

What Next for Somalia: Making Peace Sustainable

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Introduction

Ethiopia's engagement in Somalia has both dismantled an immediate threat to its security and that of the region, and opened a window of opportunity for building a sustainable peace in Somalia. But this operation, while necessary, was also a costly drain on Ethiopia's scarce resources. Now the Ethiopian forces are in the process of withdrawing and urgent action is needed before that window closes.

The Islamist militias that sparked the clashes with attacks on Somali Government and Ethiopian forces, as well as African Union (AU) peacekeepers, reportedly suffered heavy losses. This was probable accurate, as indicated by their subsequent collapse.

March 29th marked the beginning of the end for organized resistance by the Islamist militias. The Mogadishu-based Shabelle Media reported that the Ethiopian forces had taken control of a number of South Mogadishu's main intersections, "such as Shirkole, Ifka halane, Ali Kamin, Hararyale, and Towfiq." These strategic intersections and the neighbourhoods that surround them, were the main strongholds in

Mogadishu of the Islamist militias and the sub-subclan that most of members belonged to. This limited the mobility of the militia groups and the availability of viable hiding places, and accelerated their defeat.

This was accompanied by a massive exodus of civilians from the most affected areas of South Mogadishu, particularly the above-mentioned neighbourhoods. This had the effect of further isolating the militias and removing the human shields on which they apparently depended. Once the civilians moved out, the militias had little choice but to stand and fight, or surrender.

In this respect, the remnants of the militia forces of the Supreme Council of the Islamic Courts (SCIC), who attempted to launch an insurrection in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, have reportedly been largely destroyed, dispersed, or captured. While some of the Islamist militiamen may still be at large, it appears that the forces of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and its Ethiopian allies have restored order, at least for now. However, most of the key leadership of the SCIC seem to have

escaped much earlier. Some, like the ‘number two’ SCIC leader, Sheikh Shariff Sheikh Ahmed and a handful of his colleagues, have shown up in the Eritrean capital, Asmara.

For the moment at least, Mogadishu is quiet, and a measure of security has been restored. But, as always with Mogadishu, stability remains to be seen. Time, they say, will tell. In the meantime, the most immediate problem for the TFG, after establishing security, could be the humanitarian crisis linked to the conflict, with large numbers of civilians, displaced by the fighting, now starting to return to the city. With the end of the fighting, the TFG have reopened the airports and roads, to facilitate the flow of humanitarian aid.

No one knows, or is likely to know the actual toll of the recent clashes, and the estimates vary wildly. This could depend on who is making the estimates, for what audience, and, of course, their own affiliations. Much the same appears to be true of the estimates of the numbers of displaced. What is clear however is that there is a massive humanitarian emergency, and that it needs to be quickly addressed.

Building security in Mogadishu

Ensuring stability in Mogadishu is a key issue. The remnants of the SCIC networks need to be brought to a standstill. The sub-clan elders in their neighbourhoods know these people and where they hide, as do the SCIC-linked businessmen who finance them. But it may require some pressure to persuade them to share that knowledge. There are still plenty of unemployed youth around who can be hired for a few dollars to shoot at someone or plant a bomb. Their sub-clan elders and businessmen may need to be persuaded that this will not be tolerated, and could have adverse repercussions.

The newly-appointed National Police Commander, Colonel Abdi-Awale Hassan

‘Qeybdid’ from the Hawiye/Habir-Gedir/Saad sub-subclan, who fought on the side of the TFG against the Islamist militias, has considerable knowledge of Habir-Gedir Ayr militias in Mogadishu, and could be well-positioned to deal with them and what remains of their infrastructure. Similarly, the new Mayor of Mogadishu, Mohamed ‘Dheere,’ of the Abgaal, the largest of the Hawiye subclans, and the majority population in Mogadishu, who also fought alongside the TFG against the Islamists, could play an important role.

Meanwhile, recent reports from Mogadishu indicate that key Abgaal elders, including leading politicians from the early 1990s are seeking accommodation with the TFG and its Hawiye/Abgaal Prime Minister, Ali Mohamed Gedi. And they have reportedly had discussions on preparation of the planned National Consultation that was postponed to June due to the recent clashes in Mogadishu. Overall it appears that the Islamist remnants in Mogadishu and their core constituency, the Ayr sub-subclan of the Habir-Gedir sub-clan of the Hawiye clan are increasingly isolated, even within the Habir-Gedir stronghold in South Mogadishu, hundreds of kilometers south of their homeland in Galgaduud. This helps to explain the recent behaviour of the Habir-Gedir Ayr, which is showing growing desperation.

Among others, security in Mogadishu requires a well-equipped, well-trained and flexible force, capable of controlling strategic points within the city, its airport and seaport, as well as several airstrips and small seaports around Mogadishu, convenient for smuggling arms and goods, as well as people. The African Union(AU) has committed itself to provide peacekeepers to replace the Ethiopian troops, but only a small Ugandan force had arrived by the end of March.

Restoring security is only part of the problem, the other, and more difficult, part will be making it

sustainable. This will require effectively addressing the country's mass destitution and the key structural issues that underpin and feed into it. This is an imperative not only for Somalia, but also for the adjoining areas of the Horn of Africa. As vividly illustrated over the past year, instability, extremism, and conflict in Somalia, has potential to encourage adventurism from within and beyond the Horn of Africa, and pose threats to peace and stability across the region.

Disarmament is a key issue, but a general disarmament is unlikely until people are confident that security has been restored in Mogadishu. Until then, they will insist on retaining their personal weapons to defend their homes. So disarmament will need to be undertaken in stages, starting with a ban on "technicals" and heavy weapons, which need to be confiscated and destroyed, whether voluntarily or by force (for which there needs to be enough force in place); and banning all carrying of arms in public by civilians, or militias.

Another crucial issue is that of capacity, the imperative of putting in place the institutions that do the actual work of governance, and providing the resources with which to do it. A government, without the functional institutions that make up an administration, can do very little. Parliaments and executive bodies may make decisions, but these need to be implemented through appropriate institutions. Somalia's Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) were created in name, but without providing them with the basic resources needed to enable them to function.

Fundamental Problems of Somalia

Underlying Somalia's conflicts are basic issues of poverty, inequalities and access to livelihoods. There is limited access to basic social services, and severe shortages of trained human resources. These were all exacerbated by the

civil war and fed into their continuation. A DDR programme for Somalia needs to consider not only military but broader human security aspects of policy, programming and good management.

Somalia is a structurally food deficit country and has been so for most of the last three decades. Prior to the civil war, it was among the top per-capita beneficiaries of food aid, worldwide, and during the 1980s was reportedly among the countries with the lowest per-capita food intake.¹ For much of the rural population, survival is linked to cross-border trade and sale of livestock to buy cheaper grain in order to afford a larger quantity of food.²

Proper statistics about Somalia are also in short supply, starting with population numbers, which often tend to be inflated. UNICEF the UN agency with the greatest presence on the ground and probably the best information estimates the population at some 6.4 million, including Somaliland.³ Others suggest higher numbers, of up to 10-12 million or more that might be credible if including the ethnic Somali populations of Ethiopia and Kenya. What is clear, as UNICEF points out, is that "Somalia remains one of the poorest countries in the world."⁴

Somalia's poverty and food deficits are linked to a variety of causes. These include deforestation (often linked to export of charcoal), overgrazing of marginal lands, the over-exploitation of the country's agricultural and rangelands; and their consequent rapid deterioration. Further, increasingly frequent minor droughts, and occasional major ones, contribute to increasing poverty and food insecurity across the country and the region; and episodes of insecurity that constrain trade and undermine food availability.

A key problem underlying endemic and structural poverty in Somalia and neighboring regions of Ethiopia and Kenya is the lack of adequate water security and water infrastructure to make effective

use of the existing, limited water resources. Somalia's only significant sources of permanent surface water are two trans-boundary rivers, the Shabelle and Juba-Genalle that arise in the Ethiopian highlands and flow across central and southern Somalia towards the Indian Ocean.

These two rivers can also be problematic. Recent heavy rains in the Ethiopian Highlands led to massive flooding across central and southern Somalia causing considerable loss of life and property and displacement of hundreds of thousands of people in the lower river basins. This drew attention to similar episodes, in the past decade that led to even greater losses and a huge humanitarian operation in southern Somalia. In the absence of effective flood control measures in the upper river basins, such disasters could recur.

The shared river basins represent shared problems, but also shared opportunities, and the two rivers could be part of the solution. It appears increasingly unlikely that Somalia can support its rapid increasing population, and their livestock without significant change in its modes of production. Much the same is true of the dry eastern lowlands of the neighboring counties. Regional cooperation and water infrastructure could be part of the solution.

Governance

The failure of the Somali State was, above all, a failure of governance. The fundamental reasons include the clan-based nature of the state, something which the leadership was either unwilling or unable to transcend, the concept of the state as source of resources to be divided up on a clan patronage basis, and the absence of a concept of citizenship and the rights and responsibilities that it entails.

This was underpinned by a concept of social organisation based upon real or imagined blood relationship. Somali society is thus an outgrowth

of clan membership, leading to state citizenship based on ethnicity, and to clan loyalties that may supercede loyalty to the State. Somalia therefore was conceived as the state of the ethnic Somalis. But within this Somali polity, there was also the reality of competing clans and sub-clans, presently reflected in the makeup of the Transitional Federal Government. This remains a key weakness of the TFG, as was also the case with its predecessors.

The short-lived Somali Republic (1960-69) was born into democracy, with a parliamentary system that soon fell victim to clan loyalties despite the tide of post-independence nationalism. In the 1967 elections, more than 80 mostly clan and subclan-based political parties, competed for the spoils of office.⁵ Corruption and nepotism became the hallmark of the ruling elite. Within the context of a clan-oriented society, citizens were often manipulated to see benefits accruing to particular clan and subclan members as benefits to their clan and by extension, to themselves, as opposed to other clans.

The political elite maintained the support of their clans and thereby their positions of power and access to patronage, by distributing patronage, largely financed by foreign aid, to influential clan members. This was the beginning of an aid addiction that would not only prove terminal, but also last much longer than the state, fuelling inter-clan competition, human insecurity and internal conflict, for decades to come.

Clan-based politics and patronage soon paralysed Somalia's parliamentary government, leading to the military coup that brought General Mohamed Siyad Barre to power on October 21st, 1969. But Siyad Barre's military dictatorship also proved unable to transcend the issues of clan-based patronage, exacerbating the country's basic problems. Its resort to clan-based discrimination and violence, created new tensions between clans and intensified old ones. It destroyed the social bonds that had held Somalia together and

provoked conflict that eventually led to the collapse of both the government and the state.

Since the late 1980s Somalia has been in a state of turmoil and for much of this period, in a downward spiral of destitution, accelerated from time to time by natural disasters and upsurges of violence. The functions of the State, its perceived legitimacy, and control of society and territory were rapidly receding, and by the beginning of 1988, President Mohamed Siyaad Barre, the incumbent dictator was increasingly referred to as the 'Mayor of Mogadishu.' In the beginning of 1991, his regime collapsed and he fled from Mogadishu, as rebel militias stormed the capital and the city fragmented into clan conflict, 'ethnic cleansing,' and chaos. Somalia is now seeking to make a new start, but still faces many of the problems that brought down earlier regimes.

Peacekeeping or Peacemaking?

The African Union has committed itself to deploy an 8,000 man peacekeeping force to Somalia, but appears to have difficulty in doing so. Up to the end of March, only a small Ugandan force of around 1,500 troops had arrived. It is not certain when the others will come, and whether they will have the necessary size, competence, and mandate to handle Mogadishu.

It is also not certain that 8,000 would be enough for the job. The number proposed could well indicate a dangerous and potentially disastrous understanding of just what is Mogadishu.⁶ Those on the ground in Mogadishu during the landing of some 10,000 US marines in December 1992, and their subsequent reinforcement by thousands of other UNOSOM troops during 1993, observed that several times the number now proposed, did not prove adequate to 'secure' Mogadishu.

The AU's draft "Outline Deployment Plan" reportedly proposed an "African Union Mission in Somalia" (AMISOM) "to stabilize the current situation in that country, in order to create conditions for the conduct of humanitarian activities and immediate takeover by the United Nations."⁷ The mission at full strength was to involve only about 7,690 troops, for what appears to be a massive task.⁸

Besides 'securing' Mogadishu, and other main towns, this rather small force is expected, among others, to "provide assistance to the TFG to consolidate its authority over the whole of Somalia."⁹ It should also help disarm all armed groups not under TFG control, help train the TFG security forces, and prevent illegal inflows of arms.¹⁰ Considering the dozens of airstrips scattered across central Somalia, where cargo planes can land arms as well as *chat* (qat); and the proliferation of small ports along the coast where enterprising businessmen can land illicit cargoes for smuggling to neighbouring states, this last assignment would in itself be a tall order for the envisaged force to undertake. To do so effectively, it would need to control the country's airspace, and have the support of a naval patrol as well.

The Imperative of DDR

At the end of conflict, one of the first things needed, is to try to prevent it restarting. One of the starting points should be disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of the ex-combatants. Failing that, combat could quickly start again, and very often does. Mogadishu is a prime candidate for backsliding into combat. That is a key part of its history over the past 15 years or so, and could easily repeat itself, especially if the Ethiopian forces leave before the TFG finds its feet.

In Somalia as in other post-conflict situations, the need for DDR arises from the imperative of restoration of security, a prerequisite for sustainable peace and development. The central focus of

DDR is therefore is on its potential contribution to security. It seeks to achieve this through the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration into civilian society of armed forces and groups that might otherwise create insecurity.

In Somalia, as in most African countries, reintegration is the key component of DDR. The demobilized ex-combatant, particularly one demobilized after years of irregular warfare, often has few immediate prospects for an independent livelihood, and nothing to return to. Such ex-combatants tend to be poor, with few skills and low levels of literacy. They are unlikely to hold significant resources in the place from which they came and little to expect from returning there empty-handed, except for basic, and often uncertain subsistence. In such circumstances, the ex-combatant facing a livelihood crisis may well become a security problem for the civilian population, as indeed has been the case for much of the past decade in Mogadishu. Successful reintegration represents an investment that aims to reduce this risk.

A key factor is the thousands of recently unemployed and uneducated young gunmen with nothing to do for a livelihood.¹¹ DDR in Somalia, if implemented, will take place in a very diverse environment, involving a variety of groups with differing agendas. These may range from the militias of the warlords and the remnants of the SCIC militias, to the bandits and other armed groups. It is particularly important however to ensure the effective inclusion of all the main stakeholders in the process and management of DDR.

The targeting of ex-combatants of whatever sort needs to be taken as an unavoidable investment in the process of creating basic security for civilians and all Somalis. The assistance that needs to be given to ex-combatants and their families through DDR is neither an entitlement

nor a reward. It is simply a necessary tool to enhance public security by helping to provide non-violent livelihoods to elements that still have the capacity and potential to undermine the restoration of peace and security in Somalia. Above all, their rehabilitation and reintegration into society is an essential element of civilian protection and needs to be understood as such.

As previous experience in African and other conflicts has demonstrated, only successful socio-economic reintegration can produce effective and sustainable ex-combatant demobilization. The success or failure of DDR is usually dependent on the design and timely implementation of an effective process of socio-economic integration for ex-combatants. Without that, it often fails.

Demobilization usually needs to be accompanied by provision of some benefits to the ex-combatant in the form of some sort of transitional subsistence support to provide for the immediate basic needs of the ex-combatant and his dependents, while waiting for re-integration assistance. This is best provided in installments, and where possible, linked to work or services performed by the ex-combatant for his benefit and that of the community.

DDR programmes need to start with a clear understanding of the actual reintegration opportunities available. This implies mapping of existing and potential employment opportunities; profiling the ex-combatants; and identifying possibilities for self-employment or micro-enterprise creation.

The Need for an Emergency Rehabilitation Programme

In Mogadishu, where little remains of the formal economy, and of formal employment, DDR will be particularly difficult. What is particularly needed is support by the international community for an Emergency Rehabilitation Programme such as was provided for Ethiopia in the immediate

aftermath to the fall of the Derg military regime. The amount of the assistance was relatively modest, but it served the purpose of supporting stop-gap projects and providing temporary employment where most needed, while helping to stimulate the economy and the provision of essential services.

A similar emergency programme for Somalia, if rapidly put in place, could make an important contribution to strengthening the current fragile peace and helping to extend it and make it sustainable. It could help to strengthen the prospects and acceptability of DDR by building confidence in the availability of livelihood alternatives to militia membership and criminal violence. This in turn could contribute significantly to the enhancement of stability and human security in Mogadishu and other main towns, as well as in rural towns and villages.

Up to a quarter of Somalia's population, excluding Somaliland, live in Mogadishu, a city with very little formal economy or employment potential. Much of the city's population survives on remittances from family or clan members abroad, but there are also many, especially youth, and families fleeing destitution in rural areas, who have little or no access to benefits from remittances, and little opportunity to find employment or livelihoods in Mogadishu.

Deprivation, underdevelopment, and poverty are major causes of human insecurity in Somalia. Impoverishment linked to drought and desertification, both major causes of impoverishment and destitution in large areas of the country, together with rural insecurity, continues to feed the migration from rural to urban areas. This in turn contributes to the expansion of unemployment and poverty in Mogadishu and other urban centres, and to urban insecurity and lawlessness.

Recurrent drought over the past two decades has devastated the livelihoods of millions of

people across Somalia and the pastoral lowlands of neighboring regions of Ethiopia and Kenya, killing the livestock on which their livelihoods depend and dropping families and entire communities into chronic destitution. This has contributed to chronic unrest in many areas, as communities fight over diminishing pastures and water sources. The combination of environmental disaster and conflict, including the current drought affecting much of the region, has further contributed to impoverishment, instability and hunger in a region that was already increasingly poor and food insecure.

Much of Somalia, along with the adjacent areas of the neighboring states, remains in the grip of one of the most severe drought emergencies in recent decades. According to humanitarian agencies, the current drought has affected an estimated 2m people in Somalia, from one-quarter to one-third of the total population. Coming in the wake of a series of recurrent droughts that incrementally increased the vulnerability of the population, and recent floods along the Shabelle and Juba valleys, the current complex emergency has reduced large parts of the population to destitution, chronic food insecurity, and in some areas, the threat of famine.¹²

The capacity of households to secure sustainable livelihoods is under increasing stress due to loss of assets, destruction of social and economic infrastructure, and the damage done to family and communal networks as a result of conflict and natural disaster. Addressing the negative physical, economic and social consequences of the conflict and the accompanying disasters, is crucial to strengthening and consolidating the opportunity for peace, before the consequences of recent conflict and disaster, give rise to further insecurity and conflict.

An effective emergency rehabilitation programme could support public infrastructure works such as reconstruction of roads, water systems, health

centers and schools, projects that benefit both the ex-combatants and the general population. This could both provide a much-needed stimulus to Somalia's shattered economy and serve as a first step towards the reintegration of the ex-combatants, particularly when other community members are included in the work force.

The Capacity Impediment and Need for Leadership Training

The establishment in 2000 of the Transitional Federal Government and its Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) represented, and still represent an opportunity to move towards peace and stability in the country. The continuing lack of security in Mogadishu, Kismayo and some other areas of southern and central Somalia remains a pressing problem, and the capacity of the TFIs to deliver basic services to the population remains limited, at least in part, because the TFIs have never had access to the minimum resources required to enable them to function. Meanwhile the need for services is greater than ever, particularly following the recent conflict and flood disasters, and capacity to address such needs remains abysmally low.

A key need at present is to make the TFIs functional and effective. This will require, among others, the enhancement of the capacities of the existing government institutions at central and local levels to carry out the duties assigned to them, improve the quality of local governance, and its capacity for effective management, accountability and collaboration with other stakeholders. As part of capacity building there is an important need to provide basic training in key areas for local government, both urban and rural.

Somalia, like other fragile states/failed states in Africa tends to be affected by a number of problems of leadership, poor organizational culture, and concepts of governance and accou-

ntability. These tend to impact on the effectiveness of governance, and often contribute significantly to the fragility of the State at national and local levels. In the context of preparation of leadership training, these issues, together with local socio-cultural nuances, need to be better understood and addressed.

Lack of leadership quality and organizational culture tend to be major constraints on the effectiveness of leadership in Somalia, and on efforts of rehabilitation and reconstruction. The common problems include lack of institutional transparency, upwards and downwards accountability and often, limited capacity for participatory development processes and sharing of authority at the internal level of both political and non-political organizations.

There is a need for better understanding of how and to what extent do such leadership issues impact upon the capacity for inter-group collaboration and co-existence in the context of the fragile state. This can contribute to identification of relevant leadership training needs in fragile states, such as Somalia. For example, in multi-ethnic/multi-clan states, it could be useful to examine some of the root socio-economic causes of internal discord and the role of ethnic and livelihood factors, and how these might be addressed and perhaps alleviated by strategic leadership training programmes.

There are also needs that demand equal attention such as capacity building of efficient financial management, together with the development and application of effective, formal human resource policies and systems that provide consistent and transparent support to all staff, and help to avoid perceptions of ethnic/clan favoritism, or nepotism in employment and sharing of opportunities, often a source of tensions in multi-ethnic states. In fragile situations in post-conflict states, training of key officials in these areas can make a significant contribution. Such training, is essential to ensure diversity, and enhance public percep-

tions of its importance in the sharing of power and positions.

During the years since the collapse of the former Somali Government, local communities in many rural areas and small towns have largely restored peace and/or established rudimentary state institutions in the areas under their control. Where lacking capacity and resources for rehabilitation of public services, some have achieved a measure of mainly private sector driven reconstruction.

In fragile states and particularly in post-conflict situations, where civil society organizations (CSOs) and community-based organizations often play key roles in the delivery of such social services as may be available, officials may need training of a sort that can help them to better understand these roles, and the contribution that they make. Appropriate training should aim at helping them to understand that civil society activities aim at complementing rather than competing with their own roles; and the advantages of collaboration.

Such leadership training is available from various sources and could be useful to Somalia. For example, the World Bank Institute could bring considerable experience and expertise to the task of building the leadership and good governance capacities of the TFIs. This would appear to be consonant with the spirit of the World Bank's Country Re-Engagement Note for Somalia (April 2003), which describes a strategy articulated around three pivotal principles, to wit:

- “The strategy seeks to provide public goods in the absence of a fully functional national government in Somalia. It also embodies a strong regional public goods dimension, with potentially positive spillover effects for neighboring countries in all the proposed areas of intervention;”

- “The strategy recognizes the high degree of uncertainty in the country and therefore focuses on interventions which are not likely to be reversed in the event of instability. Such interventions include knowledge-intensive investments aimed at capacity and institution-building;”
- “The strategy has a strong income-generation emphasis through its support to the private sector in the livestock area with the aim of fostering important economic payoffs.”¹³

The Opportunity for Community Driven Reconstruction/Development (CDR/CDD)

Statelessness does not necessarily mean anarchy and disorder. In fact, in large areas of Somalia, before being over-run by last year's sudden expansion of Mogadishu's Islamic Courts militias, local sub-clan elders, religious leaders and businessmen, working together had established stability and security in rural areas and small towns across large parts of the country.¹⁴ But urban centers, particularly Mogadishu had continued to be affected by chronic violence, political chaos and economic disruption.

As noted earlier chronic instability, sporadic conflict, widespread lawlessness, and drought over the past two decades has devastated the livelihoods of millions of people across Somalia and the pastoral lowlands of neighbouring regions of Ethiopia and Kenya, decimating the livestock on which their livelihoods depend, and dropping pastoral and agro-pastoral families and entire communities into chronic destitution and food insecurity. Food insecurity contributes to conflict, often leading to diminished production and in turn, to increased food insecurity.

According to humanitarian agencies, the current drought has affected an estimated 2m people in Somalia, as well as large numbers in Ethiopia's Somali region, and in northeastern Kenya.

Coming in the wake of a series of recurrent droughts that incrementally increased the vulnerability of the population, the current emergency has reduced large parts of the region to destitution, accelerated displacement to Mogadishu and other urban areas, and exacerbated urban as well as rural insecurity. The conflicts of the past year have intensified these problems.

This draws attention to the urgent need for putting in place post-conflict rehabilitation and recovery programmes at the community level, based on the priority needs identified by local communities. This is the basis for community-driven recovery and one that fits in with the efforts that many communities in relatively peaceful areas of Somalia have been attempting on their own initiative with their available resources.

International agencies are already examining the prospects for conducting CDR/CDD programmes in the calmer Somaliland and Puntland regions. But the need is still greater in southern and central Somalia, where, as *The Economist* points out, “In particular, thousands of young gunmen, most of them uneducated and without prospects, need jobs.”¹⁵ In the interest of supporting the civilian population, and of the effort to strengthen the current tenuous peace, it would be helpful, if the programmes are widely implemented, as it would contribute towards minimizing a potent source of insecurity. CDR/CDD programmes, wherever security allows, could contribute to the broader need to restart Somalia’s economy.

For example, assistance to the farming areas around Baidoa and the Shabelle Valley, could help farmers to overcome the impacts of the drought, flood and insecurity and resume production. Such assistance delivered in the context of CDD programmes could also help to strengthen local governance.

Shared River Basins: Potential Contribution to Poverty Reduction and Peace

As pointed out earlier, underlying much of Somalia’s endemic and structural poverty is the lack of reliable water access. Its only significant sources of permanent surface water are two trans-boundary rivers, the Shabelle and Juba-Genalle that arise in the Ethiopian highlands and respectively flow across central and southern Somalia towards the Indian Ocean. But Somalia also lacks the necessary water infrastructure to make effective use of the existing, limited water resources for irrigation and production of hydro-energy, which could open the way to development of alternative livelihoods.

The recurrent droughts and accelerating environmental degradation of the past two decades have repeatedly devastated the local economies of central and southern Somalia, and neighboring regions of Ethiopia and northeastern Kenya. This is a problem that is only likely to be effectively addressed through water resource development: water storage, and development of opportunities for irrigation and non-agricultural employment.

Subsistence pastoralism, like subsistence agriculture, has little potential to resolve the livelihood problems of the expanding populations of the lowland river basins. Every major drought leads to loss of hundreds of thousands of livestock and weakens and reduces the quality of hundreds of thousands more, particularly in the dry lowland pastoral zones that lack alternative sources of livestock feed. As pastoral populations increase, so do their requirements in terms of the numbers of livestock required to fill their needs. This often leads to overgrazing and rangeland degradation, and so, protracted and recurrent droughts, and these are increasingly common, often lead to large-scale loss of livestock, further degradation of rangelands and pastoral resources, the mass impoverishment of pastoralists, and frequently to famine.

Drought cannot be prevented, but much of the livestock loss associated with it can be prevented through appropriate measures in terms of policy and infrastructure. Achieving this will require significant investment in irrigation, transport, animal health and marketing infrastructure. The cost of such investment should be balanced against the value of the livestock losses that it can be expected to prevent, based on the losses associated with recurrent drought over the past two decades.

Particular attention should be given to the Gennale-Dawa, Juba, and Shabelle basins, where there is considerable potential for irrigated commercial farming and fodder production. As in many other countries, irrigated farming could produce large quantities of crop residues suitable for dry season livestock feed. This would help to sustain livestock during drought episodes, and prevent large-scale losses of valuable livestock. Irrigated fodder production would also open the way to large-scale commercial livestock production under controllable sanitary conditions, enabling better access to export markets.

The principal river basins concerned are the Shabelle and Gennale-Dawa-Juba basins, comprising most of central and southern Somalia; four of the five zones of Ethiopia's Somali Region, and the Boran Zone of Oromia; and parts of northeastern Kenya, with a combined population of up to 10 million in the basin regions of the three countries. The three basins cover almost 358,000-400,000 sq kms of southeastern Ethiopia, including some 929,000 ha of irrigable land, of which only a miniscule area has thus far been irrigated.¹⁶ In Somalia, prior to the civil war, some 250,000 ha of land were brought under some form of irrigation, including flood recession. But most such systems have long since been destroyed or collapsed for lack of maintenance.

Much of this area: eastern Ethiopia, together with Somaliland/Somalia, and northeastern Kenya has long represented a strongly inter-related and interdependent economic and trading system. These areas have little potential for rain-fed crop production. But there is considerable potential in the major river basins for generation of hydropower, and for irrigation for both crop growing and commercial livestock production. The water resources of the region are the key to its development. The missing ingredient is water infrastructure, to deliver the water where and when required, and provide the hydropower needed to spur development.

All across this region, but to an even greater extent, growth and poverty reduction will be undermined, until water security is attained. This will require considerable investment, but the potential returns are far greater; in terms of hydropower for both local development and export; of the region's huge potential for irrigated commercial farming; and irrigation supported commercial livestock production. The latter is a neglected sector, but one with enormous export potential. Such investment is also vital to open the way to alternative livelihoods and economic diversification, another prerequisite for sustainable economic growth in the southeastern lowlands.

The critical limiting factors in food production in this region are water availability and declining availability of arable land. Any significant increase in production must depend on more intensive farming systems, requiring irrigation, and other inputs, to increase land productivity. Even so, improved agriculture alone is unlikely to provide sustainable food security and poverty reduction for all the rapidly increasing population of the region over the longer term, but it is a necessary starting point. Success will also require substantial development of off-farm employment to absorb the surplus rural population. This in turn will require development of the region's main natural resources and affordable energy sources, including hydroelectric power, to support industrial

development, and urban livelihoods.

This draws attention to the important opportunities that exist for joint development of the hydroelectric potential of the trans-boundary Shabelle and Gennale-Juba river basins in the context of infrastructure-led regional economic integration. Multi-purpose dams on the Shabelle and Gennale-Juba rivers could meet the hydroelectric power needs of both countries, enhance their irrigation potential, and prevent the recurrent floods that from time to time devastate large areas of the lower Shabelle and Gennale-Juba basins, leading to serious loss of life and property, and increasing poverty.

Affordable energy is a key requirement for development of non-farm and urban livelihoods. As Somalia achieves increased security and a stable government, and turns towards economic development and poverty reduction, it will need to address the reality that affordable energy is a prerequisite for economic development and that its current oil-generated electricity supply by small diesel generators (where they exist) is neither affordable, nor capable of meeting its minimum electricity requirements.

The ongoing oil price crisis has made affordable energy a key problem to countries like Somalia that depend on oil-fired generation of electricity. They need to build alternative livelihoods. And this could be addressed by interconnection with Ethiopia's electricity grid which offers the purchase of much cheaper hydroelectricity, a solution already agreed by Djibouti, Kenya and Sudan.

It is a situation that demands substantial investment in the integrated development of the region's land, water and hydropower resources; and creation of sustainable alternative livelihoods. The cooperative development of the shared water resources of this drought

disaster-prone region comprising central and southern Somalia, and the Ethiopian Somali region, offers considerable potential to rehabilitate the livelihoods of their populations, and put them on the path to sustainable development and peace. Both countries and their neighbors, have a great deal to gain from this.

Regional Economic Integration and Making Somalia's Peace Sustainable

There is growing awareness, within the region, and among its development partners, of the importance of regional integration to providing its relatively small and isolated economies with a platform for enhanced growth and stability. This has become a significant focus of key regional organisations and partner institutions. It also draws attention to important and cost-effective opportunities available from interconnection of national infrastructures towards integrated development efforts.

A particular need for lasting peace in Somalia is sustainable livelihoods for poverty reduction, and opening the way to development. In this respect, regional economic integration could play an important role, particularly in such areas as the development of transboundary water resources, by putting in place the necessary infrastructure to provide Somalia and the other riparian countries with the water and energy that they need for development.

Addressing the basic issues of sustainable livelihoods in Somalia will need to be undertaken through various means, including forms of regional economic integration. The key requirements include improved infrastructure to provide reliable access to transport, water and affordable energy. In particular, the rehabilitation of the country's internal roads and their interconnection with those of the neighboring countries could open the way to increased trade, economic growth and poverty reduction. Road interconnection could both

enhance trade between the two countries and enable Ethiopia to use Somali ports to the economic benefit of both countries.

Regional economic integration and particularly infrastructure-led regional integration could offer considerable potential for Somalia and the region, including the mitigation of causes of tension and conflict, as well as poverty. The interconnection of Somalia with the Ethiopian road network could also provide Southern Sudan with additional access to the sea, while providing Somalia with earnings from its ports, and opportunities for trade, to the benefit of all three countries.

Potential Contribution of the International Community

The fragmentation of African economies, and lack of connectivity of infrastructure between African countries are major constraints to development and economic growth. A recent European Commission proposal to the European Council, Parliament, and Economic and Social Committee draws attention to the significant economic costs arising from lack of interconnected cross-border infrastructure.¹⁷ These include high transport and service costs, unreliable supply chains and other constraints contributing to low productivity, high transaction costs, and reduced competitiveness. They tend to stifle economic growth and the capacity of African countries to expand trade at regional and international levels.¹⁸

The recent EC focus on infrastructure-led regional economic integration seeks to address the anomalies that tend to stifle national economic growth in the countries of the region. The EC has drawn attention to the significant economic costs arising from the lack of interconnected cross-border infrastructure. The integration of African economies and infrastruc-

ture is recognized as an important pillar to support and enhance the effectiveness of increased aid, and thereby, the rationale for it.¹⁹

“The Commission therefore proposes to *establish an EU-Africa Partnership for Infrastructure to support and initiate programmes (Trans-African Networks) that facilitate interconnectivity at continental level for the promotion of regional integration.* The Partnership for Infrastructure should encompass investments in trans-boundary and regional infrastructure and their regulatory frameworks in the widest sense: transport networks (roads, railways, inland waterways, ports and airports) water and energy infrastructure and connections as well as ground-based and space-based electronic communications infrastructure and services.”²⁰

As the EC’s proposed ‘Partnership for Infrastructure’ “should encompass investments in trans-boundary and regional infrastructure and their regulatory frameworks in the widest sense: transport networks (roads, railways, inland waterways, ports and airports) water and energy infrastructure and connections,” this might well include investment in development of water and energy infrastructure in the transboundary Shabelle and Dawa-Gennale-Juba river basins. This would serve the vital needs of Somalia and its immediate neighbors and make key contributions to development, poverty reduction and peace across the three countries that share those basins.

The interconnection of infrastructure also has potential to contribute materially to regional peace and security, as shared infrastructure creates interdependency and provides the participating countries with important economic incentives to manage tensions, avoid conflict, and consider possibilities of closer collaboration and integration. In this respect, the cooperative development of transboundary river basins, could contribute to solving many of the most critical problems of Somalia and the Horn of Africa.

Conclusion

For the moment at least, the organized Islamist threat in Somalia, seems to be contained. Some of their remnants in Mogadishu have continued attempts to carry out terrorist actions, and sporadic attacks against the TFG and Ethiopian forces. But most of their victims have been civilians, and this is proving counter-productive. In particular, the Ethiopian and TFG response to the Jihadist attacks in the last weeks of March appears to have had a decisive impact. Meanwhile, except for Mogadishu, Somalia seems relatively quiet.

The greater task will be making security sustainable and that will require rapid action on several fronts. The most urgent include putting in place-and finding finance for a DDR programme for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of whatever militias and armed groups that the TFG is unable to absorb into its own security forces. Of equal importance is an accelerated programme to make the Transitional Federal Institutions operational by putting in place the functional institutions that do the work of governance and providing them with the resources, and capacity, they need to do their job.

A key and urgent need is for an emergency rehabilitation programme, especially for Mogadishu and Kismayu, as well as for other less turbulent towns, and the Shabelle and Juba Valley areas devastated by the recent floods. An Emergency Rehabilitation Programme, like that provided for Ethiopia after the fall of the Derg military regime, could make a key contribution to stabilization by providing stop-gap projects and temporary employment where most needed. It could stimulate the economy and the provision of essential services, and kick-start the process of putting the country back on its feet. It would also help to strengthen the current fragile peace and make it sustainable.

Consideration should also be given to launching the kind of Community-Driven Reconstruction/Development (CDR/CDD) programmes that the World Bank and UNDP are planning for Somaliland and Puntland, and getting such programmes extended to more stable areas of central and southern Somalia, such as Baidoa and Jowhar.

For the longer term attention needs to be given to addressing some of the structural problems that keep Somalia poor and feed into its conflicts. This should take account of a declining resource base that appears increasingly incapable of sustaining rural livelihoods in central and southern Somalia, and adjoining regions of Ethiopia and Kenya. It should seek to identify development options towards alternative livelihoods that might include areas of regional economic integration, such as interconnection of road and energy networks, and water resource development.

This might be addressed in the context of water resource development in the Dawa-Gennale-Juba, and Shabelle river basins. These basins offer considerable potential for irrigated commercial farming and fodder production; and opportunities for employment creation. As in many other countries, irrigated farming could produce large quantities of crop residues suitable for dry season livestock feed. This would help to sustain livestock during drought episodes, and prevent large-scale losses of valuable livestock. Irrigated fodder production would also open the way to large-scale commercial livestock production under controllable sanitary conditions, enabling better access to export markets.

Development of multi-purpose water infrastructure for hydropower and irrigation in the Shabelle and Dawa-Gennale-Juba river basins could solve their most pressing livelihood problems. Enhanced and sustainable productivity, together with access to affordable hydropower for

processing industries, could provide the key mechanisms needed to enable and accelerate economic growth in the river basins that Somalia shares with its neighbors. And regulation of the river flow could also prevent the disastrous floods that in 2006 led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, and considerable loss of life and property.

Developing such infrastructure would of course be costly, but the losses avoided over time could amount to still more. It is difficult to quantify pastoralist losses of livestock to drought over the past decade. But taking account of the average livestock numbers needed to maintain an average household under normal conditions, and estimates of herd loss reported by officials, NGOs, and other sources working in those areas, before, during and after drought episodes, it appears likely that several million heads of livestock may have been lost. Overall, the cost of not building the infrastructure might well surpass the cost of building it.

Building it could contribute to both poverty reduction and peace. It has been said that “countries that trade don’t fight,” although sometimes they do. Nevertheless there is considerable evidence that significant economic interdependence between countries, tribes, or clans, tends to make them less likely to fight, and more likely to try to avoid conflicts likely to upset relationships from which they derive significant recognized benefits, which they value.

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End Notes

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¹⁹ EC: EU Strategy for Africa: Towards a Euro-African pact to accelerate Africa's development, Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee, COM (2005) 489 final, Brussels, 12.10.05.

²⁰ EC: EU Strategy for Africa: Towards a Euro-African pact to accelerate Africa's development, Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee, COM (2005) 489 final, Brussels, 12.10.05, p29

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