



**TANA  
FORUM  
2019**



# OUTCOMES DOCUMENT

## **Political Dynamics in the Horn of Africa** Nurturing the Emerging Peace Trends

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BAHIR DAR, ETHIOPIA

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# A. INTRODUCTION

The 8<sup>th</sup> Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa took place over 3-4 May 2019, in the city of Bahir Dar, Ethiopia. More than 200 participants, comprising current and former heads of state and government, ministers, ambassadors, academics, heads of international organizations, representatives of regional economic communities, civil society, and media, convened under the proverbial Baobab tree to discuss the theme: Political Dynamics in the Horn of Africa: Nurturing the Emerging Peace Trends. The Tana Forum has continued to provide a standing platform for constructive and frank discussions among a wide range of stakeholders on the most pertinent and pressing peace and security issues facing the continent.

## Key Highlights of Tana Forum 2019

- Attendance of H.E. Sahle-Work Zewde, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Host of the Tana Forum. While she represents the only sitting female Head of State on the continent, two former female Presidents, H.E. Joyce Banda of Malawi and H.E. Catherine Samba-Panza of the Central African Republic, were also in attendance.
- Presence of H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission.
- Presence of H.E. Thabo Mbeki, former President of South Africa and Chair of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel for Sudan, South Sudan and the Horn of Africa.
- The annual Meles Zenawi Lecture on leadership in Africa, delivered by Professor Adebayo Olukoshi, paid a moving tribute to the legacy of South African anti-apartheid activist and politician Winnie Madikizela-Mandela.
- For the first time, the annual report on the State of Peace and Security in Africa covered both a general survey of key peace and security trends, successes, and challenges across Africa as well as focused on the specific theme of the 8th Tana Forum.
- Presentations from the three winners of the Annual University Essay Competition, which, for the first time, was extended to Africans based in the diaspora in addition to those enrolled in higher education institutions on the continent.
- Several well-attended side events, including:
  - A Vice Chancellors Dialogue at Bahir Dar University on Regional Integration and Security;
  - A roundtable on Burden Sharing and the Future of Peacekeeping organized in collaboration with the Munich Security Conference and the African Union;
  - A panel on Lessons Learned from Peacekeeping in the Horn of Africa organized in collaboration with the Munich Security Conference and the African Union;
  - A panel on the Evolving Geopolitical Dynamics in the Horn of Africa and its Implications on the AU and UN Security Agenda in collaboration with the United Nations, the African Union, and the United States Institute of Peace;
  - And a panel on Lessons from the EU and AU on How Economic Integration Affects Continental Security in collaboration with the European Union
- The Annual Book Launch, which featured a book on the history and analysis of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) from 2007-2017.

**ONE OF THE MOST  
CRITICAL CHANGES  
IS BEING WITNESSED  
IN ETHIOPIA, WHICH  
HAS EMBARKED ON A  
TRANSFORMATIONAL  
REFORM PROCESS AND  
ALREADY REGISTERED  
A NUMBER OF  
ACHIEVEMENTS**



In her welcome address, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Host of the Tana Forum, H.E. Sahle-Work Zewde, noted that the present Tana Forum is being convened at a time when the Horn of Africa is undergoing a number of dramatic and positive changes, while continuing to face many challenges. She highlighted that the political dynamics in the Horn are changing, both within and between countries of the region. One of the most critical changes is being witnessed in Ethiopia, which has embarked on a transformational reform process and already registered a number of achievements. Furthermore, she pointed to the normalization of relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea for not only successfully ending the no war, no peace situation between the two countries, but also enabling a broader shift in positive relations between various countries of the Horn. These new dynamics have the potential to accelerate regional integration through the strengthening of infrastructural linkages and cementing of people-to-people relations. She emphasized the importance of the region and the wider international community putting their full support behind the implementation of the revitalized agreement between the South Sudanese parties as well the transition to civilian rule by the transitional military authorities in Sudan. She ended her address with a note of caution that persistent challenges in the Horn should not be overlooked, including governance and socio-economic deficits. Any failure to adequately and systematically address them and meet the needs and aspirations of the people of the Horn will continue to be a source of instability.

**THE 2019 SPSA UNDERSCORED THE COMPLEXITY THAT CHARACTERIZES AFRICA'S LANDSCAPE AND THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ENABLERS AND EFFORTS BEHIND THE CONTINENT'S PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES.**



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African Union





H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, followed with a keynote address. He reiterated the timeliness of the topic given the developments underway in the region. He stressed that the AU and its predecessor, the OAU, have been actively engaged in peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts in the region. Indeed, the AU has been at the forefront of continental solidarity with the Horn, from being a guarantor of the Algiers Agreement to promoting lasting peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia; deploying one of the most challenging and largest peace support operations in Somalia; and being the first to deploy peacekeepers in Sudan, convening peace talks under the auspices of the High Level Implementation Panel and, more recently, supporting ongoing negotiations among Sudanese stakeholders to help chart a consensual way forward for the transition. **He noted that** given the linkages between the various challenges confronting the Horn, the African Union has been advocating for a regional and multidimensional approach, including engaging with extra-regional actors with a stake in the wider Red Sea space.

He congratulated Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed for the reform agenda underway in Ethiopia as well as the decision to normalize relations with Eritrea, which he commended President Isaias Afwerki for accepting. He noted the numerous other positive developments across the region, including the steady progress towards peace and reconciliation in Somalia, a revitalized peace process in South Sudan, historic transition process in Sudan where the AU has pronounced itself in favor of a consensual and civilian-led process; and the resumption of relations between Djibouti and Eritrea following the Ethiopia-Eritrea rapprochement.

Mahamat offered a four-point agenda for consolidating the achievements thus far and ensuring that the current positive trajectory is irreversible, namely:

- i) Deepening enhanced bilateral relations throughout the region and institutionalizing relations through regional arrangements;
- ii) Renewing the commitment to democracy, respect for human rights and good governance;
- iii) Strengthening multilateralism and the role of the UN as well as convening regular engagements with countries in the Red Sea as a means to building a principled partnership; and
- iv) Mobilizing all intellectual resources in the endeavour to formulate policy recommendations to arrive at truly African solutions.

**GIVEN THE LINKAGES BETWEEN THE VARIOUS CHALLENGES  
CONFRONTING THE HORN, THE AFRICAN UNION HAS BEEN  
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In a following statement, the Deputy Prime Minister of the Federal Government of Somalia, H.E. Mahdi Mohamed Guled, commended the convening of the Forum to discuss the geo-political shifts and challenges in the Horn region. He pointed to the importance of infrastructure for enhanced regional integration. Speaking on Somalia, he emphasized that after decades of civil conflict, with support from a range of international actors, the fight against terrorism is being won and space created for institution building, economic recovery, and constitutional review. Nevertheless, Somalia continues to be beset by recurrent drought, exacerbated by climate change, resulting in the worsening of the humanitarian situation in Somalia. This calls for greater demand for implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

**SOMALIA CONTINUES TO BE BESET BY  
RECURRENT DROUGHT, EXACERBATED  
BY CLIMATE CHANGE, RESULTING IN THE  
WORSENING OF THE HUMANITARIAN  
SITUATION IN SOMALIA**

Following these addresses, in keeping with the Tana Forum tradition, H.E. John Dramani Mahama, former President of the Republic of Ghana and Chairperson of the Tana Forum Board, presented the highlights of the 2019 State of Peace and Security in Africa (SPSA) Report. He noted that the 2019 SPSA underscored the complexity that characterizes Africa's landscape and the internal and external enablers and efforts behind the continent's progress and challenges. The report utilizes six themes to illustrate the nature and dimensions of peace and security challenges facing Africa over the course of 2018.

African citizens continued to face multiple sources of insecurity, ranging from those stemming from the state, to activities of non-state actors, and increasingly from outbreaks of communicable and non-communicable diseases and the adverse impacts of climate change. **He emphasized that this insecurity is highly gendered, with women continuing to face the brunt of these threats.** To tackle these new sources of threats, African governments must prioritize human security and meet developmental goals in critical sectors.

Conflicts at war level retained their intensity in 2018, coupled with episodes of other forms of violent civil unrest that have grown in number, intensity, and impact. Indeed, the report indicates that virtually no country was completely free from some form of unrest. Triggers for these agitations ranged from immediate issues such as soaring inflation to structural ones related to horizontal inequality, state corruption, attempts to amend constitutions, and the like.

On the other hand, the report details a number of positive developments over 2018, including: an end to some of the most protracted conflicts on the continent, exemplified by the rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea; the peaceful transfer of power in a number of contexts following elections; expanded space for civil society despite continued risks in many contexts; greater participation of youth in politics, either through elective office or activism; momentum on the freedom of movement agenda and regional integration; and the signing of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement.

The report also draws attention to six global developments that influenced and will continue to influence Africa's peace and security outcomes, highlighting the close dependence of Africa's security on the policy outlook and developments in key countries and regions around the world. Indeed, the report notes that while African institutions and their key partners such as the UN and the EU continue to promote multilateral approaches to safeguarding peace and security in Africa, they are constrained by an erosion of the multilateral world order in place of increasingly bilateral approaches. President Mahama noted that the report explores this confluence of growing attention from external powers and global actors in the Horn of Africa, and its impact on the militarization of the region and its immediate neighbourhood.

**INSECURITY  
IS HIGHLY  
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BRUNT OF THESE  
THREATS**

## B. KEY TAKEAWAY MESSAGES

The 8th Tana Forum consisted of interactive conversations around various aspects of the 2019 theme emanating from the opening statements, main sessions, presentations, as well as side events held on the first evening of the Forum. The core of the conversations centred on the three thematic sessions of day two: a high-level panel on peace prospects in the Horn of Africa; a panel on the new era of inter-state engagement in the Horn and its implications for regional integration; and migration and free movement of people in the Horn region. The key messages and consensus reached through discussions can broadly be summarized as below:

- Significant geopolitical shifts are being seen in the Horn with increasing external competition for political, economic and military influence in the region amid a breakdown of the multilateral world order. Bilateral and transactional approaches to security and competition between the various external actors run the risk of fragmenting regional and long-term approaches as well adversely affecting national politics in the Horn of Africa.
- Consensus by countries of the region on a diagnosis of the key challenges as well as ownership over the solutions and priorities needs to be achieved. Multilateralism should be the guiding principle for addressing the challenges facing the Horn and enabling the region to address the internal and external challenges facing it.
- The revitalization of IGAD provides greater impetus for the institution to lead on garnering consensus by national actors in the region with the AU, UN and international community accompanying and supporting their efforts, and development partners aligning their support as necessary.
- The challenges facing the Horn from extra regional actors and interests require the creation of a broad inclusive framework that ensures space for dialogue, cooperation, and collaboration around shared interests in the Red Sea space - in the first instance between the region and the continent, and then between the Red Sea and other concerned actors.
- The Horn has been the centre of Africa's solidarity. There have been significant and longstanding peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts by the continent and the international community; these gains need to be protected and sustained amid the challenges and changes currently facing the Horn.
- The unprecedented transition within and between countries in the Horn, while largely positive, is also fragile, and there needs to be concerted, collective, and coherent efforts to identify and deliver support and investments to priority institutions and address persistent challenges around structural vulnerabilities in-country. Improved bilateral relations and trust between countries in the region need to be expanded and institutionally cemented across the entire region.
- The transitions within countries of the region will not be durable without concerted and sufficient investments in democracy and good governance, protection of civil society space, and transformation of state-society relations and support to building country capacities to address their structural vulnerabilities.

- Consensus on an analysis of the situation facing the region as well as shared goals and long-term strategies between all supporting actors is key.
- There is an imperative to re-centre the people and communities of the Horn in discussions and proffered solutions, and ensuring they are the recipients of this peace dividend. Prioritizing durable solutions to the displacement crisis, supporting integration efforts which facilitate the free movement of people, people-to-people relations and safe migration, and ensuring that the transition processes and institutions associated with it reflect and accommodate change agents such as youth which have been the critical driving force for change are all critical.
- The conventional approach to politics and peacebuilding are being challenged by the rise of social media, which is changing the articulation of politics, access and participation in political discourse from traditionally excluded voices, and bringing the governed and governing closer in conversation. This provides opportunities for a new positive and inclusive model of politics, as well as the risk of furthering political polarization, radicalization, and division which needs to be part of policymakers' considerations.
- Peace, security and integration are inextricably linked. Consolidating the Horn region as a peace zone thus requires greater efforts towards economic and regional integration. Progress on the integration agenda necessitates political prioritization, strategic alignment and institutional strengthening of regional organizations, as well as a "Marshall Plan", which optimizes investments in infrastructural links with regional impact and benefits. This requires innovative financing solutions and options and strong international partnerships.
- The continent needs to better own and make use of the UN, not limited to continuing to strengthen the AU-UN partnership.
- Given the nexus between peace and democratic governance, the AU should increase its efforts to improve the synergy between the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Governance Architecture (AGA).

### **The following points recap the main outcomes of the 2019 Tana Forum:**

#### **On Peace Prospects in the Horn:**

1. The transition being witnessed within various countries of the Horn needs to be sustained and supported through a focus on institution building, good governance, and human rights. The normalization of bilateral relations between countries of the Horn should be expanded to the region as a whole and be institutionalized through IGAD.
2. Partners should align their support to the priorities and agenda set by the region.
3. The growing presence and influence of external actors is contributing to the militarization of the region as well as exacerbating the fragility of nascent peace within and between countries of the Horn. The continent and the Horn region need a unified voice and concerted collective action - through its multilateral institutions - to manage these relations as well as initiate dialogue through existing and new platforms with extra-regional actors.

4. The region is, and will, continue to contend with a fundamental shift in its demographic profile, with many young people reaching political age and demanding change and inclusion in decision making. Social media is providing an alternative space to articulate politics, advance a different discourse of politics, as well as better connect policymakers with youth. Nevertheless, social media has also served as a site for polarization and radicalization, and addressing this should be a policy priority.
5. Lessons from peacekeeping efforts in the Horn emphasize the importance of an exit strategy underpinned by a clear political strategy as well as strategic options for post-mission presence that takes into account security and political realities.

### **On Regional Integration:**

6. Integration needs to be seen beyond leadership rapprochement and good relations, and speak to the integration of systems and values. Regional integration needs to happen faster, deeper, and more effectively.
7. Investments in economic infrastructural linkages, which have regional impact and benefits as well as securing innovative financing to allow for this, is imperative.
8. The integration agenda needs to progress despite numerous challenges, including fragmentation at the national level in some countries of the region.
9. Economic integration is a political process which creates interdependence and increases the cost of resorting to conflict. Opening up to neighbouring states and solidarity are the two key ingredients for successful economic integration.
10. Integration should be viewed as building inclusive prosperity for all, with a common market for skills and freedom of movement as critical components. Women and youth have a critical role to play in building this inclusive prosperity.



#### **On Migration and Free Movement of People:**

11. The question of migration in the Horn has long been overshadowed by a focus on displacement, with countries of the Horn being among the major hosts of refugees from within the region as well as the rise of internal displacement in a number of countries. Mobility in the Horn however, is increasingly complex, with mixed flows comprising of IDPs, refugees, economic migrants, returnees, victims of trafficking and smuggling.
12. Greater focus needs to be placed on the particular vulnerabilities of specific categories of the displaced and migrants, such as women and youth.
13. The weak integration of the Horn contributes to the irregularity of migration within the region. At the same time, IGAD is one of the most progressive RECs on the continent with regard to policies and frameworks on migration and mobility. The launching of the Continental Free Trade Agreement will generate jobs and opportunities, and must be coupled with facilitating the free movement of people to not only ensure safe migration options but also enable broader regional development.
14. More needs to be done to understand and address the multiple drivers of migration, including the aspirations of youth. National and regional policies should be informed by research and evidence, be aligned with development plans, and be anchored on a whole-of-system approach.
15. Continued exchange, coordination and shared approaches on migration are critical with key international partners such as the EU, as well as collective engagement by Horn countries with the Gulf States on the status, rights and situation of African migrants.

## C. CONCLUSION

The 8th Tana Forum concluded on 4 May 2019, with closing remarks by H.E. Sahle-Work Zewde. She noted that the two-day Forum starkly showed the hope and optimism in and about the region as well as concerns about persistent internally and externally generated challenges. Nevertheless, these developments need to be seen as a transition period, one that requires time and concerted efforts at minimizing risks and sustaining progress through institutionalization and collective approaches and mutual cooperation. Equally important is not only addressing internal challenges to countries in the Horn, but also focusing on the regionalized dimensions of the current dynamics. In this regard, she noted the recent IGAD initiative on the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden as critical in strengthening regional cooperation and a common position in the face of challenges emanating from extra-regional actors in shared spaces. She reiterated that multilateral organizations such as the UN and the AU should come in support of such and other initiatives of the region. Indeed, H.E. stressed that African countries must not lose sight of the fact that the UN is their organization, and that they should be at the table when major decisions are being made. She concluded by thanking H.E. John Dramani Mahama, the organizers of Tana Forum, partners, and the Amhara regional state for the successful organization of the 8th Tana Forum and called on the commencement of preparations for the 9<sup>th</sup> Tana Forum.

