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Ethiopia–Somaliland Diplomatic Relations Since 1994: Status, Opportunities, and Challenges

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Abstract. This paper is intended to observe the diplomatic relationship between Ethiopia and Somaliland since 1994: status, opportunities, and challenges. The study found that the relationship between Ethiopia and Somaliland exists within a political context expounded by Ethiopia's de jure statehood and Somaliland's de facto status. Additionally, Ethiopia was the first country to allow Somaliland to open a mission office in Addis Ababa in 1994, and it also established the General Consulate in Hargeisa in 2002. Currently, Hargeisa is home to several mission offices, including those from Turkey, the UAE, Britain, and other countries. The study identified Ethio-Somaliland opportunities to increase trade between the two sides and to create an investment exchange. For instance, this presents a significant opportunity for both sides because Somaliland has an 856 km coastline, while Ethiopia is a large and densely populated landlocked country. This situation allows Ethiopia to diversify its port options in neighboring countries to meet its demand, and it also represents a major economic opportunity for the expansion of Berbera port, which has received \$442 million in foreign direct investment (FDI) from Emirates Dubai Port World (DP World). The study also highlights that there is future opportunity and hope related to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) because Somaliland is hopeful that as soon as this dam becomes finished, it will acquire cheap and non-environmental-hazard electricity utilities. Ethiopia's vision also includes selling electricity to Somaliland when the dam is completed so as to earn foreign currency. The study also touches on the fact that since the Horn of Africa region is unstable, the challenges surrounding Ethiopia and Somaliland include terrorism, extremism, human trafficking, informal trade, and illegal immigrants. Similar to other parts of the world, both sides are always alert to the risks their countries face, as is the region's relationship with hardliner terrorist groups. Additionally, although there is a trade imbalance and a deficit on the Somaliland side, both sides indicated that the expansion of Berbera port is complete; Ethiopia will use it more for its export and import goods than it currently does, which will help to balance the trade between the two countries.

Keywords. Ethiopia, Somaliland, Relationship, Political Relations, Economic Relations, Diplomatic Relations, Foreign Policy, De jure, De facto, Mission Office, Representative Office

Methodology

The study employed a qualitative approach, which is a more descriptive type of methodology. Data collected from both primary and secondary data sources, secondary data collected from various sources, such as books, journals, policy documents, etc., and primary

data gathered from the key informants of this study were used thematically, while the qualitative method is presented here as an approach to the data analysis.

1. Introduction

The status, opportunities, and challenges of the diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Somaliland are the main themes of this study: Both countries uphold deep-rooted relations since a very long period, which were interconnected until the Empires of IFAT and ADAL of the 15th and 16th centuries, which were located on the shared territories presently known as Eastern Ethiopia and Western Somaliland, stretching from the City of Harar in the West up to the Port of Berbera. Historians have also recounted the bustling trade that took place between the city of Harar and the ports of Zeila and Berbera. These historic ties between Ethiopia and Somaliland were blocked by the union of Somaliland and Somalia in 1960; after the unification, a series of disagreements interrupted the relationship between the two neighboring states of Ethiopia and Somalia. When Somaliland regained its independence in 1991, the relationship resumed.

2. Historical Background of Ethiopia-Somaliland Relations

Somaliland turned into a British colony in 1884 and regained its freedom from Britain. On June 26, 1960, four days later, Somaliland joined Italian Somalia ahead of the latter's independence on July 1, 1960, forming the Republic of Somalia. As soon as Somaliland became dissatisfied with the unification with Somalia, Somaliland's people founded the Somali National Movement (SNM) in 1981, supported by the Ethiopian government. Also, the reference to the colonial legacy strengthens the argument of the declaration of independence with regard to international conventions because Somaliland is a foundation of colonialism, and in view of the fact that international principles allow people who have been subjected to colonial domination to be free, its secession would not constitute a breach of the OAU/AU Charter. Beyond the cognitive structure of a separate national identity, Somaliland has also succeeded in taking realistic measures to reinforce its secession. It has embarked on efforts to create peace, security, and stability, construct nationwide political organizations, and hold elections. These efforts are intended to strengthen the exploration of sovereignty (Bereketeab, R. 2012).

Although Ethiopia served as the base of the Somali National Movement (SNM), there were no political or state-to-state relations between the two sides before the emergence of the armed movements; moreover, it was proxy relations since the armed movements were getting sanctuary from the Ethiopian government. The only durable relationship that this movement restored and created was the people-to-people relationship and communication, which laid the foundation for future relations both before the collapse of the Somali state in 1991 and afterwards (Ali, N.M. 2011).

Furthermore when first President of Somaliland Abdirahman Ahmed Ali who also was the last Chairman of SNM Armed group overthrow Siad Barre to the Authority continually strengthen the relationship of Ethio-Somaliland, the next president Mohamed Ibrahim Egal came the power of Somaliland in 1993 and relations between the two sides normally going on the activities carried by Egal were the founding-stone which emphasized the current bilateral relations between Ethiopia and Somaliland while Egal was created 1994 Somaliland Mission office in Addis Ababa, this shift also accelerated the people of the two countries to interact and exchange visits across the borders the confidence created by the two armed forces, led the Ethiopian government to trust Somaliland and regard it as an ally and friend in a volatile region as an expression of the good relationships, the Ethiopian government invited President Egal

several times to visit Ethiopia where Ethiopia's State Minister of Foreign Affairs Tekede Alemu paid several visits to Hargeisa (Ali N. M. 2011).

After Egal, there were more meetings between Somaliland presidents and Ethiopian prime ministers in Addis Ababa. Somaliland establishes international relations by means of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and liaison offices, which have been set up in Ethiopia, Great Britain, the United States of America, Sweden, Kenya, France, Norway, Belgium, Djibouti, South Sudan, and Canada, and has signed treaties to sell livestock in Arab Peninsula states. The highest representatives of Somaliland regularly travel on official visits abroad, e.g., to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, or, in 2006, President Kaahin visited eastern Africa with stops in Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zambia (Hoch, T., & Rudicova, K., 2015).

Specifically, the establishment of the Somaliland representative office in Addis Ababa in 1994 marked the official start of diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Somaliland. Next year, in 1995, the Government of Somaliland sent to Ethiopia an official delegation composed of Vice President Abdirahman Aw Ali Farah, Interior Minister Muse Bihi Abdi, and Ahmed Mohamed Mohamoud Silanyo. Members of Parliament and the delegation were aimed at empowering the newly formed relationship between Somaliland and Ethiopia, and in January 2007, Somaliland president Dahir Rayale Kahin met Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi in Addis Ababa and discussed security and trade collaboration between Ethiopia and Somaliland. On November 3, 2011, Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi welcomed Ahmed Mohamed Mohamoud Silanyo, the newly elected president of Somaliland, and the two leaders discussed major concerns affecting both countries, including peace, stability, and bilateral relations between Ethiopia and Somaliland. Ethiopian delegations, including ministers at the ministerial level, visited Somaliland, while Somaliland presidents and other delegations also visited Ethiopia to meet with the Ethiopian Prime Minister (Bradbury, Abokor, and Yusuf, 2003).

On the other hand there is a deep root of ethnic relationship between the populations of Somali-State of Ethiopia and Somaliland, which greatly contributes to the Ethiopian-Somaliland relation, economically there is a long-standing trade relationship between Somaliland and Ethiopia; Ethiopia imports goods from Berbera port in long time and the 2016 bilateral agreement between the government of Somaliland and Dubai Port World (DP World) aimed to raise the level of Berbera Port's facilities as the main hub for container traffic in East Africa and the Middle East., Somaliland spends a Khat came from Ethiopia annually 530 million Dollar a year as the Somaliland ministry of Finance declared, not only Khat the goods that from Ethiopia there is also vegetables that Ethiopia exports to Somaliland, though this economic relation is more beneficial at side of Ethiopia also Somaliland gets few market position in the Ethiopian population, Somaliland and Ethiopia share a long border that trade movements across on daily basis (Mohamoud, M. A. 2017).

The peace and political stability in Somaliland were sustained, and there was a growing aspiration towards developing a comprehensive transit and trade agreement between Somaliland and Ethiopia. A series of bilateral discussions mainly started in 2002 to scale up trade cooperation. If anything can be termed the most impactful of my tenure as the Ethiopian Consul General in Somaliland, then it is the currently operational Pact Enhancing Economic Interdependence between the two neighboring and friendly sides; in fact, the trade partnership between Somaliland and Ethiopia has concurrently increased since some international investors committed to investing in the Berbera port as a major hub of transit to Ethiopia and other landlocked countries in East Africa (Bradbury, Abokor, and Yusuf, 2003).

Recently there is tripartite Berbera port and corridor Agreement, Berbera port expansion and modernization including Berbera-Wajale corridor road, agreement was signed on March, 1, 2018 by the three stake holders Ethiopia, Somaliland and Dubai Ports World (DP world), this agreement is an economic and political opportunity for Somaliland since Somaliland does not have de jure recognition, as well as it supports Ethiopia to find a solution to its reliance on the only port of Djibouti and strengthen the relationship between Somaliland and Ethiopia, this project is together with the corridor road connecting from Coastal city of Berbera and Ethio-Somaliland border district Wajjale, this corridor will conclude soon and facilitate a lot in the trade between Ethiopia and Somaliland.

3. Somaliland's de facto statehood and the relationship with Ethiopia

Somaliland is a de facto state located in northern Somalia its' territory corresponds to the former British protectorate Somaliland in 1960, Ethiopia preserves a good relationship till Somaliland announced its sovereignty 1991, for the case of challenges between Somalia and Ethiopia administrations in the 1980's, Ethiopia supported the Somali National Movement (SNM) who was the northern Somalia region rebels who fought and finally throw the power Siad Barre regime, in addition Ethiopia hosted and welcomed a more refugee from northern region (Somaliland) in the war time, Ethiopia was the first country accepted Somaliland as a de facto State, and also first country acknowledged Somaliland to set up Addis Ababa Diplomatic Mission office in 1994 as well as Ethiopian General Consulate in Hargeisa was the first foreign diplomatic office established in Hargeisa in 2002, since that period Ethiopia and Somaliland have a good relationship (Rudicova, K.2016).

For instance, Ethiopia and Somaliland have signed mutual agreements, including the usage of Berbera Port in 2006 and the borderline customs treaty. Ethiopian Airlines also connects to the Hargeisa route as routine daily flights. For the reason of its significant position inside the global associations and its proposed role of a regional hegemonist, Ethiopia is one of the crucial states in the case of Somaliland recognition. The issue of Somaliland recognition largely revolves around the advantages of African identity. Countries, particularly regional powers, regional incorporations, and organizations such as the Intergovernmental Agency for Development (IGAD) and the East African Community (EAC), have an important effect on East African policies. Ethiopia's geopolitical interests in the Horn of Africa are influenced by competition with Egypt, which opposes Somaliland's efforts for sovereignty and advocates for a Somali unitary state that would counterbalance Ethiopia, while also considering Ethiopia's desire to maintain good relations with Arab League states due to their shared economic relations, traditional ties, geographic proximity, and political interests. Ethiopia's economic relations, traditional ties, geographic proximity, and political interests limit its ability to internationally recognize Somaliland (*Ibid.*).

“For the above reason Ethiopian Prime-Minister Melez Zenawi Declared that he expected Somaliland would be recognized first by the other states and the meantime Ethiopia would Support Somaliland in the informal way, the main of the Ethiopia's reserved approach to the possibility of recognizing of Somaliland is the fear of criticism from the Somali Government that Ethiopia is trying to balkanize Somalia and weaken Somali unity, on the other hand Somaliland Political presentation does not have an overly favorable negotiating position due to its economic weakness, therefore has not been able to put the diplomatic pressure to Ethiopia in terms of the issue of its international recognition, a consequences of this is that Ethiopia lacks of political willingness in recognizing Somaliland de jure and instead it prefers to establish mainly economic relations and conclude ad-hoc agreements with this de facto State,

another type of criticism is directed at Somaliland's political representation due to its inability to propose a development programme which would attract direct on Ethiopian investment in Somaliland" (Rudicova, K.2016).

Apparently the Ethiopian in hesitant policy in the direction of matter of Somaliland international recognition can be well demonstrated by the passage of the Ethiopian Consul General in Somaliland Berhe Tesfaye on the concern of the statehood of Somaliland, Ethiopian administration consider that like an domestic matter which ought to be compacted through by the rightful stakeholders, by home-based diplomatic way, in the meantime Ethiopia trust that the community and administration of Somaliland be worthy of wider global help and relieve, because they are budding plenty and progressing the peace and steadiness of this region of the unstable Horn of Africa, the Consul General worried in this discussion that the Ethiopian government increase endeavor to encourage the world wide the importance to supply financial aid to Somaliland despite of its point in the international scheme (*Ibid.*).

4. Ethio-Somaliland Border Topography

Ethiopia is a primordial nation in northeast Africa, as well as famous as the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia is the tenth largest (with an area of 1,104,300 sq. km) and second most populous country in Africa after Nigeria, Ethiopia is located between 3°N-15° N latitudes and 33° E-48° E longitudes, Ethiopia is more populated non-coastal state, Ethiopia is bordered by six neighboring countries, Djibouti, Eritrea, Sudan Kenya, Somalia, Somaliland and South Sudan, every state shares special distance of Ethiopia's borderlines, therefore Ethiopia-Somaliland borderlands shapes piece of the Somali regional state of Ethiopia, Somali region's north west locates the border with Somaliland, and three out of 11 zones in the Somali region area share a frontier with Somaliland (Amare, T. T. June 2017).

Historically, the Anglo-Ethiopian border treaty of 1897 shaped the officially permitted regimes, which principally determined the curves and limits for the borderline of British Somaliland. On the other hand, the following treaty between Britain and Ethiopia in 1954 did not influence the completion of the Anglo-Ethiopian agreement of 1897. As a result, British Somaliland consisted of the regions of Awdal, MaroodiJeh, Togdheer, Sanaag, Sool, and the recently established region of Sahil. Britain accomplished its objective by creating a structure of indirect rule, even though its growth was, one way or another, obstructed by an anti-colonial rebellion between 1899 and 1920 (Mesfin, B., September, 2009).

Actually Arrangements for the border line segregation between Ethiopia and British Somaliland started during 1928 and the Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement of November 29, 1954 grants for the removal of British Military supervision from definite areas of Ethiopian bordering on the Somaliland Protectorate famous as the Haud and the Reserved Areas and reconfirmed Ethiopia's occupied and special domination over these areas, eventually Somaliland independence on 26 June 1960 and amalgamation by (Italian) Somalia on July 1, 1960, the Somaliland border line stopped as an international state line, actually the border transformed as an internal border among the Northern Regions (former Somaliland) with the Southern Regions for the innovative Somali Republic, there were several fought between Somalia and Ethiopia related the Anglo-Ethiopian border treaty, and finally Somalia announced that the Anglo-Ethiopia Agreement of 1897 does not concern to Somalia (Amare, T. T., June 2017).

In 1991, when the Somaliland armed forces overthrew Siad Barre and declared independence, Somaliland invigorated previous colonial borders in terms of geographical specifications. Article 2 of the Somaliland Constitution asserts Somaliland's territory and

formally accepts the British colonial borders of 1897. The Somaliland Constitution permitted this territorial assertion; the Republic of Somaliland is located between: Latitude 8° to 11° 30'' north of the equator and longitude 42° 45' to 49'' east and consists of the land, islands, and territorial water above and below the surface, the airspace, and the continental shelf. The article, on the other hand, asked for the query of what represents "the former Somaliland Protectorate," involving the Constitution of Somaliland and Ethiopia's boundary, which runs for 463 miles, from 8° N to 48° E (the tri-point of Somaliland, Ethiopia, and Somalia) to Madaha-Jalelo at the tri-point of the Somaliland-Ethiopia and Djibouti boundaries (*Ibid.*).

5. Ethio-Somaliland relations: pre-Somalia-Somaliland unification

Ethiopia and Somaliland have a long history relation because of the people on both sides are the same Somali's Clan, sub Clan, sub, sub Clan are the same ethnic, the traditional leaders of Somaliland and Ethiopia lives on both sides very near to the Ethiopian Somali region in, close to the bordering, and Somaliland was a long time serving as a Port for Ethiopia through Zeila and Berbera this is like a one thousand years, it is a long time therefore before Colonialism and independence of Somalia the Ethiopian relation with Somaliland was excellent, so the two sides have many relations, but that relationship changed when the Colonial came, because Somaliland went under the British and South Somalia went under Italy, though the relations were continuing at the people to people level but the territories have started to get divided and Somalia when it get independence Somaliland became first two three days early, however because of emotions that time Somaliland united with Somalia so both sides had the Republic of Somalia with Somaliland together¹.

As well, the relationship between Ethiopia and Somaliland is an interest-based, beneficial one that is mutual. Ethiopia and Somaliland have a common boundary, share people, trade and economics, and security interests, and there is a large Ethiopian community in Somaliland and a Somaliland community in Ethiopia, so the relationship is crucial for both countries. Even though Ethiopia does not recognize Somaliland de jure, there is de facto recognition of its existence².

In addition, the history of Ethio-Somaliland relations has been extended, and chronologically, this history dates back to 1884 when Somaliland, a British protectorate, established relations with the Ethiopian government; in modern history, relations between Ethiopia and Somaliland began in the 1950s during discussions about the Ethio-Somaliland border. Diplomatically, Ethio-Somaliland relations were interrupted when Somaliland was unified with Somalia to form the Somali Republic. Formally, the relationship between Ethiopia and Somaliland can be divided into two categories: people-to-people and political relations³.

6. Ethio-Somaliland relations: the unification period and post-unification of Somalia and Somaliland

Briefly Ethiopia and Somaliland relationship have been approximately traced a long time since the coming of British Colonialism in Somaliland, though this relation remained interrupted during the Union between Somaliland and Somalia, Ethiopia and Somalia twice fought while Somaliland within Somalia 1964 and 1977, then after 1977 internal problems started Somalia from Puntland, Somaliland, SNA, USC, all are started against Siad Barre, and Siad Barre was helping that time Ethiopian oppositions such as Eritrea, Tigray, OLF were used to support as well as Mingistu Haile Mariam was supporting the same for SSDF, SNM, SNA, and USSC, because of that people to people and part relation the movement started, so Ethiopia have started to support Kulmis Ethiopia was called SNM at that time, and SNA⁴.

Meanwhile, when the government collapsed in Somalia and the EPRDF came to power in Ethiopia, the EPRDF continued the relationship because Somaliland declared its state independence and Ethiopia continued to work together. The Ethio-Somaliland relationship has continued up to now in security, business, airlines, immigration, contraband, intelligence, and terrorism. Furthermore, since 1990-1991, Ethiopia and Somaliland have collaborated through various administrations, particularly during the periods when the Ethiopian government maintained positive relationships with Meles Zenawi and Hailemariam⁵.

Although Ethiopia and Somaliland relations is getting better from time to time, Ethiopia was good friend for Somaliland till the SNM (Somali National Movement) era and Ethiopia was Contributor for the restoration of Somaliland independence and realization of Somaliland Vision, the current relationship between Ethiopia and Somaliland is as defacto State recognition and started at the end of Cold War, the relationship's bound is more of economical diplomacy, Economic relation between Ethiopia and Somaliland historically is going on for a long term time, and also People to People relation is one motivational aspect for the relation of two countries, even if Somaliland does not have international recognition there is common interest with Ethiopia⁶.

Following the end of the two socialist-oriented regimes of Ethiopia and Somalia, there have been a series of changes and substantial improvements regarding Ethio-Somaliland relations following the collapse of the Somali state. Ethiopia and Somaliland have vibrant relations, and Somaliland regards Ethiopia as one of its closest friend in the horn of Africa, these relations led by the two countries leaders and their peoples to be better involved in the development of the relations and other important advancements taking place, as well a growing relation between the two neighboring countries of Ethiopia and Somaliland by way of cooperation relating to minimize disagreement and to build harmony in the region, in addition, cross-border trade and security cooperation between the two countries have been the foundational factors for their diplomatic relationship for the last decades, on behalf of Somaliland; Ethiopia was the gateway that connects the rest of the world, and a quiet friend for its mission or international recognition⁷.

7. Ethio-Somaliland Relations since 1994–2021

Somaliland became unaccompanied from Somalia like 1991, so a new government in Ethiopia, then 1993-1994 started the diplomatic relation between Ethiopia and Somaliland and this is a strategic decision for Ethiopia after 1994 to establish Somaliland mission office in Addis Ababa and Hargeisa, Ethiopian Airlines also started to fly, this is a political decision to cooperate with Somaliland while Ethiopian Officials declared that Ethiopia does not encourage Somalia to divide but if the people decide in Somaliland to continue similar to this Ethiopia have interest there is a lot of contraband there is a lot human trafficking there is a lot Business between both sides in exchanging like Khat, and because of that Ethiopia opened a Mission office and Somaliland has open a mission office and that is closely to exchange information because of Somaliland representation⁸.

On the other hand, in the past three decades, there have been three regimes in Ethiopia, such as Meles Zenawi, Hailemariam Desalegn, and now Dr. Abiy Ahmed, and on the Somaliland side, Egal, Rayale, Silanyo, and Bihi. The regime changes for both sides do not have any effect or implication on Ethio-Somaliland relations. Every country in the world, whenever a new administration comes into power, comes up with its own policy, including Ethiopia. Somaliland: The new foreign policy of Ethiopia toward neighboring countries,

including Somaliland, has changed slightly for the better, so these changes, of course, have some positive effects on relations⁹.

After Somaliland retreated from the union with Somalia in 1991, Ethio-Somaliland relations became static; however, both sides have gradually improved since then. Currently, Somaliland has a mission office in Ethiopia, and Ethiopia has a general consulate there. As a result, relations between the two countries encompass security, trade, people-to-people interactions, and diplomatic ties. Above all, trade between Somaliland and Ethiopia is a key pillar that has significantly impacted their relations¹⁰.

‘The actions taken by Abdirahman and Egal laid the foundation for the current two-sided relations between Ethiopia and Somaliland. This action also caused the military commanders of the Ethiopian armed forces to get in touch with their counterparts in Somaliland to work together to keep the border regions between the two sides peaceful and stable. The relationship between the military forces has improved since the 1990s ended, especially with the assistance of the two governments' civilian officials and the Central Command of the two armed services. This development also enhanced cross-border communication and the interchange of visitors between the two sides' populations. The two armed forces' ability to inspire confidence allowed Ethiopia's leadership to look to Somaliland as an ally and friend in a difficult region. There is no political tension, and the legacy of the two military regimes has been shared between the two nations. And the relations between the two sides reached their highest point’¹¹.

Also, Somaliland and Ethiopia have enjoyed a favorable relationship for about the last 30 years based on people-to-people relations. The two countries share a very long border of about 700 km. Ethiopia has been a gateway for Somaliland for the last 30 years. The main Somaliland diplomatic mission is in Ethiopia, and Ethiopia has had a consulate general in Somaliland for 20 years. The Ethiopian consulate was the first consulate office established in Somaliland. Since then, there has been a very solid relationship between Ethiopia and Somaliland on all fronts. Somaliland imports many products from Ethiopia. Khat is the main export; it is about a billion dollars yearly. Furthermore, vegetables and other commodities flow from Ethiopia to Somaliland. Ethiopia uses Berbera as a port sometimes for humanitarian aid flow. There are substantive products that Somaliland exports to Ethiopia, apart from some small products such as detergents. On the other hand, there is a security relationship between Somaliland and Ethiopia. Ethiopia and Somaliland use routine conferences for security meetings on both sides. Ethiopia supports Somaliland by offering scholarships for many students, which is really a positive sign of friendship diplomatically¹².

Conversely, Somaliland and Ethiopia share many aspects that are independent of leadership, such as ethnic relationships, shared boundaries, and mutual interests; therefore, any leader emerging from either Somaliland or Ethiopia acknowledges and respects this relationship. So the Ethio-Somaliland relationship since 1991 has been very steady; it has remained steady rather than changing significantly, and hopefully that stability will continue¹³.

As respondent revealed Somaliland is Democratic State and have done six Elections since the declaration of Somaliland from the presidency of Abdirahman Tuur, Egal time, Rayale and Silanyo time, precisely Somaliland has stable Government and better form of Democracy, as well as Ethiopia has maturity political and International Recognition State, the relation is growing and have to continue growing, Ethiopia whatever Government change happens Ethiopia cannot ignore Somaliland, Commonly diplomatic relationship is depend on interest as a result the economic integration can drive and create strong political and diplomatic link between the two countries, additionally Ethiopia respects the will and the self-determination of

Somalilanders and people, and there is no doubt Ethiopia helped Somaliland to overthrow Siad Barre regime¹⁴.

Alternatively, Somaliland and Ethiopia should strengthen security, economic, and traffic relations to improve the status of their current bilateral relations. It is very important to have continuous communication from both sides; furthermore, Somaliland also needs an upgrade at some point for the representative office that Somaliland belongs to in Ethiopia and Ethiopia has in Somaliland; and also, Ethiopia and Somaliland need to encourage business people to organize together trade exhibitions and fairs to facilitate the improvement of the relationship between the two countries. The relationship between Somaliland and Ethiopia is a strategic one that is important to both parties¹⁵.



Photo 1: Somaliland President Dahir Rayale Kahin meets Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi on January, 2007 in Addis Ababa

7.1. Ethio-Somaliland Border Security Cooperation

The Ethio-Somaliland border is 766 km, and border security is one of the areas where Somaliland and Ethiopia have a common interest. The stability of Ethiopia is important for Somaliland, and conversely, the stability of Somaliland is critical for Ethiopia. Recognizing the importance of mutual interest in security, the Ethio-Somaliland security forces on both sides collaborate to share information and regularly meet, particularly in the districts near the border, to update each other on the situation. As a result of the cooperation, the boundaries have been secure over the past 30 years¹⁶.

In addition, security relations are effective because the defense forces of Somaliland and Ethiopia collaborate on national security, with police working alongside each other and governments cooperating directly; the Jigjiga and Hargeisa administrations maintain daily contact at the border, which enhances their collaboration, and the presence of the Ethiopian military at the border further contributes to excellent border security. Since Somaliland declared independence, there have been no attacks on Ethiopia from the Somaliland side because Somaliland takes care. Al-Shabab, despite being strong in Mogadishu, Jubaland, Puntland, and Southwest Somalia, posed no threat to Somaliland, even though its leaders were from Somaliland; however, extremists failed to launch attacks on Hargeisa or Ethiopia. There was no attack on Jigjiga, no attack on Deridewa, and no attack on Tog Wajjale¹⁷.

Because of military and Security cooperation was in place and regularly exchanging information along with everything, Ethiopia now behind of the border it is Somaliland, Ethiopia can sleep happily nothing will come because Somaliland is working the same thing, Ethiopia doesn't accept any threat from Ethiopia side towards Somaliland for example some people came to Ethiopia and demanded to support to announce a new state and to fight Somaliland in contrast Ethiopia rejected that request and told that people while they are Somalilanders citizens to go and fight inside Somaliland but Ethiopia does not give any help, even Ethiopian side Somaliland supported some opposition figures who left for Hargeisa; Somaliland captured them and brought them to Ethiopia, such as Abdi Iley era¹⁸.

Really, the Ethio-Somaliland border is considered one of the most volatile in Africa due to the presence of Al-Shabab, terrorism, extremism, and violence in the region, which collectively pose a common threat to regional security. Somaliland significantly contributes to these efforts by sometimes assisting its own citizens, other times working for the nation, occasionally for the region, and at times for Africa as a whole, all while relying on minimal external assistance from the international community¹⁹.

As a result the body security and cooperation is really very good and Somaliland play big role, and it is possible during this research Ethiopian officials to confess Somaliland's contribution to the region's peace and security, as a result Somaliland cooperate very good manner, cooperate in a manner which is good for the region which is common interest or mutual interest for every country in the region not only Ethiopia and Somaliland had border but also to the every border that Somaliland have or has its own neighboring countries, even Somaliland has a border with Somalia which is really the source of extremism and Alshabab, still Somaliland is the wall that extremists cannot go through, hence Somaliland contribute to the border security with Ethiopia with Djibouti with the other countries in the region in a very good manner and very cooperative way²⁰.

Both countries can cooperate to fight extremism, which directly affects the socio-economic and political systems of their respective countries. Since Al-Shabab is based nearby and supporters of the group may be present, fighting in collaboration will bring a sound result. These two countries should establish clear border demarcations and protect their citizens from insurgents²¹.

Truthfully, changes can have some effect on relationships; certainly the relationship between Somaliland and Ethiopia extends beyond normal political interactions due to their shared, extensive borders. Ethiopia occasionally depends on Somaliland for sea access, making their relationship difficult to alter; both countries maintain robust people-to-people, trade, and security ties. East Africa's turbulent region is home to Ethiopia and Somaliland²².

Beyond doubt the relationship between Somalia and Ethiopia has no effect on Ethio-Somaliland relation so far because the relationship is based on real interest it is not personal but of course Somaliland is concern about the relationship between the prime minister of Ethiopia Abiy Ahmed and the president of Somalia Mohamed Farmajo it means the friend of your enemy is your enemy so it really creates concerns with in the Somaliland community, Somaliland consider the Government in Somalia as an enemy it doesn't wish well Somaliland and an any country which closely works in Somalia of course creates challenges and concerns among the Somaliland People, but Somaliland has confident the relationship of Ethiopia is based on real mutual interest and it will not be poisoning by relationship between Ethiopia and Somalia²³.

Actually, the relationship between Ethiopia and Somaliland is based on real interest; it is not a hypothesis, but some members of Somaliland society are concerned about the relationship between the Prime Minister of Ethiopia and the President of Somalia. Ethiopia and

Somaliland maintained strong relations for three years before Farmajo obtained power and Dr. Abiy assumed office; however, this relationship does not impact Somaliland at all, as the issues between Mogadishu and Hargeisa are internal²⁴.

In point of detail the last 30 years that problem exists and needs to solve, because now Eritrea is independent and the time Eritrea declared its independence is the same to Somaliland but Addis Ababa agreed to the independence of Eritrea and the same way Moqadishu is better to agree, in addition Khartoum it recognized independence of South Sudan, so any outsider cannot help, what will help is internal if Mogadishu cannot take by force with Somaliland, if Hargeisa does not want to come what is the solution, but still efforts are continue, Djibouti is trying, Ethiopia is trying, Turkey is trying, UK is trying and will see what will happen in the future, but final decision is Somaliland and Somalia, however the most important is Southern Somalia could not become stable if it is stable parts can discuss but now Farmajo will go another one will come and another one will come only four years and then the whole system will change, so Somalia have to do peace defeating Alshabab and reaching center, and have to have good relationship, now if you see Puntland they have a problem with Mogadishu, if you see Jubaland they have a problem, if you see Baydhabo they have problem and Galmudug they have problem²⁵.

On the contrary, the alliance between Ethiopia and Somalia is exclusive to those two countries; it does not involve Somaliland, which is a sovereign nation that can establish its relationships independently. The Ethio-Somaliland relationship is more strategic and interest-based because of the long border both sides share, because of trading volumes, and because of the security relationship. People might see it as a threat, but it can't be harmful for Somaliland. Somaliland's foreign policy is based on living in peace and harmony with its neighbors, so Somaliland does not see a big threat to the relationship between Ethiopia and Somalia²⁶.

In terms of the world's political arena there is two countries who are friends but they are the enemy of other countries or they have a problem with other countries that case exists anywhere in the world and this is not different from that, so there is no threat at all to Ethio-Somaliland relations or diplomatic relations or whatever relations the alliance between Ethiopia and Somalia, because Somalia and Somaliland are two different countries, who have two different borders, have two different interest, have two different Agenda's and also have two different existing relations, historically going back the problem or the wars or other Social problems between Ethiopia and Somalia by comparing with Somaliland have no that problem at all for the past 40 years Somaliland have been friends in Ethiopia rather Somaliland develop and improve and promotes good relation with Ethiopia²⁷.

Notably, when no country, except Ethiopia, has shown interest in what involves a de facto relationship, it creates advantageous economic, political, and social relationships between governments. Ethiopia's foreign policy depends on respecting the national interests and non-interventionism in the internal affairs of neighboring countries. Ethiopia needs to create and maintain a peaceful and collaborative Horn of Africa; it also needs to have smooth and cooperative relations with its neighbors. Therefore, Ethiopia views all nations as equal, with mutual existence and benefits in its foreign relations. Therefore, as long as Ethiopia maintains peaceful relations with Somalia and Somaliland, its relationship with Somalia is unlikely to impact Somaliland²⁸.

7.2. Ethio-Somaliland relations: the role of ministries of foreign affairs

The entities or Ministries that are responsible for maintaining the relationship are the ministries of foreign Affairs and play very important role in ensuring to assemble that cordial

relationship between two countries, precisely earlier was not something that depends on foreign Ministers acting at any time's much more important than that was not so much personal but rather than national, this is normal because foreign Ministries are institutions legally constitutionally given to conduct foreign relations, to exchange Ambassadors, to exchange Diplomats, to exchange councilor service officers, Immigration Officers and military attaches, so the two ministries play a key role of communication, cooperation, understanding, facilitation Business, facilitation VIP visits and all issues of crime both ministries work together²⁹.

Furthermore, the Foreign Ministries are the gateways of the two countries. If Somaliland needs something from Ethiopia, the connection is through the Foreign Ministry and Consulate General of Ethiopia in Hargeisa, and likewise, when Ethiopia needs to engage Somaliland, the gateway is the Mission Office in Addis Ababa and the Somaliland Foreign Ministry of Foreign Affairs. So the Ministry of Foreign Affairs always interacts with and shapes the relationship between two countries, and its role is really crucial when it comes to improving and advancing the relationship between the two sides³⁰.

In fact Somaliland Mission office in Addis Ababa is important, it is the permanent link between Somaliland and Ethiopia it's function is not just limited to the Diplomatic function, there are other functions such as cultural exchange there are hundreds of students from Somaliland studying Universities and other institutions in Ethiopia and the mission office is responsible for looking after those Students and meeting their needs and also a lot of Somalilanders who go to Ethiopia for personal health reasons and that office provides to support at to these people when they go there, the office also liaises with different Ministries with which Somaliland have relations so it does what is supposed to do which is to maintain the relationship between the two countries, expand cultural exchange expand trade and also expand & maintain the Logistics support that Ethiopia and Somaliland give each other, the Ethiopian Airline comes here (Somaliland) in daily bases that is very important link and the mission office is the Office which is responsible and representing Somaliland in all these matters³¹.

As every country has political and diplomatic entry points, so the Ministries of Foreign Affairs serve as the gateways for these nations, similar to those in the rest of the world. The Ministries of Foreign Affairs for Somaliland and Ethiopia have been significantly influencing diplomatic relations between the two countries. For instance, the Somaliland Mission office in Ethiopia works to promote relations between the two countries, including trade, investment, political and diplomatic cooperation, security, travel access to Somaliland, and tourism. The Somaliland mission office in Addis Ababa is the door that connects Somaliland through Ethiopia and other countries of the world, like the Ethiopian General Consulate in Somaliland is the gateway of Ethiopia, so mission offices play a good and enormous role in Shaping diplomatic relations between two countries is crucial; in the modern era, every country has its own approach to diplomacy, which serves as a tool for managing international relations, especially considering the long-standing friendship between Ethiopia and Somaliland³².

Likewise, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs formulate strategies to establish and strengthen people-to-people projects, identify key socio-economic and political opportunities for both countries, address these opportunities, and recognize major challenges that may affect their relationship; they also propose alternative solutions as needed. The ministries of foreign affairs also share a vision for the strengthening of the region. The Ethio-Somaliland foreign affairs ministries are responsible for managing diplomatic relations, ensuring a fruitful ongoing relationship across various dimensions, including security, economics, politics, and culture³³.

It is Somaliland Government and its foreign ministry to evaluate its mission in here (Addis Ababa) whether it is doing a good job for Somaliland or not but on behalf of Ethiopia

have no problem to contact any time and cooperate, but Somaliland has one disadvantage because it is not a recognized State because of that Somaliland does not have embassy and Ethiopia does not have Embassy what we have is representative Mission Offices because of that it cannot become like an Embassy of America, Egypt embassy, Kenyan Embassy, these Embassies' have some privilege with a flag with every immunity because it is between two sovereign countries but Somaliland Still Struggling to get recognition because of that the mission office in here (Addis Ababa) is not playing a role like old embassies for example when Ethiopian Ministry of foreign affairs call and briefing for diplomatic community, Ethiopian Ministry of foreign Affairs didn't call Somaliland mission office because Somalia will say our country is independent why you call this, so because of that there is that small problems, but the services are given without any problem³⁴.

On top of the Somaliland Mission Office in Addis Ababa belongs a flag and other signs of diplomatic status; it is secured by the Ethiopian government, and its officers possess immunity, diplomatic IDs, and the same access as any other diplomatic office. The office meets all diplomatic requirements for Somaliland and provides every service that any country's embassy would offer, not only to Somaliland but also to foreigners³⁵.

8. Ethio-Somaliland relations Opportunities and challenges

8.1. Opportunities of Ethio-Somaliland Relations

For the Opportunities Somaliland locates very strategic position, Somaliland has almost 850km of sea shore to the coastline from Babal Mendeb all the way to the Indian Ocean with border to Somalia, so for the Opportunities Somaliland can contribute to the Ethiopian live and Ethiopian access to sea in very huge way, and that is now why the Ethiopians are shifting to use Berbera Port from the other competitive regional sea hubs or Ports for the trade Opportunities there is Nurturing and exchange of information Opportunities, there is another Opportunities of having Somaliland Business People integration with the rest of Africa through Ethiopia, and also Somaliland have the Opportunity of taking advantage of the sea access and Berbera can be hub for the African countries with no sea at all including the central Africa all the way to the down countries so there is a very good and huge Opportunities in terms of Ethiopia-Somaliland relations³⁶.

Well, there are many opportunities: Somaliland has extended its port in Berbera; the road from Berbera to Wajale is under way and hopefully will finish next year; this represents opportunities for Somaliland to serve the logistical needs of Ethiopia; and of course, Ethiopia has the opportunity to exchange trade to enhance the trade between Somaliland and Ethiopia. Both sides also have other opportunities, including the need to establish transit and trade relations between the two countries. The geographic proximity of Ethio-Somaliland, which facilitates the exchange of goods and services, is another opportunity for both countries³⁷.

Additionally, Ethiopia and Somaliland have a full relationship. nothing is missing except recognition of Somaliland in fact Ethiopian side relation with Somaliland is more closer and intense than any country Ethiopia have in the world, because there is enough interaction, simply go to Wajale there are all Ethiopian Banks and go to Hargeisa there are more Ethiopian People and when that community have a problem they run to Somaliland and Somalilanders come to Bole Mechael village in Addis Ababa , allot of Somalilanders enjoy their life they work, they go to School, they go Europe and America, the Opportunities are open even before it was excellent now become more excellent it depends on Somalilanders how are clever to make more Business and the Ethiopia side clever to do more business if it is individual capacity and Government to Government is open, and also when Ethiopia finish the Grand Ethiopian

Renaissance Dam (GERD) it is opportunity for both sides and Ethiopia can provide the utility up to Berbera because Somaliland doesn't need to use Generators that is bad for environment and expensive but now if Ethiopia finish the Dam can give Somaliland a kilowatt for 30 cents or 50 cents and Ethiopia can get for foreign currency as well as Somaliland can get cheaper electricity so both sides can grow together if that happens³⁸.

Specifically, there are always significant opportunities regarding the relationship between Ethiopia and Somaliland. Ethiopia, located in the Horn of Africa, is one of the most populated countries in the region and has a growing economy, which creates significant opportunities for Somaliland in terms of trade and economic development. Ethiopia is landlocked, and Somaliland is a very strategic country with 856 km of coastline. Berbera Port is one of the strategic ports in East Africa and also generally in Africa. When it comes to trading and economic development in Somaliland, there is a giant opportunity on both sides³⁹.

On the other hand, the existence of cultural integration between the two societies is an opportunity. People-to-people and ethnic relations between Ethio-Somali societies strengthen the cohesion of the two countries. Another opportunity is economic integration since there is trade and economic interest between the sides. While the East Africa region is volatile in terms of peace, mutual border security cooperation is also an opportunity⁴⁰.

Actually, Berbera port will have not only economic significance but also political significance, as it highlights the political opportunities and interests between Ethiopia and Somaliland, particularly regarding Ethiopia's alternative port options, which are crucial for both political and economic reasons. The economic opportunities that Ethiopia and Somaliland can utilize in commodity trade exchange, trade agreements that enhance free trade and reduce trade barriers, infrastructure development, capacity-building projects, and the cooperation of two potential and economically complementary countries can make a difference in key matters such as sustainable economic development, peace, security, and diplomatic relations in the Horn of Africa⁴¹.

While Ethiopia and Somaliland have a long-term relationship, if Ethiopia establishes investment projects in Somaliland as a foreign direct investor (FDI), it will create an opportunity for Somaliland and enhance the economic and diplomatic relations between the two countries. On the Somaliland side, there are more products that are not available in Ethiopia but accessible in Somaliland, such as salt, fish, frankincense, and others. It is an opportunity for Somaliland to export those products to Ethiopia. On the other hand, the Ethio-Somaliland relationship is in a favorable situation currently, but it will be more beneficial if both sides emphasize the level of the relationship⁴².

8.2. Ethio-Somaliland relation's Challenges

Concern for the challenges Ethiopia and Somaliland have a common enemy: those who want to spoil the peace in the region. Like other countries in the world, Ethiopia and Somaliland have a common enemy in terrorism, extremism, and related crimes. Another common enemy is human trafficking, a significant problem both in Africa and globally, which concerns both Ethiopia and Somaliland. Despite this, both countries are actively working together to combat it from all angles. Ethiopian Airlines operates flights to Somalia, and there are Somalilanders and Somali youth attempting to reach Europe via Ethiopia, which is why Somaliland is also addressing this issue. There is human trafficking and illegal immigration. The collaborative efforts of both sides are challenging, and an additional challenge is the spread of diseases. Ethiopia and Somaliland share a very long border; there could be an outbreak and cross-border diseases. Both governments cooperate on this issue, but it remains a challenge. There is another

environmental problem that both sides share, like a locust in the region. There are different challenges, but still, both countries and both governments are trying to do their best together to face those challenges⁴³.

As well, there is only one problem, and that is the lack of recognition of Somaliland's independence. During Abdi Iley's administration of the Ethiopian Somali region, there were several issues, but Somaliland consistently maintained a stable situation. Even during Abdi Iley's time, when Abdi Mohamoud was the Somali region president, the Ethiopian Federal Government always went to Jigjiga and Hargeisa to solve problems between the two sides, but now that Mustafe is an educated leader, there are no problems between the two sides⁴⁴.

The relationship between Ethiopia and Somaliland may be hampered and disordered by the militants and extremist beliefs that are far-reaching in the Somali state. The situation would worsen and intensify if Ethiopia made an effort to obstruct trade between Somaliland and the Somali Region of Ethiopia. If Somalia-Somaliland ties improve and the southern region of Somalia becomes stable, this situation may pose a significant threat to the bilateral relationship between Ethiopia and Somaliland⁴⁵.

9. Ethio-Somaliland Economic relation

Somaliland imports khat, fruits, vegetables, and sometimes cement and other products mainly from Ethiopia. Somaliland pays for what it buys from Ethiopia; it is not free, as Somaliland doesn't sell directly to Ethiopia commodities produced in Somaliland. Technically, there is an imbalance in our account of trade; there are more products Somaliland buys from Ethiopia and Ethiopia buys from Somaliland, but on the sidelines, there is an informal trade that goes on: Somaliland sells things to Ethiopia, and Ethiopia also sells things to Somaliland. The trade appears imbalanced from the start, with Somaliland running an unsustainable deficit with Ethiopia, despite commodities flowing both ways. Somaliland hopes in the future to be able to sell logistic services to Ethiopia and will be able to provide logistics, and the earnings from that will cover the deficit that Somaliland has now⁴⁶.

On issue of Trade balance there must be equal if not 100% equal it has to be balanced, because the other side has to benefit so Somaliland use Khat but Somaliland doesn't produce because of the land and weather, it is only because of that nature the balance come to Ethiopia side but Somaliland have to come with a lot of Business and a lot of things to export, Ethiopia and Somaliland the Business people nobody can stop them to cooperate, whatever Ethiopia have and Somaliland doesn't have Ethiopia sends and whatever Ethiopia doesn't have and Somaliland have it can come to Ethiopia for example Fish, Salt, Incense that Ethiopian use for churches, those things are available in Somaliland and Somaliland can bring to Ethiopia and all of the biggest advantage of Somaliland⁴⁷.

For sure Somaliland will have and the trade balance can go to Somaliland side if and when Ethiopia start to use the Berbera Port very high percentage, because Ethiopia is totally dependent mostly on Djibouti but now last week Ethiopia have signed an agreement and the Port of Berbera launched a big capacity therefore very soon the trade balance will go in favor of Somaliland because Ethiopia is paying taxes, paying services, the Hotels are using and paying, and interaction will come so both countries are together the balance very soon will go in favor of Somaliland, but the Government of Somaliland cannot change the balance and the Government of Ethiopia cannot change the balance, the balance is changing by people to people and Business people, if business people continue nobody can stop it, so the Good Business people can bring good money by themselves and their country, it will go the balance for Somaliland side when Ethiopia start using Berbera Port⁴⁸.

Additionally, Ethiopia exports khat and vegetables to Somaliland. Especially the Production of Eastern part of Ethiopia which is neighbor to Somaliland but there is no trade imbalance because Ethiopia imports products which are not directly imported from Somaliland most of that are coming Harar, Coming to Jigjiga, Deridewa coming from through Somaliland, Ethiopia is really having a problem of what is coming or what Ethiopia is traded between Somaliland and Ethiopia is not directly like a legal type of trade relationship most of the things happening in that part of border as an illegal so it is true Ethiopia export but Ethiopia cannot trace and tell how much is legal or contraband and how much is illegal, anyone can easily cross Wajjale border and take Dollar in the shop, and there is more food staff such as Pasto, Cooking oil and Sugar most of this are directly comes from Somaliland with illegal trade, so the argument of there is a trade imbalance is not true because there is more goods from Somaliland but it is illegal, Ethiopia export Khat and vegetables actually that products have their pricing because they export legally, vice versa Ethiopia cannot measure the amount of food staff imported from Somaliland because of the contraband⁴⁹.

Really there is trade deficit between Somaliland and Ethiopia because Somaliland there is no much products that is produced and labored to Somaliland's name, therefore Somaliland only receive imports from Ethiopia mainly Khat and Vegetables and some cereals, so there is trade deficit which is very huge and it is challenge at side of Somaliland but Somaliland's believe is that things will change for the better when Somaliland finish the extension of Berbera Port, the corridors finalize there will be some trade and transit agreements that will help Somaliland side at least to able to balance that trade but as we speak honest there is huge imbalance trade between Somaliland and Ethiopia, the effect in there is a lot of hard currency that is going to Ethiopia without any replacement because of the Khat and vegetables and Ethiopia take hard currency from Somaliland, Somaliland is very young country that does not export any product except livestock and some view minerals, so it is drain of outgoing hard currency from Somaliland that can cause a shortage of hard currency of Somaliland Business people and can affect the economy of Somaliland it is not affecting the diplomatic relations but affecting the Economy⁵⁰.

Utterly Somaliland does not import to Ethiopia is not correct information, Somaliland exports commodities in Ethiopia there are small Factories that produce commodities in Somaliland and export to Ethiopia such Ileys detergent Company and other Products which are legally export to Ethiopia, it is true that Somaliland need to balance this relation between the two countries by producing enough commodities and increasing exportation of Somalilanders to Ethiopia but it has nothing to do with the relation, in addition improving gradually day in day out that is what Somaliland is working and Somaliland Mission office in Addis Ababa concern this issue and working for the past 25 years Somaliland has been trying to improve that, recently Somaliland launched June, 24, 2021 Berbera Port extension phase one that will increase the relation of two countries and also will balance the trade between two countries on behalf of Somaliland⁵¹.

While Ethiopia is a demographically growing and landlocked country and Somaliland has the largest marine resources in the Horn of Africa, both countries recognized the value of transit cooperation mechanisms and pledged their best efforts to establish both short- and long-term transit routes. Ethiopian residents have been expressing a rising desire to create a thorough transit and commercial agreement between Somaliland and Ethiopia. Trade agreements between the two nations, however, are unbalanced and should require more extended talks and more bilateral conciliations due to their size and populations. Ethiopia exports more products to Somaliland, but Somaliland does not import enough, so that gap must be filled so as to

maximize cooperation between the two countries. The border trade exchange is a valuable transaction that has hugely increased trade relations between Somaliland and Ethiopia⁵².

Although measurable trade flows can enhance balancing the transactions of cross-border trade between the two countries, trade cooperation to alleviate those imbalances between the two sides is progressive. Currently, Berbera port is open, and it is incontestable that Somaliland and Ethiopia's relationship has facilitated some international opportunities, such as the United Arab Emirates' investment in the Berbera port and Berbera corridor, where Ethiopia wants to shift some of its commercial activities. This tripartite deal between Somaliland, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates has significant potential economic impact throughout the region in the Horn and East Africa at large and will reduce trade imbalances as well as improve political relations⁵³.

9.1. Ethiopia and Somaliland trade relation

Ethio-Somaliland Cross-Border trade and security cooperation between the two countries have been the foundational factor for their diplomatic for the last three decades, Ethiopia and Somaliland trade is significant aspect, economic relations in Ethio-Somaliland borderlands, the formal trading activities in these borderlands are specifically the usual foreign trade and the small-scale border trade, the foreign trade involves the export from or import goods into Ethiopia or else from Somaliland, foreign trade accounts for a significant part of the contemporary Ethio-Somaliland trade relations, another form of the formal trade in the Ethio-Somaliland borderlands is the small-scale border trade, the border trade regulations and implementations⁵⁴.

The trade relationship between Ethiopia and Somaliland will increase if Ethiopia increases its utilization of Somaliland's Berbera Port. Ethiopia lacks direct sea access, while Somaliland boasts a lengthy shoreline along the Red Sea and a modernized port in Berbera; therefore, with the agreement on transit and trade between the two countries facilitating the exchange of goods and services, it is poised to initiate the development of a free trade zone in Berbera, benefiting Ethiopian businessmen and women as well. The Government of Ethiopia will be able to use that free trade zone if Ethiopia and Somaliland agree⁵⁵.

Furthermore, there are many factors that can help the improvement of Ethiopia and Somaliland's diplomatic and trade exchange relations; hopefully both Ethiopia and Somaliland have done enough and are trading very well. Somaliland trades best with Ethiopia, better than with Djibouti or Puntland. In Jigjiga, all businesses are going to Hargeisa, and the people of Hargeisa do everything in Jigjiga, Deridewa, and Togwajjale, so the transactions and trade limit will increase if both sides become eager for the exchange of commodities and telecommunications⁵⁶.

On behalf of the improvement of a diplomatic relationship between Ethiopia and Somaliland including having the legal framework, the agreements, the policies of trade and transit agreements all that agreements could have been the legal framework between in every sector, that could be a factor which can help to improve the trade and diplomatic exchange between Ethiopia and Somaliland, there is another factor that can help to achieve that goal which is improving the cooperation between two countries in terms of Socio-Political, Diplomatically and security relations, having a very efficient cooperation between the two Countries and the relevant Government Authorities of both Governments, so that factor is good and can help it and now both countries are working on that, for the near future to accelerate and having functioning logistical trade and facilitation agreements for both countries in terms of border and utilization of the Port, Sea Port and Dry Port of the border land⁵⁷.

Year	Item Name	Unit Measure	Quantity	Value in USD	Total in USD
2017	Khat	KGs	31,766,935	\$317,669,350	\$319,869,190
	Fresh Vegetable	KGs	46,512,368	\$2,188,818	
	Ethiopian Daf	Bags of 50 KGs	7,495	\$11,022	
2018	Khat	KGs	36,658,041	\$366,580,410	\$371,054,088
	Fresh Vegetable	KGs	64,309,037	\$4,465,354	
	Ethiopian Daf	Bags of 50 KGs	456	\$8,324	
2019	Khat	KGs	39,903,777	\$399,037,770	\$437,753,713.66
	Fresh Vegetable	KGs	57,725,764	\$3,870,2660.16	
	Ethiopian Daf	Bags of 50 KGs	3,129	\$13,283.5	
2020	Khat	KGs	42,498,880	\$424,988,800	\$465,166,338.18
	Fresh Vegetable	KGs	43,989,659	\$40,175,621.38	
	Ethiopian Daf	Bags of 50 KGs	20	\$1916.8	
2021	Khat	KGs	44,958,197	\$449,581,970	\$449,584,906.218
	Fresh Vegetable	KGs	39,303,068	\$2,901	
	Ethiopian Daf	Bags of 50 KGs	5,987	\$35.218	

Table 9.1: Somaliland Import from Ethiopia (2017-2021)

Source: Somaliland Ministry of Finance

As the above table shows Somaliland partial import from Ethiopia, as the table depicted the import is gradually increasing year after year, 2017 the import was \$319,869,190 and 2021 raised up to \$449,584,906.218 mostly the reason of increase is related Khat because every year the number of people who consume Khat in Somaliland increases and that increases the demand for Khat in Somaliland, mostly in Somaliland Khat consumers are adult male society, Khat is the first product that Ethiopia exports to Somaliland and earns mostly Ethiopia's income from Somaliland, due to this table Ethiopia earned Khat in 2020, \$424,988,800 and 2021, \$449,581,970 also vegetables includes the valuable products that Ethiopia exports to Somaliland (Somaliland, MoF. 2021).

In addition there are other products or Businesses that routinely crosses the border between Ethiopia and Somaliland such as Coffee and livestock, Sometimes the livestock's

exchange between Ethiopia and Somaliland is difficult to mention or track its identity whether from Ethiopia or Somaliland, because livestock and the people who keeps them have the habit of moving without limits, for example, this Pastoral community lives in Ethiopia for some years and in Somaliland for some other years as well as it is difficult to recognize even the identity of that pastoral community and their livestock's, on the other hand there is informal trade which is going on the border between Ethiopia and Somaliland which is remarkable but it is untraceable (Somaliland MLF. 2010).

Ethiopia can diversify its economy by using Berbera Port, located nearer to its border, in which it possesses a 19% share; this partnership fosters robust economic engagement, enabling Somaliland to utilize the port for trade equilibrium. Ethiopia and Somaliland are important to establish trade agreements to facilitate commercial collaboration and reduce trade barriers. On the other hand, the Ethio-Somali relationship is a threat to the relationship between Somaliland and Ethiopia in economic, social, and political terms. Ethiopia and Somaliland need to sign trade agreements to make it easier for businesses to work together and lower trade barriers. Cooperation in all matters will enhance closeness, alleviate trade challenges, and achieve a fair balance in trade deficits, while also emphasizing cross-border trade exchange markets and developing the role of DP World Services⁵⁸.

Though in General African countries have inadequate trade relation other than mostly African countries depends on Asia and Western countries because of this the relationship between Africa is not enough, same as that there is no an adequate amount of trade relation between Somaliland and Ethiopia, but regarding the relationship between Ethiopia and Somaliland was so good according to other Countries in the region, and the present status of the relationship between Ethiopia and Somaliland is as a country of the de facto State recognition for Somaliland along with the condition of Ethio-Somaliland relation is good specially the Diplomatic relation and trade, Historically two sides inherited long time relation as well as almost depend on traditional and cultural, because there are same ethnic people for both sides of the border⁵⁹.

9.2. Ethio-Somaliland Negotiation of Free trade zone establishment

Currently, efforts are underway to achieve a common understanding for the creation and establishment of a free trade zone between Somaliland and Ethiopia; a large area at Berbera Port has been allocated for this purpose, and Ethiopia is one of the countries that will benefit from the free trade zone. There is also an ongoing discussion about having a free trade zone on the borderland between Ethiopia and Somaliland. Officials mentioned that the positive communication and cooperation between Ethiopia and Somaliland will definitely improve diplomatic relations. It is critical to have continuous communication from both sides⁶⁰.

Given that Ethiopia is a landlocked country, Somaliland belongs to an extensive 800 km shoreline in the Red Sea, along with a modern port located in Berbera. In the coming two years, there is hope that with the finalization of a transit and trade agreement between the two countries, the flow of goods and services between the two countries will increase. Somaliland is also about to start the development of a free trade zone in Berbera, and Somaliland is hoping that the government of Ethiopia will be able to use that free trade zone⁶¹.

As well Ethiopia and Somaliland is possible to sign free trade zone agreement but there were changes in Ethiopia for the last decades such as Melez time then Hailemariam time and now Dr. Abiy Ahmed time, Ethiopia is in a continues transition a change and when the change comes quick country cannot focus on everything but a free trade zone with Somaliland is the best way to grow together to give opportunity to both sides and to make Business regular that

the government can get income from taxes of a legal trade, if it is like this trade is illegal contraband is raise and Ethiopia will not benefit Somaliland will not benefit, but if both countries do free trade zone everyone can come operate legally, and can contribute through the Government and to the people, there is expectation for the next step after Abiy now getting the power again for five years, in this coming five years Ethiopia can do and it is in Ethiopian plan⁶².

10. Conclusions and recommendations

10.1. Conclusion

The foundation of the long term relationship between Ethiopia and Somaliland is people to people relation; as well the long-standing economic relationship between the two countries has also facilitated the connection flanked by Ethiopia and Somaliland politically and diplomatically, every year Somaliland exports Khat and vegetables from Ethiopia which worth millions of Dollars, while Ethiopia is an important diplomatic friend of Somaliland, this relationship has gone through many different stages that can be mentioned before the colonial period, during the colonial period, throughout the unification of Somalia and Somaliland period which the relation has been interrupted, and lately for the period of Somaliland declared its independence, therefore, while there is a long border between Ethiopia and Somaliland and the two countries situated volatile region which is not peacefully stable, there is a security cooperation relationship based on close collaboration among two sides, which is up to the point where Ethiopia and Somaliland shares information on daily basis, the relation between two countries in the last thirty years has been developing gradually and the two sides have exchanged General Consulate and Mission office in Hargeisa and Addis Ababa respectively, here is no major changes in the relation between Ethiopia and Somaliland in terms of the administrative changes on both sides since Somaliland declared its independence.

Furthermore, this study suggests that the nature of the relationship between Ethiopia and Somaliland depends on the *de jure* status of Ethiopian statehood and the *de facto* status of Somaliland as a state. Ethiopia was the first country to accept Somaliland *de facto* and open a mission office in Addis Ababa in 1994; it was also the first country to establish a general consulate in Hargeisa in 2002. Now there are more mission offices in Hargeisa, such as in Turkey, the UAE, Britain, and others.

The discovery of the study identified Ethio-Somaliland opportunities include to increase trade between two sides, to create an investment exchange, for instance is big opportunity for both sides since there is 856km coastline that Somaliland has, and Ethiopia is very large and more populated landlocked country, with an advantage for Ethiopia to diversify its options related to ports in the neighboring countries to cover easily nation's demand, and its significant economic opportunity for the expansion of Berbera port which Emirates Dubai Port world (DP. World) company has implementing \$442 million of Foreign Direct investment (FDI), since Ethiopia belongs 19% stake of the tripartite agreement of Berbera port shares, on the other hand there is future opportunity hope related to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) because Somaliland is hopeful as soon as this dam get finish will acquire cheap and non-environmental hazard electricity utility as well as Ethiopia's vision includes to put up for sale electricity to Somaliland when the dam will finish so as to get foreign currency.

once more Ethio-Somaliland relation has been started for a longtime and has gone through different stages; this relation is currently excellent stage with progress, as Ethiopia and Somaliland shares a very long border, the important thing is that the two countries cooperation includes security, although trade and political relations are steadily going on with no

interruption, the relationship between Ethiopia and Somaliland is not depend on changing administrations or figure head of the states on both sides, other than it is a relationship based on the mutual interest of the two countries and the two citizens who share a long-standing cultural and ethnic relationship linking the two communities, it is worth noting that Ethiopia put forwarded the citizens of Somaliland have been very dependent on the past 30 years for health and embassies for the other countries in Ethiopia, if Somalilanders need to travel to the rest of the world, for the reason of that Somaliland is not internationally recognized and the mission offices of the other countries locates in Hargeisa have limited businesses.

Historically, regarding the Ethio-Somaliland relationship 1994 is marked as an important diplomatic event because Somaliland Succeeded to Establish Somaliland Mission office in Addis Ababa which was the first diplomatic office that Somaliland implemented outside the country, this office played an important role in the Socio-cultural, economic, immigration, diplomatic, and security relations between Ethiopia and Somaliland, likewise Ethiopian General Consulate founded in Hargeisa 2002 was another political success for Somaliland while it was the first Consulate set up in Hargeisa since Somaliland announced its independence, on the other hand Ethiopia's decision related to the creation for this two representative offices is an indicator of Ethiopian interest due to Somaliland because the phenomena of foreign policy or in general international relations and diplomacy into all relations between the countries basically depends on each country's national Interest.

10.2. Recommendations

Since the beginning of 1994 Ethio-Somaliland relationship have opened a new phase which follows formal diplomatic and foreign policy channels, though starting from 1980s, Ethiopia was supporting the SNM forces in the war against the revolutionary government of Mohamed Siad Barre there was technical offices that connects both sides which were located in Deridewa and Addis Ababa, but 1994 the first diplomatic office that connects Ethiopia and Somaliland has been established in Addis Ababa and it is Somaliland Mission office in Addis Ababa, this is one of the reasons that this study has been highlighted this history, because the study is related Ethio-Somaliland Diplomatic relationship, in addition two sides should emphasize economy and cultural Diplomacy to maintain the link of Ethio-Somaliland.

The findings of this study indicate that there is a trade imbalance in the Ethio-Somaliland trade relationship, and Ethio-Somaliland economic diplomacy aims to address this imbalance. The deficit is on the Somaliland side because Somaliland doesn't export enough products to Ethiopia. In Somaliland, there are more products that are available, and those products' demand exists on the Ethiopian side, such as fish, salt, and frankincense. While there are no trade barriers between Ethiopia and Somaliland, the Somaliland government and business people should have the courage to export and sell more products to Ethiopia.

While the Horn of Africa region is a volatile and dynamic region in terms of geopolitical and security issues, Ethiopia and Somaliland should improve their security cooperation and political stability collaboration, even though Somaliland is an internationally unrecognized country. Ethiopia is also a valued friend of Somaliland and an important member of the African Union, IGAD, and other regional, continental, and global organizations such as the UN. Somaliland leaders should strive to persuade Ethiopia to advocate for Somaliland within continental or international organizations, raising awareness of the Somaliland issue, as Somaliland is not eligible to attend meetings of international organizations to campaign for its independence. In addition, Somaliland executives have the courage to apply for Ethiopia to accord Somaliland de jure recognition.

To ease trade exchange, Ethiopia and Somaliland should implement and fulfill the Free Trade Zone (FTZ) and sign free trade zone agreements for both Berbera port and borderland towns such as Wajjale to facilitate cross-border trade. The free trade zone will assist bilateral exchange of goods and enhance the interaction between two communities, as well as increase cultural diplomacy, economic diplomacy, and political relations between Ethiopia and Somaliland. On the other hand, Ethiopia and Somaliland should encourage their businesspeople to hold joint trade fairs and exhibitions together and to establish cross-border investments. In addition, there is substantial hope for the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) to finish; it is a valuable mega-project that will be a major benefit for Ethiopia and the entire Horn of Africa, so Ethiopia and Somaliland should consider negotiating how to benefit both sides from this Ethiopian dam.

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³ Interview with one of the senior officials of the Somaliland Mission Office in Addis Ababa, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 16 July, 2021

⁴ Ibid: 1 & 2

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- ⁶ Interview with Senior Staff of the Somaliland Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hargeisa, Somaliland, on 15 June, 2021
- ⁷ Interview with one of the officials of the Ethiopian Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 21 July, 2021
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- ⁹ Interview with one of the senior officials of the Somaliland Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hargeisa, Somaliland, on 5 June, 2021
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- ¹¹ Ibid: 7
- ¹² Ibid: 9
- ¹³ Ibid: 2
- ¹⁴ Ibid: 1 & 2
- ¹⁵ Ibid: 2
- ¹⁶ Ibid: 2
- ¹⁷ Ibid: 1 & 2
- ¹⁸ Ibid: 1 & 2
- ¹⁹ Ibid: 3
- ²⁰ Ibid: 3
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- ²² Ibid: 3
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- ²⁵ Ibid: 1 & 2
- ²⁶ Ibid: 9
- ²⁷ Ibid: 3
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- ²⁹ Ibid: 1 & 2
- ³⁰ Ibid: 1 & 9
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- ³² Ibid: 3
- ³³ Ibid: 1 & 2
- ³⁴ Ibid: 3 & 9
- ³⁵ Ibid: 3 & 9
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- ⁴⁰ Ibid: 7
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- ⁴² Ibid: 6
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