

## **REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN AFRICA: THE CASE OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY ON DEVELOPMENT (IGAD)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The objective of this study was to explore Inter-Governmental Authority on Development's (IGAD's) performance on the integration of the Horn of Africa in light of constructivism theory of international relations, and thus its revitalization. As the Horn of Africa is characterized by civil wars, interstate conflicts, terrorism, chronic poverty, refugee flow, and dictatorships, IGAD aims to work on integrating the Horn countries in political, economic, social and cultural respects in line with sustainable development. The role of IGAD on the integration of the horn region can be well understood through constructivism, a theory that posits essential attributes of international politics are the outcome of social processes. The study was conducted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia focusing on IGAD office and stakeholders. Drawing on qualitative method, data were collected from primary and secondary sources. Interview and focus group discussions were conducted to collect the qualitative data. The findings of this research proved that the restructuring of IGAD did not bring the intended outcome due to multiple and overlapping memberships, diverging roadmaps to integration, unequal levels of economic development, and lack of commitment to implement the objectives of the organization and disagreement on the issue of sovereignty. The revitalization also did not bring inclusiveness as IGAD still followed top down approach, politically-led process (reserved for government officials and diplomats) as well as due to the fact that there existed limited involvement of stakeholders, lack of ownership among citizens, and serious issues of human rights and governance. Therefore, IGAD should undergo further restructuring and recognize the role of institutions as forces of regional development through education and research for policy development.

**Keywords:** Integration, IGAD, Horn of Africa, Restructuring, Revitalization

## INTRODUCTION

First established in 1986, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) was mandated to address the issue of drought and desertification in the Horn of Africa where sustainable development is given focus. Especially in the 1990s, IGADD registered some recognition that was used as an instrument for regional security and political forum. IGADD was restructured into Inter-Governmental Authority on Development's (IGAD) in 1996 when member states (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somali, Sudan, and Uganda) decided to revitalise IGAD into a full-fledged regional political, economic development, trade and sustainable security entities. In this regard, IGAD member countries agreed to form a strong regional economic community through a reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers, to harmonize their monetary and fiscal policies, to form joint research and monetary programs, to establish monetary union and to promote IGAD as a common investment destination through harmonization of member states' investment laws.

As the Horn of Africa is the victim of recurrent drought, famine, human displacement, inter-state and intra-state conflicts, regional integration in the region often regarded as a remedy for the accommodation of diversity, fair share of power and resources, cooperation, security, and development of the region. IGAD is one of the eight Regional Economic Communities recognized by the African Union (AU). The AU has understood that a strong continental integration cannot be realized without strengthening and supporting regional organizations. In other words, there is consensus that regional organizations are the building block so as to bring viable continental integration (Rolso, 2010:11). Although IGAD's performance has been, to some extent, better in the area of conflict mediation, for example, in Sudan and Somalia (Tavares, 2010:47), there is evidence that the organization is still in the process of revitalizing. IGAD has not brought the intended achievements since it has faced multiple complications and lacked clear orientation as the basis for its restructuring and integration. Other reasons include multiple memberships, lack of political will, divergent goal of integration and other structural problems among its member states. For instance, Kenya and Uganda are members of East Africa Economic Community and IGAD. Consequently, some scholars argue that due to dual membership these two countries fall in dilemma strengthening between IGAD and EAC. In short, one may observe that there is a problem of priority among IGAD members to achieve the intended objectives.

Despite some achievements of the organization, the level of intra-regional roads and railways among the IGAD member states is underdeveloped and market access within IGAD members is limited. The initiatives of IGAD are fragmented and isolated where short-term outcomes have been the prime consideration, without a view to enhancing longer-term political integration, conflict prevention and regional stability. The political instability, poverty, maladministration, of member countries, lack of inclusiveness and weak restructuring of IGAD are the major challenges to IGAD's initiatives of regional integration. The region has been experiencing a wide range of intra and inter-state conflicts, some of which prevailed for many decades. The integration efforts of IGAD are challenged by the existed conflicts in the region and deteriorate the underdeveloped physical and social infrastructure of the region (Ali &Edris, 2013). The horn region continues to experience civil wars, interstate conflicts, proxy wars, terrorism, famine, drought, chronic poverty, economic competition, refugee flow, dictatorships, and state collapse. All these have taken the performance of IGAD's revitalization into question and encumbered the organization from achieving strong and dynamic regional frameworks for economic and political integration in the Horn of Africa. (Murithi

2011:68-87; Bashir 2002:9-13). That is why this researcher tries to look for why the restructuring or revitalization of IGAD did not bring its intended outcome?

Scholars such as Medhane (2004), Tafesse (1998), Markakis (1998), and Tavares (2010) analysed IGAD's revitalisation and its performances based on the assumption that IGAD is mainly a regional security organization. That means they did not give attention to the main essence of the revitalisation and its performances in a holistic way and also failed to analyse revitalisation using relevant concepts and theories such as constructivism, federalism, functionalism, neo-functionalism and integration. Instead, they mainly applied conflict theories. This kind of analysis cannot show the full picture of the merits and demerits of the revitalisation and the prospect of IGAD. In short, their attempts are not based on the appropriate theory and relevant concepts like that of constructivism, federalism and integration which could be relevant tools to analyse the complementary objectives of IGAD. There is no visible consensus on the meaning and how regional organizations should be analysed (Biswaro 2003:5; Mangachi 2011:1-5). The establishment and practice of regional and international organizations can be analysed using international relations theories. For instance, Harrison (1974:27-94), Steans and Pettiford (2005:181-202), Biswaro (2012:2-39) discuss various types of theories and approaches of regional integration. These theories basically include political federation, federalism, functionalism, neo-functionalism, realism and neo-institutionalism. Thus, this study, using constructivism theory, fills the gap of existing and previous researches, and thus analyses the integration of the Horn of Africa and IGAD's revitalisation in a holistic manner.

Drawing on the above assumptions, this study intends to answer the following main questions.

- What are the major challenges that affect the integration of the Horn region and IGAD's revitalization?
- What are the opportunities that exist to expedite the integration of the Horn region and the revitalization of IGAD?
- How IGAD should be restructured in order to address its declared objectives (integration and revitalization)?

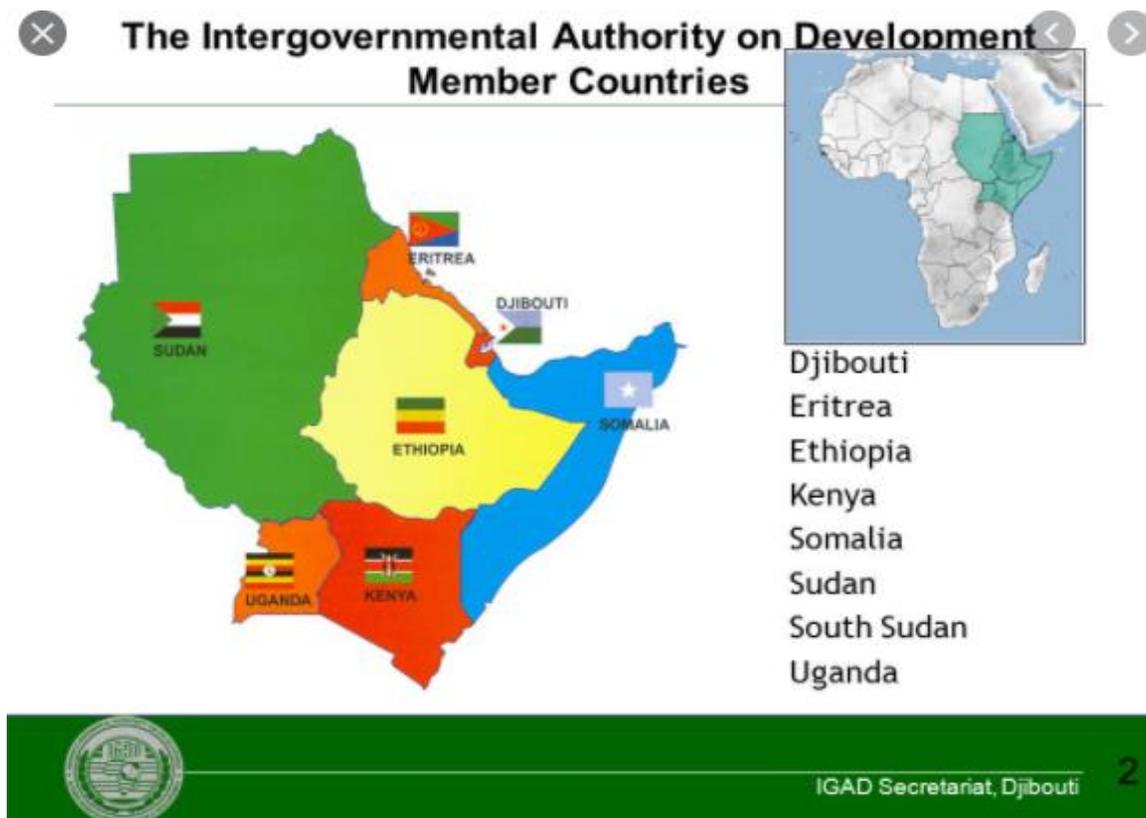


Figure 1: Map of IGAD member states

Source: own construction, 2019

## CONSTRUCTIVISM AS THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THIS STUDY

The end of the cold war, with the collapse of the Berlin wall in 1989, symbolized the emergence of constructivism as an alternative to the mainstream international theories of neorealism and neo-liberalism. Constructivists argue that international relations are predetermined by the historical and social values that are constructed in time, and avow that significant elements of international relations such as anarchy, power, and resources are not objective realities but rather are acquired through the construction of meaning that shape and guide states' relations. Unlike the mainstream theory of IR that asserts the international system is unchanging and assume the sameness of states with the identification of regularities for the purpose of generalization (Dunne et al., 2010: J79), constructivists hold that IRs are historically and socially constructed, and are changeable depending on context and time.

Constructivist scholars believe that social practices shape the structure of the international system and determine the way in which international relations conducted. States' interaction among each other, whether it is anarchic or peaceful, depends mainly on their shared and constructed cultures (Guzzini, & Leander 2006: 2). Putting it differently, anarchy in itself is not an immutable and a naturally-imposed concept, but a result of constructions of social and historical experiences perceived by states. Constructivism stresses on the meanings that are attached to material objects, instead of the mere existence of the objects themselves. Similar objects may mean different thing as their meaning is developed within the context in which they existed and the structured definition they acquired. In Wendt's scenario, a nuclear

weapon belonging to United Kingdom and a nuclear weapon belonging to North Korea may be materially identical, but they possess quite different meanings for the United States. The British are friends and their nuclear weapon is never threatening while the North Koreans are enemies and whose nuclear weapon is dangerous. In fact, the use of nuclear weapons, regardless of who possessed them, is equally destructive. However, the categorization of friendship and enmity, which is a result of historical and social construction of realities, determines what meaning the objects would have in the eyes of the United States.

Interests and identities of states are the other important concepts that constructivism differs from mainstream international relation theories. According to Hopf (1998), “constructivism assumes that the selves, or identities, of states are a variable; they likely depend on historical, cultural, political, and social context” (p.176). States shape their foreign policy, which is the expression of their interests and identity, based on what they think is appropriate to them. And what is appropriate is dependent on the judgment of actors’ conscience which is likely to be influenced by the experiences of the past and the environment in which they lived. Hurd (2008) assumes that “the social constitution of interests encompasses all the ways that actors’ interests and identities might be influenced by their interactions with others and with their social environment” (p. 303). At this point it is prudent to enquire why interests usually explained in terms of material resources like power, wealth, and security. The answer to this enquiry lies in the social meaning societies attributed to power and wealth. When states’ relation with others is built on fear (which is of course a consequence of social construction), they direct their interest towards attaining the most power and wealth to get assurance over that fear.

The international political relations or systems including regional organizations are socially constructed. Steams and Pettiford (2005:199), based on assumption of Alexander Wendt who was the forefront proponent of Social Constructivism, clearly pointed out that constructivism principally tries to show that the organizations of human association (federalism, confederation, regional organization and the like) are dominated basically by shared ideas. Consequently, the identities and interests of states and other human organizations are the outcome of these shared or common ideas with sustainability. Thus, these identities and interests are the main factors that shape the behaviour of states and regional organizations that are established by states. Constructivist scholars posit that international organizations are effective in maintaining international order not because of their governing principle contained in their constitutions, or because societies abide by those principles as liberal politicians would claim, but it is because of the important social meaning attached to those organizations. As cited in Nugroho (2008: 89), Wendt argues, “People act toward object, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them”. The social meaning attached to the United Nations (UN) as a promoter of international peace, gave the institution a privilege to be respected by all states for the purpose of peace. Thus, irrespective of its real power to enforce peace, the UN is identified as an object of peace that binds the whole world. This can be applied to IGAD. Therefore, analysing the nature, structures, and establishment of regional organizations like that of IGAD through constructivism can be suitable with the aims of sustainability and sustainable development. Constructivism can allow this researcher to discuss sensitive issues of IGAD and its member states and communities such as federalism, confederation, identity, sovereignty, culture, resources, ethnic groups and other interests which can be the source of cooperation as well as conflict. Constructivism as a tool of analysis may be more appropriate for the complex Horn of Africa region or IGAD. In other words, among those theories constructivism is more applicable in this study area. Most member countries of IGAD share many issues in common:

political, historical, ethnic, natural resources and cultural. To be successful, the revitalization and practice of IGAD should therefore be viewed in constructivism.

Constructivists posit that culture and identity play important role on the way states make decisions (Berger, 1998) and assert that there is a common national identity that the society and political elites share (Kaarbo, 2015). There are diverse ways through which culture affects and shapes elites' or state's behavior. These included: culture is about collectivity - it is culture that helps us define who we are in relation to others (Katzenstein, 1996; Klein, 1991); culture influences peoples' perception; culture defines and shapes state's interest in a particular way; and culture frames the process through which we make evaluations and choices among available options.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a qualitative approach with the aim to better understand the research problem in depth. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) were carried out to gather in-depth information on the challenges and prospects of the integration of the Horn region. Purposeful sampling was employed to identify key organizations and potential respondents to carry out the interviews and the FGDs. The respondents were selected based on their expertise and knowledge on the Horn region and the issues under investigation. The data for this research have been collected from six different organizations based in Addis Ababa. The organizations included in the sample were IGAD, AU, ECOWAS, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, UN and EU. I conducted semi-structured interviews with 20 interviewees. The interviews were conducted based on an interview guide that mainly included open-ended questions in addition to probing and follow-up questions.

In addition to the data gathered through interviews and FGDs, a review of both published and unpublished secondary sources of data related to this research was conducted in July 2020. The researcher summarized and presented the data into two main thematic areas: security and economic integration. In the process of data analysis, the researcher followed different stages and categorized codes into common themes, and finally made interpretation and analysis.

## **EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Having collected the necessary information for this research, I looked into the perspectives that the interviewees and FGD participants provided. Hand-in-hand with this, I also reflected my intension towards the subject of this study. In this research, I wanted to look at some of the major challenges that IGAD faced, the opportunities that could be utilized as well as the approaches that are being practiced by IGAD in achieving its objectives of the regional integration in conjunction with sustainable development. The empirical data of this research or the perspectives gained from in-depth interviews have been illustrated through two major themes that are related to the research objectives: Security and Economic Integration. This broad-based thematic categorization of the research findings is purely for the purpose of illuminating a contextualized and cohesive understanding of the perspectives shared by diplomats and officers who are located in Addis Ababa and working for IGAD or their respective countries (IGAD member states). First, the paper presents the perspectives of the respondents in relation to challenges, followed by prospects of security and economic integration. In both themes, the roles of IGAD as a regional organization have been addressed.

## **Security concerns and challenges**

The main security issues today in the Horn of Africa include civil wars, interethnic conflicts and forced migration that drove millions of people seeking refuge outside of their home countries, and its negative repercussion on the socioeconomic and political landscapes of the region. It is an apt description that civil wars, inter-ethnic conflicts and mass displacements posed a serious security threat in Africa (Rwamatwara, 2005) which, in turn, affected the economy sustainability of the continent in general and the horn region in particular. Although IGAD seems to have exerted efforts to deal with security problems in the region, it failed to achieve its objective of resolving conflicts among member states. Most of the interviewees for this research mentioned and explained diverse challenges or reasons that impeded IGAD's effort to bring about peace in the region. These included lack of cohesion among member states, little commitment and willingness from conflicting parties, weak leadership & institutions, and inadequate mechanisms to enforce the parties to abide by agreements they have signed (lack of enforcement capability), little support from member countries.

One Ethiopian expert in the EU Commission based in Ethiopia discussed about rivalries and power struggles among Horn countries that exacerbated mistrust between IGAD member states. He also asserts that IGAD failed to coordinate its efforts in urging and pushing the parties to a certain end as some members genuinely tried to accelerate the mediation process while others choose to stay neutral or followed a highly interventionist approach. All these approaches help the conflicting party to look into another avenue rather than the mediation. Divergence of views among major powers and the gap within the UN in enforcing law and orders and in influencing the leaderships has been frustrating. The International Organizations like EU and powerful countries like US have been dragging their feet concerning support to IGAD's position at its critical times. Especially, the US current President Trump has no clear policy direction not only to Horn region but towards Africa as a whole.

Although peace and sustainable development of IGAD's member countries is a pre requisite to regional integration, the Horn of Africa has been characterized as one of the unstable area and the relation between the countries is not based on mutual trust. It is obviously true that the crisis in one country has spillover effect on the regional stability because it creates a concern that the repercussions from the prolonged poverty could compromise regional security, peace and stability, thus undermining the neighbor countries' economic, political and security interests.

Most focus group discussion participants and interviewees agree that the IGAD region has been victim of bad governance, suffered from lack of democracy, civil wars, interstate conflicts, proxy wars, terrorism, famine, drought, chronic poverty and refugee flows. They point out that, due to its weak performance, IGAD has not effectively dealt with these problems both before and after its restructuring. Lack of clear orientation when it was restructured was also mentioned as the underlining problem of IGAD. In short, the restructuring of IGAD was not based on suitable concept such as constructivism.

While other regional organizations have brought a relatively better progress in the areas of good-governance and development within their own region, IGAD did not achieve its main objectives in many ways (Interviewee 1, March 5, 2018).

Internal political problems, contradictory interests of member states and unnecessary interference both implicit and explicit, intentionally or unintentionally have complicated the prospect of the peace processes in the region. IGAD's financial dependency and dependability on external funders, as well as the preoccupation of member states mostly in

their own domestic affairs rendered inability to giving immediate supports when IGAD is in need. As governments of the Horn countries did not tolerate opposing opinions, they often used the police and military forces as an instrument to stay in power, and thus repressed Medias and political groups. Unequal representations, socio economic inequalities along ethnic groups are the characteristics of many governments in the region. It is recognized that such deficiencies in government structures are potential causes for instability of the region. The existence of the conflict forced IGAD to give much emphasis on peace and security of the region and to make less effort on regional economic integration considering sustainable development. Mutual respect and collaboration is important in order to gain effective partnership within regional member states, however, the case of IGAD had always been of rivalry and mutual suspicion among its members. The rivalry amongst member states had led to a situation and contradictory interest. The division within the region's countries and their contradictory interests is shown with regard to the approach to be adopted to solve the violence when the outbreak of South Sudan conflict in 2013. For example, Ethiopia supported the IGAD led mediation while Uganda supported the military means and fighting alongside the government. Such kind of competition among member states of IGAD compromised the organization's prospects of being a strong regional organization. Some member states even acted unilaterally or contrary to the decision made collectively.

As the South Sudan government spends much money on the military expenditure, it has been hit by economic stagnation and double-digit inflation, which has devastated the government's inability to function. The UN calls South Sudan one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. Such kind of impact is even on the neighboring countries because the instability of one country has spillover effect on the other and also on the region's security condition. Even though IGAD is still active concerning the crisis of Sudan and South Sudan, on the contrary, not having the same approach and different political interests of the member states is the major challenge that IGAD has faced. As it is mentioned before, different interests of some of its member states like the Kenya and Ethiopia governments to take the lead on IGAD's peace process of South Sudan is one of them.

Despite their common security concerns, countries of the Horn region perceived each other as a threat due to their long history of interference in the internal affair of the other. Abdu Yasin, a respondent from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, IGAD desk believes that contradictory interest of IGAD's member states of the Horn region is one of the challenges to cooperation. For example, Uganda supports the South Sudan government for the purpose of weakening the Khartoum's government. Other than the political interests there is also an economic interest because since independence Uganda is one of the trade partners of South Sudan.

IGAD does not have an enforcing mechanism or punitive schemes to get the parties abide by the agreements they have signed, hence leaving them a space to play outside of the rules of the game they were meant to adhere to, its indecisiveness to get spoiler parties. The roads for the peace process are always at the mercy of a few politicians who, in the absence of strong civic participation and accountability, command a free ride either to open or block it on their own whims. An expert from AU peace and security staff in Ethiopia said that IGAD lacks strong institution and leaders and their member states are divided and too preoccupied with their internal issues rather than engaging in solving other countries' problem. The organization also lacks credibility as its ultimatums to conflicting parties are often ignored without any penalties. The structures such as special envoy, joint monitoring and evaluation commission (JMEC) and IGAD secretariat do not have any leverage over the parties and are only reliant on summits to move the peace process forward.

IGAD has been doing its best to resolve the problem, but it is not a powerful institution to execute the agreements reached by conflicting parties. IGAD did not play its role because of its member states put their interest first than resolving the matter. For instance, countries in the region either support the South Sudanese government in Juba or its oppositions considering their national interest or ethnic consideration. IGAD's weak institutional capacity and lack of resources undermined its ability to play greater role in the peace process that would be sustainable.

A respondent from IGAD explained that IGAD's problem to solve security problems in the region is associated with the weak leadership and state apparatus of most member states. Member states lacked even the most rudimentary set up for creating a viable state and nation. He has to say this:

The leadership has failed to craft a new and vibrant vision necessary to move the new nation into democracy and prosperity. Throughout their history the states have had marginalized peripheries which are deprived of the basic physical or social infrastructures to sustain their existence. The rampant corruption and patrimonial relations and networks complicated the whole leadership process, and paralyzed the governmental structures and bureaucracy of the countries.

Another IGAD staff representing Djibouti explained that colonial legacy is the main cause of conflict in IGAD region as it uprooted the organic or traditional balance of power and shattered the culture of coexistence among diverse nations of Africa. He points out;

The deliberate wedging of differences between communities imposing boundaries triggered perpetual conflicts among nationalities, ethnic groups and clans. The current lack of trust and instance on power grab by a winning group or party is the product of the unfortunate colonial legacy.

Good administration, institutions and political roadmap invites competing views. In the absence of platform for discussion and willingness to win-win compromises through negotiations, it is difficult to reach consensus. Most of the ruling parties have not yet graduated from a guerilla movement to a civilian government. Political parties with rich experience in armed conflict, often find it difficult to operate as a political party in time of peace. It is often said that history of restoring issues by force and violence won't be much of a helpful experience in time of peace to affect good governance.

Exclusion in politics has also been stated as an important factor affecting the peace and security of IGAD's member states in the horn region. One of the high ranking diplomatic staff from the South Sudan Embassy in Ethiopia explains: Everyone wants to be part of the state apparatus. Besides, the power struggle among political leaders, lack of understanding between the parties, and the dismissing officials of the positions hold are sources of conflicts.

The other diplomatic staff from the Kenya Embassy in Ethiopia posit that majority of the respondents forwarded their rationales that the factors that aggravated the conflict in the region were ethnic tensions and tribalism, impoverished social and economic conditions and weak implementation capacity, lack of professional army, lack of well-organized security sector institutions, corruption, poverty, mismanagement of the situation by higher officials, irrational decisions of the formation of regional states, lack of political will from the principals, lack of transparency in the ruling parties, external interference and vested interest among super powers, especially those who engaged in the negotiation process,

militarization and proliferation of arms, and lack of neutrality of IGAD member states, etc., are attributed to the genesis and escalation of conflict in the country.

### **Peace and security prospects**

Despite its weakness, IGAD platform has served the international community as entry point in resolving the crisis in the region. Efforts and investments on the revitalized agreement have captured attention of partners and the UN System. One of the Ethiopian diplomats working in Djibouti, Headquarter of IGAD, has commented that IGAD has minimized the escalation of the conflicts and further damage; it created a platform for rival factions to voice and pursues their interest through dialogue, negotiations, and agreements. IGAD's mediation role helped in minimizing the escalation of the conflict into other parts of member countries. For example, the organization is providing and mobilizing all necessary political, technical and material support in the quest for peace, stability and nation building through sustainability and sustainable development in Somalia and South Sudan. In South Sudan, IGAD has been trying its level best in creating the platform for rival factions to voice their grievances and demands, and brought the issue to the attention of the international community. The case in point is that IGAD's appeal to leverage the power of the United Nations Security Council has got acceptance and support which, in turn, has given the much-needed traction to the peace and reconciliation process.

One of the Ugandan diplomats working in Djibouti, Headquarter of IGAD, has pointed out that IGAD is an indispensable organization for countries of the Horn region towards bringing peace to the country.

In bringing the cessation of hostilities, in Somalia and South Sudan, IGAD played key and central role in mediations, negotiations and influencing the conflicting parties to come to terms. But, the financial and political support from the external actors was undeniable and indispensable. With the support of external power IGAD endlessly engaged the conflicting actors and bring them to negotiating table. This reduced much atrocities and humanitarian crisis in the region.

A program analyst of IGAD, Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Somalia from The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia also appreciated the role of IGAD. He says,

Had IGAD not taken initiatives in conflict resolution, the situation could have gone up to grave humanitarian crisis like genocides, to the collapse of the governmental systems and to the unending instability or to the failed state, where the circumstances would be safe haven for the terrorist elements.

Two diplomats from the Federal Democratic Republic of Somalia also gave credits to the effort IGAD exerted in resolving conflicts in the region by bringing political leaders of Somalia and South Sudan for negotiation. It also brought visibility of the conflict to the international community.

In order to enhance the region's stability and level of trust among member states, there are attempts by countries to refrain from interfering and supporting rebel movements in the region. For example, currently Ethiopia assures that it would never allow the activity of any armed movement that threaten peace and security in the region and signed agreements that inhibit member states to allow any forces to use their respective territories to launch any hostile activity

against the other. Such kind of commitments from the leaders improves the relations of the countries and enables them to work for mutual benefit by engaging in different aspects of trade, investment and security cooperation.

### **Challenges of economic integration**

Joint development strategies & gradual harmonization of macro-economic policies of member countries; harmonizing policies of trade, customs, transport, communications, agriculture and natural resources; free movement of goods, services and people within the region; and creating conducive environment for foreign investments and cross border investments are among the objectives of IGAD to integrate the region economically with intention to achieving sustainable development. In January 2012, the Heads of State and Government of IGAD countries endorsed a Minimum Integration Plan where economic cooperation and integration as one of the priority areas of cooperation. However, the organization did not commit itself to work with member states towards harmonizing trade policies, procedures and standards to boost trade in the region. As the Horn region has been adversely affected by instability, IGAD is forced to give much emphasis to peace and security issues. Armed conflict in South Sudan and unstable political situation in Sudan have the potential to adversely affect the efforts of the sub region development due to the unsecured business environment.

An important factor that affected the regional economic integration is the nature of governments in the Horn region. IGAD member states have practiced different types of governments and models of political economy. Ethiopia practices centralist model while Somalia, Kenya and Djibouti have established neoliberal types of government with little role of the government. Other Horn countries such as Eritrea and Sudan followed developmental type of political economy. These disparities seem to have hindered the integration processes of the region (interview with Desk Officer, Sudan and Somalia at the MoFA, May 2020).

Poverty being the major problem makes the region vulnerable to anything. IGAD member states 'had obsession with sovereignty while ignoring the most burning issues, poverty, good-governance and democracy'. Although there have been connection between member states with regard to economic activities, cross border investment and the flow of goods into the member countries have been very limited and negatively affected due to poor transport system and mistrust between countries. Such kind of structural problems affects the development of mega projects that are essential to foster the region's integration through trade and flow of labors. One of the mega projects launched in the horn of Africa particularly by South Sudan, Kenya and Ethiopia is the construction of a new transport corridor from the new Port of Lamu through the Kenyan towns of Garissa and Isiolo with one part of the corridor connecting Kenya and Ethiopia. This project envisaged foster in the transport linkage of the three countries and also it is expected to promote trade along the corridor, especially opening up faster development for the countries. Lack of coordination delays the construction of this important project (Augustus & Paul, 2014). Such kind of negative impact on major development projects crowd-out opportunities for regional development.

The interference of a member state into the affairs of other member states affected integration in the region. For example, Uganda is South Sudan's biggest trading partner and its interest is to have safer northern neighbor. However, Uganda's relation with Sudan has always been tense due to the country's proximity to SPLM. And also Uganda has long accused the Sudanese government of supporting of the LRA (Victor A. & Kate M. 2012). And even after the independence of South Sudan, both countries continued to support one another's oppositions, and thus failed to reach an agreement on

free trade and open border. Such kind of historical mistrusts affects the relations of IGAD member countries in order to cooperate and integrate for mutual interest.

Conflict has also the impact of diversion of the government's spending on other significant infrastructure developments to spend on defense and security. To mention the example of South Sudan consequently in a state of economic crisis: its oil revenues are down because of decreasing of the output and depressed international prices, at the same time the government's military spending is sharply up as a result of the civil conflict. Since fighting broke out, South Sudan has reportedly spent at least USD 1 billion on weapons (Laura 2015).

### **Prospects of economic integration**

Although IGAD, since its establishment, concentrated on the issue of conflict in countries such as Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan, it seems it has also given, though little, attention to the idea of economic integration in the Horn of Africa since the Abuja treaty in 1991 wherein Africa Union accepted eight regional economic communities including IGAD. The Abuja Treaty set a timetable for the continental integration that would be fulfilled in stages and completed by 2028 with a step-by-step process (Abdu Yasin, 2020, Interview at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia). Ethiopia as a member state of IGAD proposed insightful economic initiatives that have been appreciated by other member states. For instance, Lamu Project initiated by Ethiopia, Kenya and South Sudan, Ethio-Djibouti railway (from Ethiopia's Sebeta to Somali Region's Dewale), Mekele (Ethiopia) to Tajura pipe line project, energy connection was set by Ethiopia and Djibouti as integration work. However, many economic integration projects of IGAD remain on papers. The practical implementation of joint projects in the region is bilateral or trilateral initiatives rather than at IGAD level (interview with Abdu Yasin, May 2020).

Formal trade flows between IGAD member states is by far low compared to the average trade flows of inter-African countries in general while informal trade or economic exchange between IGAD member states constitute more than 40% of the GDP of the region (Byiers, 2016). A study conducted by Healy (2011) indicates that there are strong economic exchanges between Ethiopia and that of Kenya, Sudan and Djibouti. For example, Ethiopia exported to the aforementioned countries trade items that included beans, livestock, chat and coffee worth of millions of dollars. Given the porous nature of boundaries between horn states as peoples across boundaries share cultural traits such as language, religion, the amount of informal trade flows between Ethiopia and its neighboring countries could go beyond the stated amount. The Ethio-Eritrea reconciliation that broke the 20 years deadlock between the two countries is one of the major prospects for regional integration in terms of peace and economic development for sustainability.

Regional integration could not be enhanced without promoting interconnectivity across the region through energy and transport and building of roads, railways and pipelines. The IGAD region has strong potential to substantially improve the process of regional economic and socio-political integration. This is attributable to the interdependence of the region's people in economic, social and cultural respects. Uganda, South Sudan, and Ethiopia are landlocked countries that need to use the ports of other member states. The imperative of access to the sea for these countries is a major impetus for enhancing regional integration. Member states such as Ethiopia and Djibouti bilaterally tried to interconnect themselves through infrastructural developments. Ethiopia gets access to the port of Djibouti via a jointly owned railroad, and Djibouti benefits from revenues generated from Ethiopia's use of the port.

## CONCLUSIONS

This research basically draw conclusion that the Horn region's integration efforts has been challenged mainly due to IGAD's weak restructuring situation. IGAD has been ineffective in promoting trade and attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the region that is expected to foster sustainable economic growth and development. IGAD did not yet develop consensus to commendably restructure itself and put in place various mechanisms so as to be strong and competent in the continent. In order to be competent and achieve its objectives, IGAD should work to ensure the participation of its member states in identifying apparent structural and functional deficiencies with respect to progress in the integration process, and build a framework for partnership building and collaboration towards common goals both in security and economic sustainability prospects. Relatively high external trade barriers and low resource complementarity between partner states limit internal and external regional trade. Small market size and poor transport facilities make it difficult for Horn African countries to reap the potential benefits of economic integration. IGAD does not build strong regional institutions and it does not develop a strong and clear regional hegemon unless it recognizes cross-border cooperation as critical to the socioeconomic and political integration of the region for sustainable development.

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