supporting Ethiopia's development goals.

Ethiopia and the UK now have a unique opportunity to work together to address some of the most pressing challenges of the 21st century, from climate change and sustainable development to technological innovation.



Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner at the Ethiopian Stock Exchanges (ESX) HQ, accompanied by the FDRE Finance Minister Ahmed Shide

This partnership has the potential to bring about lasting positive change, contributing to the prosperity of both nations.

In addition, the visit has exhibited a strategic reorientation of UK-Ethiopia partnership and a clear shift from humanitarian assistance focused relationship, towards a sustainable and growth-oriented partnership.

As Ethiopia continues on its transformative journey, the UK's role as a trusted partner will be indispensable in supporting the country to realize its full potential.

This visit has set the stage for an even deeper and more mutually beneficial relationship, one that is poised to foster shared growth, innovation, and success for years to come.





Bridging the Red Sea: The Need for Revitalizing Strategic Partnership Between Yemen and Ethiopia

*By Qale'ab T. Sigatu (PHD), Assistant Professor,
FDRE Defense War College*

Yemen's diplomatic relations with Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa have historically been significant. Yemen's geopolitical position, in close proximity to the region, places it as an integral part of the Horn of Africa. Geographically, the Horn of Africa comprises Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Somalia. However, Yemen's location near the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, a crucial maritime passage connecting the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden, positions it as a key neighbor. This strait serves as a vital international trade route. Today, Yemen is grappling with deep divisions along ideological, tribal, and religious lines, while Ethiopia is navigating an increasingly complex geopolitical environment. Therefore, there is a strong need to revitalize their strategic partnership.

Yemen's civil war erupted in September 2014, with the internationally recognized government losing power to al-Houthi insurgents, backed by Iran. The conflict has attracted involvement from numerous regional and international actors, including Western powers, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, Iran, and Russia. This external intervention has complicated the situation, as various actors deploy military support to advance competing interests.

The Saudi-led coalition, which had been battling the Houthis, recently agreed to a Chinese-mediated ceasefire deal, acknowledging that it could not militarily defeat the Iranian-backed movement. Although this deal resulted in a ceasefire, it did not address the root causes of Yemen's internal divisions. Northern Yemen, including the capital Sana'a, is controlled by the Houthis, while the east and south are contested by multiple factions.

Despite efforts from the United Nations, including the March 2023 release of 887 detainees, a credible peace process is still lacking, meaning the conflict could persist.



Yemen's civil war has had far-reaching implications for the Horn of Africa. The conflict has disrupted shipping lanes, posing a threat to one of the world's busiest maritime chokepoints. This disruption affects the economies of Horn of Africa countries, which rely on secure and stable maritime routes for importing goods and exporting resources.

Historical and Cultural Connections

The relationship between Ethiopia and Yemen is deeply rooted in historical and cultural ties. Today, thousands of Ethiopians live in Yemen, and many Yemenis reside in Ethiopia. The Yemeni Community School in Addis Ababa is a testament to these enduring connections. Yemenis remember Ethiopia's role in providing sanctuary during the rule of the Imams after World War II, prior to the establishment of the Yemen Arab Republic in 1962.

Similarly, Ethiopia is indebted to the Yemeni troops who fought alongside Ethiopia to stop the aggression of Siad Barre's regime during the 1977-78 Ogaden War with Somalia.

Formal diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Yemen began in 1935, and despite the division of Yemen into two states, these relations continued and were strengthened after Yemen's reunification in 1990. Yemen has consistently supported Ethiopia's diplomatic efforts, particularly during the Ethio-Eritrean War of 1998-2000, when Yemen supplied armaments and demonstrated its solidarity.

Today, Ethiopia and Yemen have strong bilateral relations based on shared history, kinship, and mutual interests in regional policies, economics, and trade. There have been several high-level visits between the two countries, and their relations flourished particularly after the fall of the Derg and the rise of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) government. They now have a Joint Consultative Commission (JCC) to monitor the implementation of agreements across political, economic, and social sectors. The two countries also collaborate extensively on combating terrorism, human trafficking, and other illegal activities, and this cooperation is expected to continue and expand.



Prime Minister Meles Zenawi (L) & President Ali Abdullah Saleh, on the Conclusion of Zenawi's Visit to Yemen, November 2008

Economic and Trade Relations, Multilateral Cooperation & Ethiopia's role in Yemen Peacebuilding Efforts

Although the trade volume between Ethiopia and Yemen is relatively low, there is potential for growth. Ethiopia exports cattle, livestock, and agricultural products to Yemen, while importing various consumer goods, including chemicals.

There is significant room for expanding trade, particularly through South-South Cooperation and comparative advantages. Recently, Yemeni investors have begun showing increased interest in Ethiopia, with several joint ventures already established and operational.

Beyond bilateral ties, Ethiopia and Yemen have worked together in multilateral forums, such as the Sana'a Forum for Cooperation, founded in 2002 with Sudan. This forum plays a key role in promoting cooperation in areas such as economics, trade, investment, tourism, and social development within the Horn of Africa. One of its key objectives is to address security concerns, including terrorism and piracy, which affect the southern Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. While Ethiopia has no coastline, it is deeply vested in the security and stability of these maritime routes, which are crucial for its trade.

Ethiopia's involvement in peacebuilding efforts in Yemen could prove essential. Given the intertwined security and economic fates of the Horn of Africa and Yemen, it is crucial for regional states to work together to restore peace and stability in Yemen. By doing so, the Horn of Africa can secure its trade routes, protect its economies, and promote regional stability.



Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi (L) and Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh walk and talk together at the presidential palace in Sanaa on November 27, 2008.

The Strategic Importance of Yemen for Ethiopia

If Ethiopia were to establish a naval base in Yemen, it would mark a significant shift in regional dynamics. This move could enhance Ethiopia's strategic influence in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea, providing it with a much-needed maritime outlet to strengthen its economic and security interests. However, such a decision could lead to tensions with neighboring countries and alter the balance of power in the region, depending on the reactions of other regional actors and the international community.

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The Pyromaniac's Shadow: Eritrea's Pursuit of Regional Discord in the Horn of Africa

Tinderbox of Geopolitical Rivalry



By Samiya Mohammed

The Horn of Africa, a region as enigmatic as it is volatile, stands at the crossroads of history, geography, and human ambition. Its story is one of resilience and ruin, of ancient civilizations and modern conflicts, of strategic waters and vast resources that have long made it a theatre of fierce geopolitical rivalry. Like the Middle East, with which it shares historical and contemporary ties, the Horn is a region where the ambitions of great powers and regional players collide, often with devastating consequences for its people.

At the heart of this turbulent landscape lies Eritrea, a nation whose trajectory under President Isaias Afwerki has been one of relentless militarism and destabilization. For nearly half a century, Eritrea has been a perennial actor in the region's conflicts, its influence extending far beyond its borders. From Sudan and South Sudan to Somalia and Ethiopia, Eritrea's machinations have left a trail of discord and destruction. Isaias Afwerki, the nation's first and only president since its independence in 1993, has become synonymous with conflict, a leader who seems to thrive in chaos like a pyromaniac drawn to flames.

Eritrea's story under Isaias is a cautionary tale of governance gone awry. Unlike most nations, Eritrea lacks the foundational institutions that underpin statehood. There is no constitution, no parliament, no independent judiciary. The country is a one-man show, with Isaias wielding absolute power as the sole executive, legislator, and legal authority.

This concentration of power has turned Eritrea into a militarized state, where mandatory and indefinite military service is the norm. Young Eritreans, desperate to escape the dystopian realities of forced conscription, risk their lives to flee the country, making human exodus one of Eritrea's most tragic exports.



President Isaias Afwerki

But it is not just its own people who suffer. Eritrea's foreign policy is predicated on conflict. The nation's *raison d'être* seems to be the perpetuation of regional instability, whether by supporting rebel groups, insurgents, or governments embroiled in war. Isaias's Eritrea is a state that thrives on division, its leader a master of exploiting fissures within neighbouring nations to further his own ambitions.

Today, Isaias's sights are set on northern Ethiopia, where he is engaged in maneuvers as destructive as they are predictable. The Tigray region, which has endured years of conflict, is once again at risk of becoming a flashpoint. The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the party that ruled the region for decades and waged war against Ethiopia's federal government from 2020 to 2022, is now the target of Isaias's machinations.



Eritrean migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea in mass

The history between Eritrea and the TPLF is long and bitter. In the late 1990s, a falling-out between the two erupted into a bloody war that left tens of thousands dead. The 2018 peace agreement brokered by Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, which earned him the Nobel Peace Prize, was a rare moment of hope. Yet, for Isaias, peace was never the goal. His indifference to economic cooperation and infrastructure development between Eritrea and Ethiopia revealed his true intentions: to keep the region unstable and maintain his grip on power.

When the TPLF launched its ill-fated bid to reclaim power in 2020, Isaias seized the opportunity. Eritrean forces surged into Tigray, leaving a trail of devastation in their wake. The 2022 Pretoria Peace Agreement, which ended the conflict between the TPLF and the Ethiopian government, was a diplomatic triumph for Ethiopia and the African Union. But for Isaias, it was a setback. Peace, after all, is anathema to a leader who thrives in chaos.

Isaias's response to the Pretoria Agreement has been as cynical as it is dangerous. He has sought to undermine the peace deal by engineering a militia in Ethiopia's Amhara state and aligning with disgruntled elements within the TPLF. These factions, emboldened by Isaias's support, are now openly challenging the interim administration established under the agreement and threatening to tear up the peace deal altogether.

The implications of such a development would be catastrophic. The Horn region, already grappling with internal divisions and economic challenges, cannot afford another descent into conflict. To Ethiopia's west, Sudan is engulfed in a brutal civil war. To the east, Somalia struggles to rebuild after decades of collapse.

Across the Sahel, extremist groups are gaining ground. A resurgence of conflict in Tigray would create a belt of chaos stretching from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa, emboldening groups like al-Shabab and ISIL (ISIS) and disrupting global trade through the Red Sea.

The stakes could not be higher. The Horn of Africa is not just an African problem; it is a global challenge.

The region's instability has far-reaching consequences, from waves of refugees straining fragile systems in Europe to the spread of extremist ideologies into the Middle East. Global powers, from Washington to Beijing to Brussels, have a vested interest in ensuring the Horn does not descend into chaos.

Diplomatic pressure must be exerted to deter those, like Isaias, who seek to undermine peace. The Pretoria Peace Agreement must be defended, and regional cooperation incentivized through investments in trade, infrastructure, and governance. The international community must recognize that the Horn's stability is a shared interest, one that requires sustained engagement and support.

The Horn of Africa stands at a crossroads. The choices made today will determine whether the region becomes a bridge of cooperation and prosperity or a cauldron of conflict and despair. The world cannot afford to stand idly by as Isaias Afwerki and others like him stoke the flames of discord. The time to act is now.

If the Horn descends into chaos, the ripple effects will be felt far beyond its borders. But if peace takes root, the region could become a beacon of hope, a testament to the power of diplomacy and cooperation. The Horn of Africa's future is not just a regional concern; it is a global imperative. The world must rise to the challenge, for the sake of the Horn's people and for the stability of our interconnected world.



The Outcome of the 38th Summit: What Next?

*By Henok Getachew (PhD),
Senior Researcher, Institute of Foreign Affairs*

This New Year, 2025, has brought uncertainties and geopolitical challenges to Africa and its continental organization, the African Union (AU). At the global level, there is an increasing tide of shake in the mainstream political establishment in Europe. The rising of nationalist political parties and their clinging to the helm of power would inevitably shape the continent's interactions with Europe, particularly in the areas of peace and security as well as climate financing. The power transition in America from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party under Trump has increasingly demonstrated the foreign policy trajectory of the new administration, and the consequences are increasingly felt in different corners of the continent.

Although there were promising trends witnessed in the continent last year, Africa has been shaken by worrying trends pertinent to uncertainties in the Sahel, diplomatic wrangling and looming danger of regional war in the Great Lakes Region, conflicts in the Horn, fragility of states, terrorism, financing peacekeeping, fragmentation of regional security arrangement and unconstitutional changes of government. The African Union Commission and Union member states are grappling with those challenges. Against this backdrop, the AU summit was held in Addis Ababa in February 2025. The 38th African Union Summit was held under the theme of "Justice for Africans and People of African Descent through Reparation." The conversation on reparation had been on the agenda of the OAU. Ghana and civil society organizations have championed the issue to become the agenda of the AU. The theme was proposed during the 37th Ordinary Session of the AU. This designation demonstrated the AU's aspiration to address the injustice of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the legacy of colonialism, given the fact that Africa has still grappled with the dire consequences of the inhuman aspects of historical trajectory.



The AU summit elected the chairperson of the AU from Angola, H.E. Joao Manuel Goncalves Lourenco, President of the Republic of Angola. It also endorsed the election of four states for a three-year period of the Peace and Security Council: Ethiopia (East), Nigeria (West), Cameroun (Central), and Eswatini (South). As per the AU rules, lack of securing the required two-third majority votes by Algeria and Morocco compelled the election of North Africa to be cancelled.

The Summit also elected the chairperson and deputy-chairperson of the AUC from Djibouti and Algeria, respectively. H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf was elected head of the AUC to replace the outgoing Moussa Faki, while H.E. Ambassador Selma Malika Haddadi was elected deputy chairperson. Mr. Moses Vilakati from Eswatini was elected to the Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (ARBE) Commission, H.E. Amb. Bankole Adeoye from Nigeria elected for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), H.E. Amb. Amma Twum Amoah from Ghana was elected for Health, Humanitarian, and Social Development (HHS), and H.E. Ms. Lerato Mataboge from South Africa has been elected for Infrastructure and Energy (IED).

The 38th Assembly of the AU also adopted strategies for clean and sustainable energy and transport pathways. The adopted strategies are: the Continental Strategy for Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) and Low Carbon Aviation Fuels (LCAF); the African Green Hydrogen Strategy; the African Energy Efficiency Strategy and Action Plan (AfEES); the Continental Policy on Climate Resilient and Smart Infrastructure and the revised Abuja Safety Targets (ASTs). These strategies help facilitate Africa's integration, economic transformation, and climate resilience. The Assembly was also dominated by the crises in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Multiplicity of initiatives has been taken in response to the escalation of the humanitarian crisis. For instance, since the eruption of the conflict in Sudan on 15 April 2023, the Quartet, the Quad and Troika (Norway, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, the United Kingdom and the United States) have been the mediation efforts to address the complexities of the conflict. Again, notwithstanding the Luanda and Nairobi peace processes, the unfolding conflict in the eastern part of the DRC has continued and exacerbated the fragility of the state and its institutions. The lack of coordination and complementarity in the peace processes and difficulties of matching words with action further contribute to prolonging the conflicts in those countries.

The multiplicity of the issues dominating the Assembly could be considered as one of the challenges to the AU to achieve the theme of this year that anchored on moral ground and historical precedents. Indeed, the AU will have a common position, assign a special envoy, and establish a Reparation Fund and institute a committee of experts. Although these institutional setups are necessary to address in part the historical injustices perpetrated against Africans and African descents, the clarification on the conceptualization of reparation and restitution as well as further dialogue and consultations are required. Furthermore, the issue of reparation is often raised while talking the trans-Atlantic slave trade. As a result, the issue would lack justice in so far as it fails to incorporate and acknowledge the role of the Arab nations during this humiliated historical juncture. Without doubt, the current global geopolitical uncertainties that eroded multilateralism and partnership would be less likely receptive to Africans demand for justice.

Although the adoption of policy positions and strategies are essential to chart the AU's course, the current internal and external conditions of the continent have attested that member states need to revisit their hitherto orthodox approaches to financing, diplomacy, and dealing with internal complexity. Cognizant of the unprecedented geopolitical changes that have brought both opportunities and challenges to the continent and the AU, the new leadership of the Commission, the African Union Organs and institutions, and regional economic communities and Regional Mechanisms must redouble their efforts through reforming the institution, resolving internal disputes, democratizing the states and cultivating amicable relations to realize the aspirations of Agenda 2063. Indeed, civil society organizations and think tanks should also seize the moment to support the AU to galvanize its efforts to attain the strategic vision. Otherwise, the further marginalization of the continent amidst the weakening of global governance and economic and political uncertainty is imminent.

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Ethiopia faces security threats from the militarization of its neighbors, particularly the presence of Gulf powers. There is a risk of exporting regional rivalries, such as the Iran-Saudi Arabia divide, to the Horn, as seen in Yemen. These tensions threaten Ethiopia's foreign policy interests and its pursuit of stable, reliable maritime access. The expansion of foreign military bases in the region could also challenge Ethiopia's regional influence, as its landlocked status and surrounding instability already constrain its geopolitical flexibility.

Expanding Cooperation

Ethiopia and Yemen share strong bilateral relations, founded on common interests in security, peace, and regional stability. Their cooperation on issues such as terrorism and the stability of the Horn of Africa remains vital. There is ample potential for the relationship to deepen, particularly in the fields of trade, investment, and regional cooperation. ***By recognizing Yemen's central role in the Horn of Africa, regional actors can develop more effective strategies for conflict resolution, promoting peace, and fostering long-term stability.*** Strengthening Ethiopia-Yemen relations is not just beneficial for the two countries but for the entire Horn of Africa region, ensuring a more secure, prosperous future for all.



The Lingering Shadow of Colonialism: A Futile Recrimination or Essential Dialogue in the 21st Century?

*By Bethelhem Fikru,
Researcher, Horn Review*

The African Union (AU) has designated 2025 as the year for "Justice for Africans and People of African Descent Through Reparations," but the potential for this initiative to either uplift or undermine the continent remains a subject of debate. Some argue that prioritizing historical grievances is unhelpful in a world grappling with urgent crises such as climate change, economic instability, and poverty. They believe Africa should focus on immediate development rather than looking to the past. Others contend that justice is timeless and must be pursued regardless of past failures, particularly given the enduring economic and social inequalities rooted in colonialism and slavery.

The demand for reparations is not new. Precedents exist in global history, such as Germany's imposed reparations after World War I, which contributed to economic turmoil and ultimately the rise of the Nazi regime, culminating in World War II. African nations, individually, have also sought reparations in the past, but the AU's approach is different. As a unified voice for the continent, it acknowledges the lasting damage caused by the transatlantic slave trade, colonial exploitation, and neo-colonialism. The AU's initiative seeks to address these injustices through structural and economic reforms rather than mere financial compensation.

Dismissing colonialism as irrelevant ignores its profound and lasting impact on Africa. Colonial-era economic structures and political systems continue to shape the continent's realities today. Trade agreements, for example, often favor former colonial powers, limiting Africa's industrialization and economic self-sufficiency. The global financial system is still largely controlled by institutions established during the colonial era, leaving African economies at a disadvantage. Addressing these imbalances is not about dwelling on the past, it is about dismantling barriers to equitable development.

The push for reparations extends beyond financial compensation. It encompasses systemic transformations that could reshape global power dynamics.

This includes advocating for fairer trade terms, debt relief, and the re-evaluation of international financial policies that disproportionately burden African nations. Another crucial aspect is the repatriation of cultural artifacts looted during the colonial era. These artifacts, currently housed in European museums, are not merely historical relics; they are symbols of identity, heritage, and cultural sovereignty. Their return is a fundamental step in restoring Africa's historical narrative.

The AU's focus on reparations also extends beyond historical injustices to address contemporary global disparities. One of the most striking examples is the continued financial and political dependence of some African nations on their former colonial rulers. West Africa, in particular, has long suffered from external influence, with European nations maintaining control over key resources and security structures. However, recent developments indicate a shift. Several West African states have begun asserting their independence, demanding reparations, and reassessing their political and economic ties. This shift represents a crucial step toward self-determination and economic sovereignty.

Economic independence remains at the heart of the reparations debate. Many African economies still rely on exporting raw materials, a pattern established during colonial rule. Former colonial powers often retain control over these industries, extracting wealth while African nations struggle to industrialize. Addressing colonial legacies means promoting economic diversification, strengthening local industries, and implementing policies that prioritize African citizens' economic well-being. Reparations should, therefore, be seen as part of a broader strategy to shift Africa from a resource supplier to a global economic force.

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Smart Cities, Green Corridors: Ethiopia's Path to a Sustainable Diplomatic Future

*By Tesfaye Bezabih (PHD), Researcher & CoS,
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Traditionally, international diplomacy has been the domain of nation-states, working through multilateral forums like the United Nations, G20, or the African Union. However, these high-level negotiations often take time, and the solutions may not always reflect the specific and immediate needs of cities. Local governments cannot afford to wait; they are acting now, taking the lead in implementing Smart City solutions that address urgent challenges in real-time and transform their cities' image to the internal as well as external public. Smart City development typically occurs within a national framework, but cities also participate in Smart City Diplomacy on the global stage to share knowledge, collaborate on pilot projects, and attract international investments. In this way, Ethiopia is undertaking a major project to transform hundreds of its towns into smart cities. The initiative aims to upgrade urban services, improve the quality of life for residents, and drive overall urban development across the country.

The key elements of the smart city concept involve upgrading office services, offering accessible and efficient services, and implementing e-services. This smart city initiative spans major cities such as Addis Ababa, Adama, Bishoftu, Debre Birhan, Dessie, Jimma, Hawassa, and Bahir Dar. The initiative holds immense potential for Ethiopia's urban landscape. By adopting smart technology and focusing on sustainable development, the goal is to build a more dynamic, efficient, and livable future for millions of Ethiopians.

In the Ethiopian development sphere, as the rapidly growing population of the capital and other regional cities has led to an increased demand for infrastructure development over the years, the city's administrations have been undertaking various initiatives to address longstanding challenges in this area. One such initiative is the corridor development project which plays a crucial role in shaping the urban landscape and improving the overall efficiency of cities. Through the corridor development activities, the smart city initiative is also vital to improve image of the capital by harnessing advanced technologies and infrastructures that will lead to smart living conditions

The Project is based on the digital transformation drive with a view to make Addis Ababa and other cities more livable and attractive. According to data, the smart city initiative will be rolled out across 58 institutions and 120 districts within the city's 11 sub-cities, with an overall investment surpassing 280 million Birre. Being Addis Ababa, as the seat of the African Union (AU) and numerous other multilateral organizations, plays a pivotal role in Africa's diplomatic, political, and economic landscape. The importance of corridor development and smart city initiatives in Addis Ababa is immense, given the city's strategic role as a center of international diplomacy and its rapid urban growth.



African Union Headquarters, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

From Local to Global: Harnessing Corridor Development for Diplomatic Advantage

By promoting sustainable and inclusive growth along corridors, countries can increase their diplomatic leverage in global discussions on development, sustainability, and international cooperation. Ethiopia's recent corridor development project enhances people-to-people diplomacy by facilitating movement and exchange between citizens of different countries.

Enhanced transportation routes, such as railways, highways, or pipelines, allow greater mobility for workers, tourists, students, and professionals.

By developing dedicated lanes or routes for buses, taxis, bikes and trains can fundamentally improve the efficiency of public transport systems, reducing traffic congestion and providing faster and more reliable transportation for city residents. On top of that it creates well to have a smart traffic management system. Integrating smart technologies into traffic management systems, such as real-time traffic monitoring and intelligent traffic signals, can enhance traffic flow along urban corridors, alleviating congestion and contributing to better air quality.

The business hubs initiated at the center where several offices and people are gathering through the corridor development can also foster the growth of commercial zones, motivating businesses to establish operations along key routes where they have access to high foot traffic and transportation links. This can lead to job creation and greater economic activity. The country's corridor development has also play a key role for the real estate development industry. It drives real estate development, especially in areas that were once neglected or lacked services, by boosting demand for both residential and commercial properties from global investors.

In the diplomatic perfective, Smart cities enhance a country's soft power by showcasing modernity, sustainability, and cutting-edge technology. By offering an attractive living environment, these cities draw international attention, helping countries improve their global reputation and diplomatic influence. Smart cities and corridor development programs offer countries powerful tools to advance their diplomatic goals by fostering cooperation, promoting economic ties, and enhancing global influence. These initiatives Offer platforms for countries to work together on common challenges, showcase innovation, and build lasting diplomatic relationships that transcend national borders.

Ethiopia's Green Legacy initiative offers a vital chance for the global community to breathe fresh air. In connection with this, the development of green corridors is expanding not only in Addis Ababa but also in other major cities across the country, contributing to the growth of several modern urban areas. The corridors incorporate green infrastructure such as parks, greenways, and sustainable energy solutions, promoting environmental sustainability within urban settings. These green corridors can help reduce pollution, promote biodiversity, and create pleasant public spaces.



The Green Legacy Initiative (GLI), launched in June 2019, aims to establish a green and climate-resilient Ethiopia. Ethiopia's path to a sustainable diplomatic future is intricately tied to the development of smart cities and corridor development projects. These two initiatives are pivotal in shaping the nation's economic, environmental, and social landscape, enhancing both its domestic development and its standing in the global arena.



Trump Deserves a Nobel Peace Prize for His Approach to the Ukraine War



In the annals of modern history, few conflicts have posed as grave a threat to global stability as the ongoing war in Ukraine. Since the end of the Cold War, the world has witnessed a series of geopolitical shifts, but none have brought humanity as close to the brink of nuclear confrontation as this crisis. Amidst the chaos, one leader has emerged with a pragmatic and peace-oriented approach that has the potential to de-escalate tensions and avert catastrophe: former President Donald J. Trump. His decision to prioritize diplomacy over warmongering and his unwavering commitment to engaging with key stakeholders in the conflict make a compelling case for why he deserves the Nobel Peace Prize.

The Ukraine Crisis: A Threat to Global Security

The war in Ukraine is not merely a regional conflict; it is a flashpoint with global implications. The so-called "globalist" agenda, driven by unchecked ambition and a desire to isolate and weaken the Russian Federation, has pushed Europe and the world to the edge of disaster. The rhetoric of collective security and indivisible stability, often touted by international relations scholars, has failed to address the root causes of the conflict. Instead, it has exacerbated tensions, bringing the world closer to a potential nuclear confrontation. For decades, military agreements and diplomatic channels maintained a fragile but tolerable relationship between Russia and the United States.

However, the breakdown of these agreements in the wake of the Ukraine crisis has left Europe more vulnerable than ever. The war has not only destabilized the region but also threatened to unravel the delicate balance of power that has prevented global conflict since World War II.

Trump's Diplomatic Approach: A Lesson in Peacemaking

Amidst this turmoil, Donald Trump's approach to the Ukraine crisis stands out as a beacon of hope. Unlike the warmongering alliances that have dominated the discourse, Trump has consistently advocated for dialogue and negotiation. His decision to engage directly with Russia, the primary player in the conflict, demonstrates a profound understanding of the political dynamics at play. Rather than fueling the flames of war, Trump has sought to bring the "meat-grinding machine" of conflict to a halt.

Trump's actions reflect a deep and unadulterated grasp of the political developments surrounding the Ukraine crisis. While many in the West have sought to frame the conflict as a recent phenomenon, Trump has rightly pointed out that the roots of the war stretch back decades. His willingness to challenge the prevailing narrative and address the underlying causes of the conflict sets him apart from other leaders who have prioritized short-term gains over long-term stability.

Overcoming Obstacles and Criticism

Trump's path to peacemaking has not been without its challenges. He has faced relentless criticism from powerful contenders who have sought to undermine his efforts at every turn. The obstacles he has overcome, both domestically and internationally, are a testament to his perseverance and commitment to peace. Despite the unrelenting attacks from those who benefit from perpetual conflict, Trump has remained steadfast in his pursuit of a diplomatic resolution.

The attempts to belittle his efforts, often under the guise of securing strategic bargains, are not only misguided but also dangerous. The demonization of Russia and its leaders, which has permeated every aspect of Western society, from sports to political forums, has created an environment where alternative views are silenced. This one-sided narrative, driven by a globalist agenda, has only served to escalate tensions and push the world closer to the brink of a third world war.

A Deserving Candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize

Given the gravity of the Ukraine crisis and the potential for global catastrophe, it is imperative that we recognize and reward efforts to de-escalate the conflict. Donald Trump's approach to the crisis, characterized by pragmatism, diplomacy, and a commitment to engaging with all stakeholders, makes him a deserving candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize. His actions have not only averted further escalation but also laid the groundwork for a lasting resolution to the conflict.

In a world increasingly dominated by divisive rhetoric and short-sighted policies, Trump's leadership offers a refreshing alternative. His ability to see beyond the immediate chaos and focus on the bigger picture is a quality that is sorely lacking in today's political landscape. By awarding him the Nobel Peace Prize, the international community would not only acknowledge his contributions to peace but also send a powerful message about the importance of diplomacy and dialogue in resolving conflicts.

In General, the Ukraine crisis is a stark reminder of the fragility of global peace and the urgent need for leaders who prioritize diplomacy over conflict. Donald Trump's approach to the crisis, marked by his willingness to engage with Russia and challenge the prevailing narrative, has the potential to bring an end to one of the most dangerous conflicts of our time. For these reasons, he deserves the Nobel Peace Prize, not tomorrow, but today. The world cannot afford to wait.

This article is written by an author who wishes to remain anonymous and does not reflect the views of the Horn Review Editorial team.

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The psychological impact of colonialism also cannot be ignored. The legacy of racism and discrimination continues to shape societal structures and individual identities. Generations of Africans and people of African descent have endured systemic prejudice, which affects social mobility, economic opportunities, and mental well-being. Acknowledging these deep-seated issues and promoting cultural pride and historical awareness is essential for healing and progress.

Beyond reparations, the AU must strategically position itself in international forums to amplify Africa's voice in global decision-making. Aggressively pursuing greater representation in institutions like the United Nations Security Council, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is crucial. The AU's membership in the G20 is a significant step in this direction, providing African leaders with a platform to influence global policies on trade, climate change, and economic development. By shifting Africa's role from passive recipient to active contributor in shaping global economic policies, the AU can push for reforms that align with the continent's interests.

Revisiting the colonial past is not about seeking pity or assigning blame—it is about acknowledging historical injustices and taking concrete steps toward a more just and equitable future. Ignoring the past allows its consequences to persist, while confronting this legacy provides an opportunity to dismantle structural inequalities. The AU's reparations initiative is a starting point, but rhetoric alone will not be enough. Tangible actions, strategic diplomacy, and economic reforms must follow. The question remains: will Africa seize this moment to transform its future, or will the pursuit of reparations remain a symbolic gesture with little real impact?



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Behind Sapphire Addis Hotel,
Bole Atlas, Addis Ababa

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Price: ETB 100.00

Published by Demera Media
and Communications PLC
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia