The Horn of Africa – Regional Cooperation on Multidimensional Security
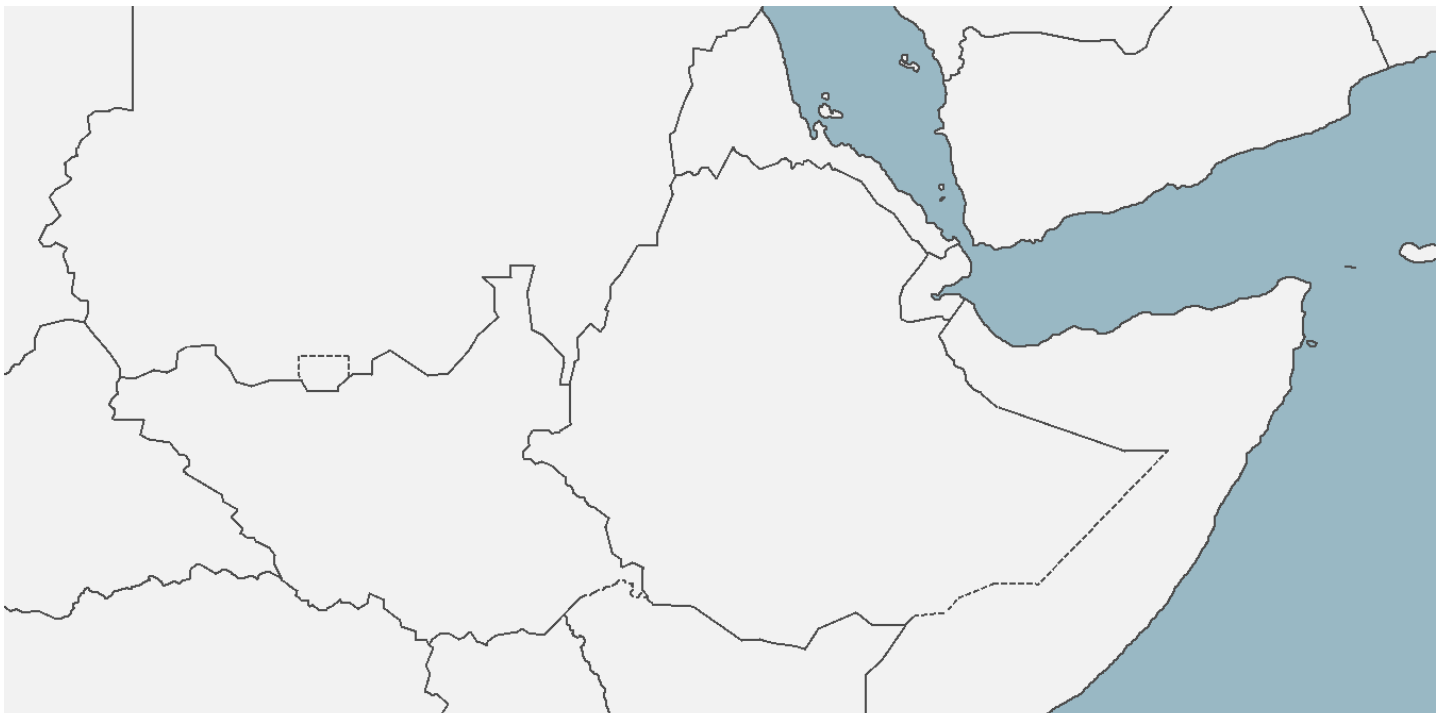
NSD-S HUB

A JOINT REPORT BY

THE NATO STRATEGIC DIRECTION-SOUTH HUB &

THE AFRICAN CENTRE FOR THE STUDY AND RESEARCH ON TERRORISM

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The AFRICAN CENTRE FOR THE STUDY AND RESEARCH ON TERRORISM (ACSRT) was established as a structure of the African Union in 2004. The decision to establish the Centre was taken in 2002 as part of the AU Plan of Action (PoA) to Prevent and Combat Terrorism. Its primary role is to assist AU member States build their Counter-Terrorism capacities. Its mandate includes the conduct of research, analysis and studies on the terrorism situation and terrorist groups in Africa, maintaining a terrorism database, centralizing information on terrorism and sharing this with AU Member States. The Centre conducts assessment missions to various AU Member States in order to ascertain their Counter-Terrorism capability and compliance with International Legal instruments and then provide advice on what needs to be done. In its capacity building effort, the Centre conducts seminars, workshops, and training sessions in various aspects of Counterterrorism for Member States and facilitates the drafting of their Counter-Terrorism legislation, strategies and Plans of Action in accordance with international human rights requirements.

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BACKGROUND

The Horn of Africa (HoA) region comprising Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia is among the most fragile and conflict-torn areas in the world. The region currently faces multidimensional challenges with critical impacts on the political, military, economic and social spheres. Protracted inter/intra state conflicts, terrorism, violent extremism, weak governance, and climate change vulnerabilities are the key factors leading to high instability across the region.

Many of the countries are rich in natural resources, have vast untapped farmland and have business communities that are innovative and eager to contribute to their economies. Prior to the COVID pandemic, the Horn of Africa had some of the world's fastest growing economies. However, add to the pandemic, locust infestation, drought and/or extreme flooding, famine, etc., caused severe economic suffering across the region.[1] These issues have immense social impact with direct knock-on effects to stability and security. The HoA at present hosts an estimated 4.9 million refugees and asylum seekers and 10.7 million internally displaced people.[2] The number of women and children migrating from the HoA to Gulf countries through Yemen has significantly increased and has become a cause of concern. The treacherous journey from Ethiopia, Somalia, and Djibouti through Yemen, called the Eastern Migration Route, has seen a 64% increase in the past year**.[3]**

Each of the countries in the region faces their local context specific challenges, which overall contributes to the sophistication of security dynamics in the region. **Djibouti,** which lies at the mouth of the Red Sea faces range of security challenges including Terrorism. On 07 October 2022, Garabtissan area, Tadjourah region (north) Armed FRUD (Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy) militants conducted a deadly raid on government troops in Garabtisan from the Tadjourah regiment. At least 13 soldiers were killed, and four others injured. The Djibouti parliament subsequently unanimously voted to classify "Armed FRUD" as a terrorist group.[4] Also, the rise of sea robbery and piracy and the weak security environments in Yemen and Somalia have recently surged the geostrategic and geo-economic relevance of the country.[5] As a result, Djibouti currently hosts eight foreign military bases, contributing to the instability in the HoA.

In **Eritrea**, even though there are no major violent conflicts, its relationships with its neighbours (Sudan, Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt) are often not stable or solid. Following the peace agreement with Ethiopia in 2018, the Eritrean government remains autocratic and border issues continue with Ethiopia**.[6]** Eritrea also faces extreme climate change vulnerabilities and recurrent of drought which have affected over 80% of Eritreans who depended on subsistence agriculture for their livelihoods**.[7]** In **Ethiopia**, the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) signed in November 2022 by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the federal government, ended two years of military conflict.[8] [9] [10] The 10-month civil war in Ethiopia was estimated to have

resulted in the deaths over 600,000 people[11] and displaced over 2 million people, created massive human rights violations, and further contributed to risks of famine in the northern Tigray region.[12]

The security sector in **Somalia** is highly fragmented and tensions continue with Jubaland and Puntland, hindering security reforms. Political tensions are rising between Somali and the self-declared but internationally unrecognized Somaliland.[13] Furthermore, Al-Shabaab (AS) remains a regional security threat capable of carrying out large-scale attacks. The Al-Qaeda affiliate terrorist group continues to dominate the terrorism landscape in the country and the region as well. In recent times, the group has resorted to suicide bombings using Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and targeting civilians in high population density areas as well as government offices and installations.

The HoA also hosts several foreign actors, due to its geo-strategic position, which further escalates the complexity of security cooperation initiatives in the region, thereby undermining the efforts to achieve enduring peace, stability, security, and development in the region. Given the peculiarity of the challenges that the HoA faces, multiple Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Regional Mechanisms (RMs) and multinational security cooperation initiatives have become common. The overall effect is that such multiple cooperation mechanisms create issues of overlapping regionalism where one country belongs to two or more regional cooperation initiatives, which share common policy objectives. This phenomenon poses challenges to effective security cooperation and coordination.

Despite the multidimensional security cooperation in the HoA, the dynamics of security challenges remain potent. With the view of enhancing the response generation efforts, the Heads of State and Government of Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia met and held their third trilateral meeting on 27 January 2020, to discuss the need for a regional security framework as a tool to meet their shared security challenges and to regionally address national issues. Aware of the challenges ahead and understanding that the security and stability of each country is intrinsically linked, they foresaw the creation of a new regional bloc in the HoA often referred to as "Horn of Africa Cooperation (HoAC)".[14] The meeting was a follow up to the 2018 "Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Cooperation between Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea'' (also called the *Tripartite Agreement*) signed in Asmara, Eritrea, where the leaders agreed on a Joint Plan of Action for 2020, focusing on consolidating peace, stability and security as well as promoting economic and social development in the HoA but the document was never released.[15] The Joint Declaration (2018) established four pillars of cooperation:

> i.   Comprehensive cooperation that advances the goals of their peoples;
>
> ii. Building close political, economic, social, cultural and security ties;
>
> iii. To work in coordination to promote regional peace and security;

iv. The formation of a Joint High-Level Committee to coordinate their efforts within the framework of this Joint Declaration.

The HoAC comes onboard as additional initiative to existing regional mechanisms such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF), East Africa Community (EAC) which Somalia applied to join in 2012, among others. More recently, on 01 February 2023, four Heads of State and Government comprising Somalia and three frontline states to Somalia - Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya met in Mogadishu to agree on a final push for joint operations in the areas that remain under Al-Shabaab terrorists to completely liberate the whole of Somalia from Al-Shabaab, and to prevent any future infiltrating elements into the wider Horn and East of Africa region. The regional leaders decided to establish a joint operations mechanism that will coordinate the drive to defeat al-Shabaab.[16] Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti pledged in the meeting to send additional troops to Somalia to provide support to the Mogadishu regime in the clashes against Al-Shabaab.[17]

Understanding the complexity and the sophisticated nature of cooperation and relationships among countries in the HoA which are often characterized by deeply ingrained rivalries between the countries in such a conflict-ridden region[18] and complicated political context, it was paramount to assess the potential of the HoAC and reflect on what necessitated the need to pursue the path of another regional cooperation. This situation prompted The NATO Strategic Direction-South HUB (NSD-S HUB) and the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), under the auspices of their ongoing cooperation agreement, to co-organize a workshop on 'The Horn of Africa – Regional Cooperation on Multidimensional Security'. Consequently, a Subject Matter Expert Workshop was held on 23 May 2023 in Algiers, Algeria. The Workshop sought to facilitate understanding and exchange of perspectives on the security dynamics in the Horn of Africa and the cooperation mechanisms and brought together participants drawn from the co-organizers as well independent experts. The main objective of the Workshop was to facilitate peer learning about the Horn of Africa regional multidimensional security initiatives and the potential for more comprehensive and impactful regional cooperation. Specifically, the Workshop also sought to facilitate:

1. the harnessing of deeper insights into the existing mechanisms which determine the multidimensional security environment in the Horn of Africa.
2. greater participant's understanding of regional multidimensional cooperative security initiatives, focusing on the "Horn of Africa Cooperation" (HoAC) also called the Tripartite Agreement.

WORKSHOP METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

The NSD-S HUB and the ACSRT co-organized a one-day Workshop on 'The Horn of Africa – Regional Cooperation on Multidimensional Security'. The Subject Matter Expert Workshop was held physically on 23 May 2023 in Algiers, Algeria. The expert workshop was attended by eighteen participants. Four Subject Matter Experts from Burundi, Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda with extensive understanding of the multidimensional security dynamics in the HoA were invited to lead discussions and presentations. In addition, Experts from NSD-S HUB and the ACSRT as well as the Sahel Fusion and Liaison Unit (UFL), African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL) took part in the workshop and contributed to discussions. List of Workshop participants is attached to this report as **APPENDIX 1**.

The Workshop comprised four main sessions that covered Dynamics of the Multidimensional Security Environment in the Horn of Africa; Opportunities for the Horn of Africa Cooperation (HoAC); Challenges facing the Horn of Africa Cooperation; and External Influences on Regional Cooperation and the Multidimensional Security Environment. The in-depth discussions commenced with coverage of the prevailing situation given the already existing regional state of fragility, the multiplicity of regional and external actors and the impact thereof, the contributing factors to continued peace and security delicacy. The remainder of the workshop was dedicated to discussing prospects for the peace and security of the relevant countries and for the region as a whole.

By design, therefore, the report includes content, which does not necessarily reflect the positions of ACSRT and/or the Hub.

The deliberations culminated into some key findings, outcomes and conclusions, which covered the regional security dynamics, the cooperation modalities, opportunities for cooperation and the influences of external actors. This report summaries key findings and outcomes of the discussion.

OVERVIEW OF MULTIDIMENSIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION IN THE HoA

The Horn of Africa's geostrategic position is fundamentally significant, not only for the littoral countries, but also to the entire East African region in the economic, security, social and political domains. Regional cooperation and multinational organizations (**whose details are presented in the Table below**) have played key roles in conflict resolution and in addressing multidimensional security matters.

No.	Name of Organisation/ Mechanism/ Initiative	Year of Establishment	Current Members	Brief Description
1	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)	11 December 1994	Burundi, Comoros, D.R. Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Tunisia, Zambia, Zimbabwe,	COMESA covers a huge geographical area (21 members) and promotes free trade, market harmonization, greater productivity, financial/monetary coordination and infrastructural development. COMESA is not only the promoter of economic cooperation, but facilitator of a more secure, stable environment for development.[19]
2	Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)	21 March 1996	Djibouti, Eritrea,[20] Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda	IGAD is one of the oldest and most influential regional organizations in East Africa. Its remit has expanded from food security and environmental protection to economic cooperation, social development and peace and security.[21]
3	East African Community (EAC)	30 November 1999	Burundi, DR Congo, Kenya, Rwanda South Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania,	EAC's main objective is economic integration, but its future plan is the establishment of the East African Federation as a sovereign entity. Currently there are no members from the Horn of Africa, but Somalia applied to join in 2012.[22]
4	Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF)	10 September 2004	Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.	EASF which is a component of the African Union's security architecture and consists of military, police and civilian elements from 11 member states in the region. However, the deployment of forces in

				peacekeeping missions has been limited.[23]
5	The Regional Centre for Small Arms Control (RECSA)	21 June 2005	Burundi, Central Africa Republic, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.	RECSA is an intergovernmental organization with a sole mandate of coordinating the implementation of the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region, Horn of Africa, and bordering states. All Horn of Africa countries are parties to the protocol.[24]
6	Horn of Africa Cooperation (HoAC)	8 September 2018	Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia	A "Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Cooperation between Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea"[25] (also called the *Tripartite Agreement*) signed in Asmara, Eritrea. At this meeting, they agreed on a Joint Plan of Action for 2020, focusing on consolidating peace, stability and security as well as promoting economic and social development in the region

The HoA also hosts a significant number of foreign players which have influenced the local political landscape. For external actors, the region is often an arena where they advance their own interests, potentially affecting the local balance of power, both between and within Horn of Africa countries.

THE DISCUSSIONS

The discussions followed an opening ceremony, which was formally addressed by *Brigadier General Aydin KILIÇ*, Director of NSD-S HUB and Mr. *Idriss Mounir LALLALI*, the Acting Director Deputy Director of the ACSRT. Brigadier General KILIÇ underscored the importance of the Workshop in understanding regional and local perspectives on the security challenges that confront the HoA which are key to sustainable solutions. Thus, he encouraged participants to share their experiences and perspectives as much as possible to effectively contribute to the ultimate solution of the region's peace, security, development, and stability. On his part, Mr. LALLALI, reiterated the ever-increasing multiplicity of challenges facing the East and Horn of Africa region, notably, terrorism and violent extremism, climate change, resource-

based communal conflicts, organized crime; drugs, arms and human trafficking, and other emerging threats that have compounded against the peace, security, and stability of the region. He further encouraged participants to share and peer-learn from their counterparts' experiences and perspectives whilst exploring feasible solutions for the peace of the region.

The discussions and the deliberations followed the opening session. The discussions centered around four main themes viz:

(a) Dynamics of the multidimensional security environment in the HoA region,

(b) Opportunities for regional cooperation in the HoA region,

(c) Challenges facing regional cooperation in the HoA region, and

(d) External influences on cooperation and multi-dimensional security environments.

a) DYNAMICS OF THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT IN THE HoA.

The aim of this session was to gain deeper insights into the existing and emerging threats undermining peace, security, and stability in the HoA. The discussion revolved around the multiplicity of regional security threats in the region. The experts enumerated several security challenges, and these include, amongst others, transnational organized crime, terrorism, violent extremism, livestock rustling, intra-state conflicts and border insecurity. There was considerable debate on the major security threat in the region. However, at the end, all agreed that, whilst organized crime is very high in the region, terrorism and violent extremism constitute the primary security threats, which necessitate harmonization of efforts in order to effectively prevent and counter the phenomena.

The complexities of the security dynamics were attributed to the multiplicity of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to which East Africa and the Horn of Africa regional Member States belong. In this regard, it was noted that the fact that the regional Member States (MS) are members of more than one Regional Economic Communities such as EAC, IGAD, Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) poses a threat to effective security cooperation. Experts' opinion was however divided on the matter of multiple membership. While some experts noted that membership in such several organizations leads to disharmony in terms of cooperation as cross-regional priorities may contrast each other, experts with contrary opinion argued otherwise by pointing out that the existence of bilateral organization, such as HoA Cooperation, does not undermine the umbrella mechanisms such as IGAD as long as the agendas do not clash. The argument was premised on the fact similar sub-organizations like the Mano River Union; which was established to pursue strategically coordinated socio-economic development, jointly conceive and implement peacebuilding interventions, as well as embark on political stabilization programs initially between Liberia and Sierra Leone - and later roping in Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea; have existed and thrived without necessarily running contrary to the Economic Community of West African

States (ECOWAS) agendas. In the end, the general consensus among the experts is that such multiple memberships, whilst they may be good for economic integration and other purposes, do retard or derail timely responsiveness to security threats especially if the lower-level sub-organizations' agendas are not in sync with the greater REC mechanism.

The security implications of the HoA region's geographical location were also discussed. This was observed to pose external threats as it is the link between Africa and the Middle East. It also serves as a geostrategic logistical transit corridor for Member State leaders to see beyond narrow interests to regional level. It was considered as key indicator that the threats emanating from the influx of external actors have far reaching regional security implications.

Border security mechanisms by the regional Member States were noted to be contributory to the security environment. The Experts noted that disjointed border security programs are common amongst neighboring countries of the region. The experts further attributed incessant cross-border terrorist attacks to border porosity and fragmented border security mechanisms. The experts called for more joint border patrols at bilateral levels to enhance border security management and surveillance to tackle cross-border terrorist attacks and transnational organized crime network groups.

The presence of multiple foreign actors was identified as another key factor that bears on the security environment in the HoA region. An expert for example stated that "*the multiplicity of non-African actors in the region who come in the name of cooperation exacerbates insecurity and sow seeds of disharmony amongst the regional Member States*." Examples of how particularly Middle Eastern countries have sown seeds of disharmony in the region thus posing further security challenges were highlighted. In the end, all experts recognized the role of coordinated regional security efforts in eliminating the threats at national and regional levels.

The state of social contract between the governments and their citizenry and the impact thereof on security dynamics at national and regional levels was discussed. Social contract gaps were noted to be common amongst all the regional MS as manifested in lack of job opportunities in the face of youth bulges as well as unavailability of social safety nets. The existence of ill-administered spaces and the assumption of commodity provision roles by terrorist organizations that effectively translates to job provision and stamping of authority by those groups were identified as challenges to the multidimensional security environment. In addition, the prioritization of kinetic operations over more human security-centric interventions exacerbates the divide between the citizenry and the governments hence more appeal for terrorist groups, their propaganda and their promised commodities. In the end, it was unanimously agreed that MS must endeavour to promote whole-of-society approaches to the countering of terrorism and prevention of violent extremism in order to eliminate the alienation of the local population in security interventions.

b) OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION IN THE HoA.

The second thematic area of discussion concerned opportunities for regional security cooperation in the region. The discussants noted improvements in political will amongst the regional leaders to cooperate in order to effectively intervene against security threats. Experts pointed to the mooted HoAC platform as one such mechanism that shows willingness to engage by the leaders of Somalia, Ethiopia, and previously alienated Eritrea. This HoAC platform generated immense debate amongst the experts with the majority agreeing that it was detrimental to the strength of the IGAD, yet others argued otherwise that IGAD's alienation of Eritrea constituted an exclusionary policy that hampered cooperation with the previously erstwhile country. The expert buttressed the argument by that the thawing of relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia, coupled with the former nemeses' mutual willingness to cooperate in bilateral and regional security matters, presented an opportunity for readmission of the former to IGAD. Furthermore, the expert argued that "unless IGAD shows willingness to reinstate Eritrea, the HoAC mechanism remains justified as it is the one of the only avenues that the alienated country can cooperate with its regional counterparts. It must however be noted that Eritrea has since rejoined IGAD on 12 June 2023.

The discussion also covered the potential opportunities for the swaying of regional MS' priorities towards more social contract enhancement-oriented interventions. The security benefits that could trickle from prioritization of addressing factors that are conducive to the emergence and propagation of terrorism and violent extremism necessitated regional cooperation mechanisms. Other benefits that could be obtained were listed to include social services education, community-level conflict resolution mechanisms, anti-livestock rustling services, livestock enhancement programs and provision of services in ill-administered spaces as key in this regard.

Regarding security cooperation, the experts noted significant progress as evidenced by deployments in Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and the cooperation agreement for Somalia's Frontline States in preparation for the eventual exit of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). However, the emerging security challenges, such as the Sudanese conflict, were considered to have the possibility of further prolonging the security challenges of the region. That notwithstanding, the high levels of willingness and the improvement in operational-level criminal justice cooperation at regional and cross-regional levels were applauded. Examples of how regional and inter-regional law enforcement agencies and judicial officials have successfully cooperated to perform extra-territorial investigations, prosecutions and justice delivery were indicated.

The security agenda and interventions are mainly top-down and seldom bottom-up. Experts noted the limited scope for inclusivity in the security agenda such that non-security-oriented stakeholders on the ground, including civil society organizations and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), are mostly excluded from security interventions. The experts, therefore, shared the immense potential contribution of decentralization and devolution of governance and empowerment of local communities under the auspices of Whole-of-Society or Whole-of-Government approaches towards sustainable peace, security, and development. The experts unanimously concurred that such lower echelons-empowering measures including

policies, budgets, and programs are crucial for the furtherance of holistic security and development agendas. It was observed that there could be potential region-wide benefits that would emanate from holistic community engagement towards conceiving Mindset Change Programs especially covering anti-livestock rustling and prevention of violent extremism that have proved effective in some cases. In the end, it was agreed that such good practices need region-wide replication.

The presence of a common language, which facilitates easy communication was identified as a key element that presents opportunities for regional cooperation. In this regard, the experts deliberated on the potential for the two (2) major languages (Swahili and Arabic) in East Africa and HoA regions to foster cooperation, collaboration, and integration. In the end, it was agreed that this constitutes an opportunity for deeper and more extensive regional integration and the evolution of regionwide development interventions. The potential role of comprehensive needs assessments and stakeholder mapping at national and regional levels exposing the cross-national similarities. An expert noted that "the comprehensive needs assessment has to be followed by comprehensive resource mobilization geared towards addressing local grievances and ensuring full implementation of relevant synergistic interventions."

The potential opportunity to focus on post conflict disarmament, demobilization, reconstruction, and reintegration were discussed. In this vein, experts articulated how holistic cross-national disarmament and demobilization cooperation would greatly weaken the impetus of the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the region as well as reduce the numbers of potential and actual combatants roaming the region. The integral role that Regional CT Strategies and Plans of Action (PoA) could play towards addressing specific problems was recognised. It was agreed that these need to be complemented by comprehensive capacity building programmes (training of personnel and acquisition of equipment) that incorporate a mainstreamed monitoring and evaluation component.

c) CHALLENGES FACING REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION IN THE HoA

The main aim of this session was to discuss the various factors hampering security cooperation amongst the HoA MS. The main factor identified is insufficient political support and abundance of mistrust amongst the regional MS leaders and this greatly impedes regional level cooperation. It was further noted that countries engaging or recovering from inter-state conflicts such as resource-based and territorial conflicts are habitually suspicious of one another and the rift dampens prospects of cooperation at bilateral or regional levels. An example of Eastern DRC where tensions arose between the EASF and the host country, resulting in the invitation of the SADC Standby Force to add firepower against the M23 was cited. The experts unanimously concurred that trust is very essential if effective regional cooperation is to materialize, and the case cited above bears testimony to this. Competing interests of external players also affect cooperation between and amongst MS in the Horn Africa region.

The issues of overlapping regional organizations with shared policy objectives and its attendant multiple memberships of individual countries to regional blocs was revisited during this session. This once again was argued as a setback to regional security

cooperation as the phenomenon creates both overt and covert retrogressive competition between regional blocs. It also brings about competition for both internally generated and externally mobilized resources. In this regard, several experts believed the incorporation of the HoAC Platform into IGAD would eliminate such competition. Other experts, however, questioned the possibility of such incorporation given that Eritrea had not rejoined IGAD at the time of discussion. In this regard, the panelists unanimously agreed that the reinstatement of Eritrea into the IGAD family is a necessary precursor to enhanced integration in the region that would see the dissolution of the smaller sub-regional mechanisms. The possibility of reimagining regional cooperation by emerging existing mechanisms with similar mandates was proposed. One such proposition is that the EAC and IGAD might need to be morphed and transformed into one formidable Regional Economic Community that is free from multiple memberships, thus rejuvenating the impetus for enhanced regional cooperation.

Lack of access to predictable and sustainable financing mechanisms for security sector initiatives creating budgetary constraints have also been cited among the greatest challenges tormenting the region and hampering meaningful regional cooperation. This, according to a panelist, is also partly a result of overlapping memberships that unduly overstretch MS monetarily and further contribute to inefficiency and overreliance on foreign assistance.

d) EXTERNAL INFLUENCES ON REGIONAL COOPERATION AND THE MULTI-DIMENSIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The influx and continued presence of foreign actors in the region was also picked as a factor that contributes immensely to the regional security dynamics. An expert noted the fact that, instead of aiming at reaping synergies through fostering and investing in effective security cooperation, the foreign actors do sow seeds of disharmony because of incongruent geostrategic interests. It was noted that competing interests of external players have done more harm than good to security cooperation between and amongst MS in the Horn Africa region.

As alluded earlier, the competing international partner interests do humper effective regional cooperation and destabilize the multi-dimensional security environment. In this regard, an expert opined that "*the geo-strategic position of the HoA makes it susceptible to competing interests that manipulate or dictate the form, substance, direction, or even fate of cooperation.*" Others also argued that the lack of self-sufficiency renders the HoA regional prone to detrimental external influences that will impede prospects of bilateral and regional security cooperation.

Finally, the lack of commitment to regional causes and interventions also enhances the probability of manipulation by external actors. Several examples of non-African countries whose alliances with their hosts have caused more turmoil in the HoA region were cited. In the same vein, the possibility of incompatible foreign influences divergent HoA host country local priorities and often with entrenched conditionalities that inhibit potential or actual regional cooperation and relegate regional security considerations were highlighted as key external interventions that negatively impact regional cooperation and the multidimensional security environment.

CONCLUSION

Peace and security in the HoA have seen significant progress in recent times. Commitment by the political elites, particularly in Somalia and Ethiopia to address multifaceted challenges have received commendation. The commitment and willingness that inspired the political leadership to meet on the HoAC was a step towards resolving common security threats and socio-economic challenges. Identifying priority areas of interventions, creating synergies with existing regional organizations and mechanisms to avoid duplication of efforts and waste of scarce resources, sustaining the momentum of political commitment, and building trust among political leadership of countries in the HoA are considered key priorities that could prove useful to the HoAC and enhance its effectiveness.

The formation of the HoAC is considered a step in the right direction. However, satisfactory answers to the questions; is it beneficial to create a new regional organization mechanism such as the HoAC? could such a network be a valid solution for dealing with stability in the HoA? and what problems might the HoAC solve that other regional organizations have not? are still lingering. To avert the risk of alienating current and potential partners and running the risks of undermining security response generation efforts, the HoAC could adopt a more inclusive and progressive approach by working closely with existing organizations such as African Union, IGAD, EAC, EASF, RECSA, COMESA, including exploring the possibility of getting the buy-ins of countries such as Djibouti and Kenya who are key security partners for Somalia. This, when done, has the potential of shaping the security architecture of the HoA and the broader East Africa region.

In light of the deliberations and findings articulated above, the following conclusions and key takeaways can be drawn:

- The HoA region is subjected to multiple security challenges, notably, terrorism, violent extremism, livestock rustling and border insecurity.
- The multiplicity of MS' membership to regional blocs and mechanisms create issues of overlapping regionalism undermines regional security cooperation agendas hence the need to rethink multiple membership in regional organizations with similar policy objectives to foster total commitment to regional security agendas and interventions.
- The geo-strategic position of the HoA makes it prone to varying global interests and external influences that have varying connotations on the security situation and the effectiveness of cooperation. The presence of numerous military bases is considered a contributing factor to the state of instability in the HoA.
- Political rivalry, resulting in incongruent political will, dents the practicability of regional security cooperation hence the perpetuation of conflict and conditions conducive to the emergence and spread of terrorism and violent extremism.
- There is a strong possibility for the East and Horn of Africa region to integrate capitalizing on the commonality of languages (Swahili and Arabic).
- A combination of Whole-of-Society and Whole-of-Government approaches are integral for comprehensive engagement that inculcates multi-stakeholder commitment to peace, security, and development in the HoA.

APPENDIX 1: WORKSHOP ATTENDEES

No	Name	Organisation
1	Major General Diomede NDEGEYA	Ministry of Defense, Burundi
2	General (Rtd) Dr. Robert G. KABAGE	The Global Centre for Policy and Strategy (GLOCEPS)
3	LCL Alex BWOMA TUMUSHABE	National Counter Terrorism Centre, Uganda
4	Dr. Anneli BOTHA	Free State University, South Africa
5	Commissioner Meliani KRISTIOU	African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL)
6	Ms. Fatimatu Binta ABDALLAH-ARASAH	The Sahel Liaison and Fusion Unit (UFL)
7	Mr. Idriss Mounir LALLALI	ACSRT
8	Ameur DAHMANI	ACSRT
9	Ms. Mauna BAGWASI	ACSRT
10	Mr. Eric Hukportie	ACSRT
11	Mr. Martins ABADIAS	ACSRT
12	Mr. Moise Lazare Emery LECKIBY	ACSRT
13	Mr. Elias BENYU	ACSRT
14	Mr. Idriss Hassan LALOUCHE	ACSRT
15	Mr Usman HUSSAIN	ACSRT
16	Brigadier General Aydin KILIÇ	NSD-S HUB
17	Mr Marton HEGEDUS	NSD-S HUB
18	Mr. Enrico CASTELLO	NSD-S HUB

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