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PROCEEDINGS OF THE HORN INTER-ELITE DIALOGUE

STRENGTHENING REGIONAL AGENCY FOR DURABLE PEACE IN THE HORN OF AFRICA



DIALOGUE • COOPERATION • KNOWLEDGE • DURABLE PEACE

17-19 MAY 2026 | SHABELLEY RESORT

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE HORN INTER-ELITE DIALOGUE

— JIGJIGA FORUM —



"Strengthening Regional Agency for Durable Peace in the Horn of Africa"

17–19 May 2026

Jigjiga, Somali Regional State, Ethiopia

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1 Foreword

The Horn of Africa is a region of deep historical connection, shared identity, strategic importance, and immense possibility. It is also a region facing serious and overlapping challenges: conflict, fragile political transitions, displacement, climate stress, food insecurity, economic fragmentation, mistrust among states, and increasing geopolitical competition.

The Horn Inter-Elite Dialogue, Jigjiga Forum, convened under the theme "Strengthening Regional Agency for Durable Peace in the Horn of Africa," was organized to create a serious and constructive space for reflection, dialogue, and practical regional thinking.

The Forum recognized that durable peace in the Horn of Africa cannot be built through security measures alone. It requires trust, inclusive governance, responsible leadership, functioning institutions, economic opportunity, community participation, and continuous dialogue. It also requires that the countries, institutions, and peoples of the region strengthen their own agency in shaping their shared future.

Jigjiga was a fitting venue for this dialogue. As the capital of the Somali Regional State, it stands at the intersection of culture, trade, mobility, borderland life, and regional connection. It is not only an administrative center, but also a living symbol of the Horn's interdependence.

This proceedings booklet captures the key discussions, speeches, thematic insights, recommendations, and declaration emerging from the Forum. It is intended to serve as a



reference for policymakers, regional institutions, scholars, peacebuilders, development partners, and communities committed to a more peaceful, cooperative, and self-directed Horn of Africa.

2 Acknowledgements

The convening partners express sincere appreciation to the people and government of the Somali Regional State for hosting the Horn Inter-Elite Dialogue — Jigjiga Forum with warmth, dignity, and generosity.

Special appreciation is extended to the senior federal and regional officials of Ethiopia, representatives of IGAD and regional institutions, delegations from Somalia, Djibouti, and Kenya, members of parliament, scholars, elders, peacebuilders, media representatives, development partners, and invited guests who contributed to the success of the Forum.

The organizers also acknowledge the work of the organizing committee, protocol team, technical team, security personnel, documentation team, and all staff who supported the planning and delivery of the event.

The success of the Jigjiga Forum reflected not only institutional effort, but also a shared belief that the Horn of Africa is capable of dialogue, cooperation, resilience, and durable peace.

Acknowledged institutions include - Center for Responsible and Peaceful Politics, Institute of Foreign Affairs, HANKAAL Institute, Somali Regional State, European Union, IGAD, and participating regional partners.



3 Executive Summary

From May 17–19, 2026, the Horn Inter-Elite Dialogue—Jigjiga Forum convened a diverse assembly of senior government officials, regional leaders, diplomats, traditional elders, and policy experts under the theme "*Strengthening Regional Agency for Durable Peace in the Horn of Africa.*" Hosted in Jigjiga, the forum focused on building local and regional mechanisms to define priorities, manage internal transitions, and coordinate external engagement from a position of common interest.

Over three days of thematic sessions, participants addressed the challenges of external geopolitical rivalries, climate-induced vulnerabilities, and cross-border security frictions. The forum rejected security-only frameworks, emphasizing that durable peace relies on inclusive governance, trade integration, and regular institutional dialogue.

The landmark outcome of the gathering was the unanimous adoption of the Jigjiga Forum Declaration. This document outlines ten core commitments, establishing a regular platform to promote regional integration, empower borderland populations, and turn geographical proximity into shared prosperity across Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti, and Kenya.

"The future of the Horn of Africa must be shaped not only by governments and institutions, but also by the people and communities whose lives are directly connected across borders."

4 Background and Rationale

The Horn of Africa is bound by profound historical connections, shared cultural heritages, interdependent economies, and strategic maritime access spanning the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the Indian Ocean. Simultaneously, the region faces overlapping domestic and transnational pressures: armed conflicts, fragile political transitions, climate-driven resource scarcities, systemic displacement, and intensifying major-power competition. Because these dynamics flow across national borders through fluid markets and migration routes, traditional, isolated state-centric responses are no longer sufficient.

The horn of Africa cannot continue to be understood only through the language, of crisis. The region is also a place of resilience, negotiation, local wisdom, economic possibility, and shared destiny.

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The Jigjiga Forum was established to shift the regional focus toward regional agency. This concept does not advocate for isolating the region from global partnerships. Instead, it demands that external engagements align with the Horn's self-defined peace, development, and integration agendas rather than worsening dependency or division.

5 Strategic Objectives of the Dialogue

The Jigjiga Forum was structured around six core objectives designed to move regional discussions from identifying problems to implementing practical solutions:

- **Promoting High-Level Dialogue -** Creating a trusted, institutionalized space to reduce mistrust, balance competing national narratives, and build a collaborative regional mindset among key actors.
- **Analyzing External Engagement -** Assessing the impact of shifting global alliances, Red Sea security frameworks, and military partnerships on regional sovereignty and policy autonomy.
- **Empowering Cross-Border Communities -** Elevating local borderland mechanisms—such as traditional mediation, kinship ties, and informal trade networks—into formal peace and conflict-resolution frameworks.
- **Advancing Economic Cooperation -** Utilizing transport corridors, livestock routes, infrastructure investments, and border markets to create economic ties that reduce conflict incentives.
- **Generating Actionable Policy Recommendations -** Producing realistic, grounded proposals tailored for governments, regional institutions, local administrations, and development partners.

Why Jigjiga?

Jigjiga was selected not only as a venue, but as a meaningful regional space. The city represents many of the realities that define the Horn of Africa: borderland interaction, trade, culture, mobility, pastoral life, community connection, and regional interdependence.

Jigjiga is a bridge between Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti, Kenya, and the wider Horn. Its location and lived experience make it a fitting place for a dialogue on regional agency, peace, and cooperation.

***Regional agency** means the ability of the countries, institutions, communities, and people of the Horn of Africa to define their own priorities, manage their own challenges, and shape their own future.*

It does not mean rejecting international partnership. It means ensuring that external engagement supports the region's own peace, development, and integration

- **Solidifying Collective Commitments -** Adopting a shared declaration to guide future diplomatic engagements and collaborative programming across the Horn.

The objectives of the Forum reflected an important shift in regional thinking. The dialogue did not treat peace, trade, security, climate, and mobility as separate issues. Instead, it approached them as connected parts of one regional reality.

6 Methodology and Format

The forum followed a Track 1.5 dialogue methodology, strategically combining formal state diplomacy with civil society, traditional authority, and academic research. The three-day agenda was structured into three distinct phases:

THREE-PHASE DIALOGUE METHODOLOGY

PHASE 1: HIGH-LEVEL OPENING PLENARY - Senior leadership anchored political commitment and set the thematic scope.

PHASE 2: BREAKOUT THEMATIC WORKING GROUPS - Deep-dive technical sessions focusing on geopolitical, community, and trade dynamics.

PHASE 3: PLENARY SYNTHESIS AND ADOPTION - Consolidating outcomes and adopting the Jigjiga Forum Declaration.

The forum prioritized inclusive participation by balancing contributions from state leadership, regional blocks, and local grassroots peacebuilders to ensure all recommendations were supported by field realities.





7 Opening Session and High-Level Plenary

The opening session brought together senior dignitaries, regional leaders, representatives of intergovernmental institutions, scholars, elders, peacebuilders, and invited guests.

Distinguished Guest of Honors included:

No.	Name	Institutional Affiliation	Role at the Conference
1	Honorable. Tagesse Chafo	Speaker, House of Peoples' Representatives	Guest of Honor
2	Honorable. Agegnehu Teshager	Speaker, House of Federation	Guest of Honor
3	H.E. Getachew Reda	Minister; Advisor to the Prime Minister on East African Security Affairs	Guest of Honor
4	H.E. Amb. Redwan Hussein	Director General, National Intelligence and Security Service	Guest of Honor
5	H.E. Dr. Assefa Abiyu	Deputy Director General, National Intelligence and Security Service	Guest of Honor
6	H.E. Dr. Abraham Belay	Minister, Ministry of Irrigation and Lowlands	Guest of Honor
7	H.E. Mohammed Idris	Minister, Ministry of Peace	Guest of Honor
8	H.E. Dr. Kassahun Gofe	Minister, Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration	Guest of Honor
9	Field Marshal Birhanu Jula	Chief of Staff, Ethiopian National Defense Force	Guest of Honor
10	H.E. Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu	Executive Secretary, IGAD	Guest of Honor
11	H.E. Ambassador Birhanu Tsegaye	State Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Guest of Honor
12	Hon. Dr. Dima Negewo	Chairperson, Parliament's Foreign Relations Committee	Guest of Honor
13	Hon. Amb. Dina Mufti	MoP, House of Peoples' Representatives	Guest of Honor

No.	Name	Institutional Affiliation	Role at the Conference
14	Hon. Dr. Fethi Mahdi	Deputy Chair, Parliament's Foreign Relations Committee	Guest of Honor
15	H.E. Amb. Zerihun Abebe	Director General for African Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Guest of Honor
16	H.E. Zeynu Jemal	Director, UNDP Resilience Hub for Africa	Guest of Honor

The opening session emphasized that the Horn of Africa must move from crisis management to strategic cooperation, from fragmentation to shared interest, and from externally driven agendas to stronger regional agency.

7.1 Welcome Address - H.E Jafar Badru - The Director General of the Institute of Foreign Affairs



The Director General of the Institute of Foreign Affairs welcomed participants to the Jigjiga Forum and emphasized the importance of strategic dialogue in addressing the complex political, security, diplomatic, and economic questions facing the Horn of Africa.

In his welcome remarks, the Director General noted that the Horn of Africa is passing through a period of major regional and global change. The region is increasingly shaped by shifting alliances, Red Sea and Gulf security dynamics, competition among external powers, climate-related pressures, fragile

political transitions, displacement, and economic uncertainty. These developments require careful analysis, stronger institutions, and regular platforms for dialogue among policymakers, researchers, regional organizations, and community actors.

The address underlined that the Horn of Africa is often presented mainly as a region of crisis. While the challenges are real, this view is incomplete. The region also has strong foundations for cooperation: shared histories, cross-border communities, trade routes, ports, corridors, livestock markets, cultural ties, and long traditions of mediation and coexistence. The Director General stressed that policy discussions must therefore move beyond crisis language and give equal attention to the region's opportunities for peace, trade, connectivity, and collective security.

He also emphasized that strategic dialogue is not a ceremonial exercise. It is a practical tool for reducing mistrust, clarifying interests, managing differences, and building a shared understanding of regional priorities. In a region where local conflicts can easily gain regional and international dimensions, regular dialogue among leaders, experts, and institutions is essential for prevention and early response.

The Director General highlighted the importance of evidence-based policy engagement. He noted that decisions affecting peace and security must be informed by sound research, field realities, historical understanding, and serious analysis of emerging trends. The Horn of Africa needs policy thinking that is both intellectually strong and practically grounded in the lived experiences of its people, especially those in borderland communities.

The Institute of Foreign Affairs reaffirmed its commitment to supporting informed debate, diplomatic engagement, regional cooperation, and knowledge-based policymaking. The Director General stated that institutions such as IFA have a responsibility to connect research with policy, bring scholars and decision-makers into meaningful conversation, and help develop regional perspectives that are clear, balanced, and forward-looking.

The welcome address concluded by appreciating the Somali Regional State, the convening partners, and all participants for contributing to a timely platform. The Director General expressed hope that the Jigjiga Forum would generate not only ideas, but also practical recommendations that can strengthen regional agency, deepen cooperation, and support durable peace in the Horn of Africa.

7.2 Welcome Address by Fowsia Abdulkadir, Director of HANKAAL Institute

The Director of HANKAAL Institute welcomed participants to Jigjiga and expressed appreciation to the Somali Regional State, the convening partners, distinguished guests, and regional delegations for taking part in the forum.



In her remarks, the Director emphasized that Jigjiga is a meaningful place for a dialogue on peace, cooperation, and regional agency. She described the city as a space of connection, where borders, markets, culture, mobility, and community life meet. Jigjiga reflects the daily realities of the Horn of Africa, especially the realities of communities whose lives, livelihoods, and relationships extend across national boundaries.

The address underlined that peace in the Horn of Africa cannot be achieved through formal diplomacy alone. State-to-state engagement is essential, but it must be supported by local knowledge, community trust, and the wisdom of people who live with the consequences of conflict and cooperation every day. Elders, women, youth, religious leaders, traders, pastoralists, local administrations, and cross-border networks all play an important role in preventing conflict, resolving disputes, and sustaining social cohesion.

The Director noted that borderland communities are often described mainly through the language of insecurity. However, these communities are also bridges of trade, culture, kinship, and practical cooperation. They understand interdependence not as a theory, but as a way of life. Their experience shows that peace is built not only in conference halls and government offices, but also in markets, grazing routes, water points, family networks, and traditional mediation spaces.

She stressed that any serious discussion on durable peace in the Horn must listen to these voices. Policies that are not grounded in local realities may look strong on paper but fail in practice. For this reason, the Director called for a peacebuilding approach that combines high-level diplomacy with community-based solutions, formal institutions with traditional systems, and regional strategy with local experience.

The address also highlighted the importance of knowledge institutions such as HANKAAL Institute in connecting research, community experience, and policy dialogue. The Director reaffirmed the institute's commitment to producing grounded analysis, supporting informed debate, and creating platforms where local perspectives can contribute to regional policy thinking.

She concluded by encouraging participants to use the Jigjiga Forum as a practical space for honest conversation and solution-oriented engagement. She urged the forum to produce ideas that speak not only to policymakers and institutions, but also to the lived realities of the people of the Horn of Africa.

7.3 Welcome Address by Zerihun Teshome - The Board Director of CRPP

The Board Director of the Center for Responsible and Peaceful Politics welcomed participants to the Horn Inter-Elite Dialogue — Jigjiga Forum and expressed appreciation to the Somali Regional State for hosting the gathering. He also thanked the distinguished guests, regional delegations, partners, scholars, elders, peacebuilders, and participants whose presence gave the forum strong institutional and regional significance.



In his remarks, the Board Director described Jigjiga as a city of resilience, diversity, and strategic importance. He noted that the city is a fitting venue for this dialogue because it reflects many of the realities that define the Horn of Africa: cross-border movement, trade, culture, community ties, and interdependence. Jigjiga, he emphasized, is not only a regional capital but also a gateway linking Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti, and the wider Horn.

The address situated the forum within the wider realities of the region. The Horn of Africa is blessed with rich history, vibrant cultures, resilient communities, important trade routes, and major strategic value. At the same time, it continues to face conflict, fragile transitions, mistrust,

humanitarian pressure, and growing external competition. These challenges have too often caused the region to be described mainly through the language of crisis.

The Board Director stressed that the forum was convened to help change that language: from crisis to cooperation, from fragmentation to shared interest, and from dependency to regional agency. He explained that the theme, "Strengthening Regional Agency for Durable Peace in the Horn of Africa," speaks directly to the need for the countries, institutions, leaders, and communities of the region to take greater ownership of their shared future.

He underlined that lasting peace cannot be imported. It must be owned, nurtured, and protected by the people of the region themselves. In this sense, regional agency means that the Horn should not remain merely a theatre for external interests. Instead, it must become a region capable of shaping its own future with wisdom, confidence, and responsibility.

The address also highlighted the importance of responsible politics as the foundation of peaceful societies. The Board Director noted that responsible politics requires restraint, inclusion, foresight, honest dialogue, and the courage to place the long-term public good above narrow or short-term interests. He emphasized that peacebuilding in the Horn requires not only formal agreements, but also a culture of dialogue, trust, and shared responsibility.

He further noted that the forum would examine key questions shaping peace and cooperation in the region, including external engagement and security alignments, fragile transitions and conflict management, the role of regional institutions and cross-border communities, and the contribution of trade and economic cooperation to durable peace.

Jigjiga Forum would generate not only analysis, but also direction;

not only concerns, but shared commitment.

He reaffirmed CRPP's commitment to responsible dialogue, peaceful politics, and regional cooperation in the Horn of Africa.

The Board Director concluded by inviting participants to engage with honesty, humility, and a constructive spirit.

7.4 Welcome Speech by H.E. Mustafa Mohamed, President of the Somali Regional State



H.E. Mustafa Mohamed warmly welcomed participants to Jigjiga on behalf of the people and government of the Somali Regional State. He described guests as blessings in Somali culture and noted, with humor, that Somali hospitality may not always allow guests to leave exactly when they planned, but would ensure they leave with warm memories, meaningful conversations, and renewed appreciation for Somali tea, camel milk, and Jigjiga hospitality. His Excellency emphasized that the Horn of Africa is a region of ancient civilizations, young aspirations, trade routes, pastoral routes, ports, borderlands, faith, culture, resilience, and possibility. At the same time, he acknowledged the region's difficult realities, including conflict, mistrust, displacement, fragile transitions, humanitarian pressure, and growing external competition.

He argued that the Horn should not be viewed only as a region of crisis. Rather, it is also a region of wisdom, solutions, courage, and hope. He reminded participants that elders practiced mediation before modern diplomacy gave it a name, traders crossed borders before regional

integration became a policy agenda, and communities shared water, markets, marriage, culture, and faith before maps drew formal borders.

H.E. Mustafa Mohamed stated that regional agency is not a foreign idea, but something rooted in the history and lived experience of the people of the Horn. He stressed that Jigjiga is more than a city; it is a meeting point and bridge between Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti, and the wider region.

He noted that peace is not an abstract concept. Peace is an open road, a functioning market, a child going safely to school, a pastoralist moving without fear, a trader crossing a border with confidence, and a mother knowing that tomorrow will be safer than today.

His Excellency concluded by calling on participants to speak frankly but respectfully, to disagree with purpose, and to leave Jigjiga not only with analysis, but with direction; not only with concerns, but with commitment.

7.5 Opening Remarks by H.E Kassahun Gofe (PhD), Minister – FDRE Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration

H.E. Dr. Kassahun Gofe, Minister of Trade and Regional Integration, delivered the opening remark at the Horn Inter-Elite Dialogue held in Jigjiga, the "Rising Sun of Ethiopia's East." The dialogue was jointly organized by the Somali Regional State, the Institute of Foreign Affairs, and the Centre for Responsible & Peaceful Politics under the theme "Strengthening Regional Agency for Durable Peace in the Horn of Africa."



At the outset, H.E. Dr. Kassahun expressed his appreciation to the organizers for convening what he described as a timely and important regional dialogue. He noted that bringing together leaders, experts, policymakers, and stakeholders from across the region provides a valuable platform to reflect on the pressing political, security, governance, economic, and regional cooperation issues affecting the Horn of Africa.

He emphasized that the Horn of Africa faces complex and interlinked challenges that continue to shape the region's political, security, and economic landscape. The region, he noted, is increasingly influenced by geopolitical competition, shifting regional alignments, and external pressures that affect the autonomy of states to pursue their own development priorities.

H.E. Dr. Kassahun further highlighted persistent cross-border security concerns, including conflict spillovers, violent extremism, illicit trade and financial flows, and other transnational threats. These challenges, he stated, continue to undermine peace, disrupt economic activity, and weaken prospects for sustained regional cooperation.

He also underlined that institutional coordination gaps remain one of the major constraints limiting the region's ability to act collectively. According to him, weak coordination reduces the effectiveness of regional mechanisms and slows progress toward meaningful trade and economic integration.

In this regard, H.E. Dr. Kassahun stressed that trade and economic integration along shared borders can serve as vital anchors for regional stability. He noted that borderlands, which have often been vulnerable to conflict and insecurity, can be transformed into resilient corridors of mutual prosperity when supported by trade, infrastructure, cooperation, and people-to-people exchange.

He pointed out that the Horn of Africa has significant opportunities to advance regional economic integration through the African Continental Free Trade Area, digital market development, climate resilience initiatives, and stronger regional trade and investment partnerships. He emphasized that sustaining a secure and fluid environment for trade does not only generate economic returns; it also lays the structural foundation for durable peace, strategic autonomy, and shared development across the Horn of Africa.

H.E. Dr. Kassahun stated that the challenges facing the region are deeply interconnected and cannot be addressed in isolation. He therefore called for robust, inclusive, and sustained dialogue platforms such as the Jigjiga Forum, where stakeholders can exchange ideas, identify shared priorities, and develop practical pathways toward lasting peace, stability, and prosperity.

He underscored that sustainable peace and shared prosperity can only be achieved when solutions reflect the realities, values, priorities, and aspirations of the people they are meant to serve.

Reflecting on the region's long-standing challenges, H.E. Dr. Kassahun noted that many of these problems have persisted for decades because appropriate mechanisms for coordinated and context-specific problem-solving were often lacking. To break this cycle, he called for a new mindset that prioritizes indigenous knowledge, local ownership, and home-grown approaches to peace, development, and regional cooperation.

He stated that Ethiopia is demonstrating leadership in this regard through its commitment to home-grown solutions to political, social, and economic challenges. He explained that Ethiopia's reform approach emphasizes the inclusive participation of citizens in shaping national priorities

and ensuring that reforms are not only technically sound, but also socially legitimate and nationally owned.

In this context, H.E. Dr. Kassahun referred to the concept of **Medemer**, introduced by H.E. Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed. He explained that Medemer, meaning synergy or adding value through unity, reflects the idea that unity does not require uniformity. Rather, it represents the harmony of diversity, where different voices and experiences contribute to collective progress.

He noted that the Medemer mindset is relevant not only for Ethiopia's national development, but also for regional cooperation in the Horn of Africa. It strengthens durable partnerships by promoting unity that transcends borders and encourages genuine collaboration in support of peace, prosperity, and human dignity.

H.E. Dr. Kassahun also highlighted Ethiopia's Homegrown Economic Reform Agenda as a practical expression of the country's home-grown development direction. He stated that the reform agenda is designed to promote private-sector-driven growth, strengthen macro-financial stability, enhance sectoral productivity, and improve the competitiveness of the national economy.

He emphasized that these reforms are not only intended to transform Ethiopia's domestic economy, but also to position the country as a strong contributor to regional economic integration. In this respect, Ethiopia continues to prioritize infrastructure connectivity, including the modernization of logistics systems, expansion of road and railway networks, improvement of port access, and strengthening of transport corridors linking Ethiopia with its neighbors and the wider region.

He further noted that these investments are essential for lowering trade costs, strengthening competitiveness, and enabling the smooth movement of goods, services, and people across borders. Ethiopia is also expanding regional energy cooperation by supplying clean and affordable electricity to neighboring countries, thereby supporting economic growth and improving access to regional and global markets.

H.E. Dr. Kassahun added that Ethiopia's trade policy reforms are designed to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers, harmonize standards, and support the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area. These reforms, he said, are critical for deepening regional integration and expanding intra-African trade.

In conclusion, H.E. Dr. Kassahun emphasized that in an era of rapidly evolving geopolitical dynamics, regional stability and cooperation are more essential than ever. He stated that the destiny of the countries of the Horn of Africa is profoundly interconnected, and that peace and prosperity in one country are closely linked with peace and prosperity in the wider region.

He reaffirmed Ethiopia's commitment to building a shared regional vision, promoting stability, and creating an enabling environment for expanded trade and deeper economic integration. Ethiopia's commitment to peace, he stated, is rooted in the belief that when the region is peaceful, all countries benefit.

He concluded by noting that Ethiopia's commitment to regional economic integration and its leadership in promoting peace and stability form a coherent and mutually reinforcing strategy for the Horn of Africa. By investing in infrastructure, energy connectivity, trade facilitation, and conflict resolution mechanisms, Ethiopia is working to build a region where economic opportunity, political stability, and social cohesion advance together.

H.E. Dr. Kassahun called on all stakeholders to strengthen collective action, mutual trust, and practical cooperation in order to build a peaceful, integrated, and economically vibrant Horn of Africa.

7.6 Remarks by H.E. Workneh Gebeyehu (PhD), Executive Secretary of IGAD

H.E. Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, Executive Secretary of IGAD, commended the organizers and the Somali Regional State for convening a timely and strategically important dialogue in Jigjiga. He noted that the forum came at a moment when the Horn of Africa requires calm reflection, honest conversation, and stronger regional coordination.

In his remarks, Dr. Workneh emphasized that the Horn of Africa is one of the most interconnected regions in the world. The countries and communities of the region are linked by geography, history, culture, trade, mobility, security, climate, and shared livelihoods. Because of this deep interdependence, the challenges of one country rarely remain within its borders. Conflict, drought, displacement, food insecurity, arms flows, political instability, and economic disruption can quickly affect neighboring states and communities.



He stressed that IGAD's long experience demonstrates a simple but important lesson: regional problems require regional solutions. No country in the Horn can address today's challenges alone. Peace and stability must therefore be pursued through cooperation, dialogue, institutional coordination, and shared responsibility. Dr. Workneh underlined that regional institutions are

essential because they provide platforms where states can consult, manage differences, coordinate responses, and prevent crises from escalating.

The Executive Secretary explained that conflict and fragile political transitions must be addressed before they become wider regional crises. He emphasized the importance of early warning, preventive diplomacy, mediation, and confidence-building among member states. He also noted that peacebuilding must be linked to development, climate resilience, food security, and livelihood protection, because insecurity is often deepened by poverty, environmental stress, and competition over resources.

Dr. Workneh gave particular attention to the role of cross-border communities. He noted that these communities are often the first to suffer when conflict, drought, displacement, or political tension occurs. At the same time, they are also among the first to build practical forms of cooperation. Through markets, pastoral mobility, kinship networks, traditional mediation systems, and shared use of resources, borderland communities sustain relationships that formal institutions can learn from and support.

He further emphasized that regional agency should not be misunderstood as isolation from international partners. The Horn of Africa needs constructive partnerships with the wider world. However, such partnerships must be guided by the priorities, leadership, and ownership of the region itself. External engagement should strengthen peace, stability, development, and integration. It should not deepen divisions, encourage rivalry, or turn the Horn into an arena for strategic competition among outside powers.

Dr. Workneh also called for stronger investment in regional economic integration. He noted that trade corridors, infrastructure, energy cooperation, ports, livestock markets, and people-to-people exchange can help build trust and create shared interests. Economic cooperation, he emphasized, is not separate from peacebuilding; it is one of its foundations. Communities and countries that benefit from cooperation are more likely to protect stability and resolve differences through dialogue.

The remarks reaffirmed IGAD's commitment to supporting peace, security, cooperation, and integration in the Horn of Africa. Dr. Workneh concluded by encouraging participants to ensure that the Jigjiga Forum becomes more than a discussion platform. He urged that it should contribute to practical recommendations, stronger regional understanding, and sustained cooperation among governments, institutions, and communities across the Horn.

7.7 Remarks by the Delegation of Somalia – General Beshir Mohamed, Minister of Environment and Climate Change

The delegation of the Federal Republic of Somalia, represented by senior officials including General Beshir Mohamed, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, and Hon. Jamal Mohamed Hassan, Minister of Commerce and Member of Parliament, warmly welcomed the convening of the Jigjiga Forum and expressed sincere appreciation to the Somali Regional State



and the organizers for creating an important platform for regional dialogue, strategic reflection, and cooperation.

The Somalia delegation emphasized that peace, trade, environmental sustainability, and security are deeply interconnected across the Horn of Africa. The delegation noted that climate change,

recurring drought, competition over natural resources, displacement, food insecurity, and conflict do not occur in isolation. Rather, they reinforce one another and create complex regional pressures that cannot be effectively addressed by any single country acting alone.

The delegation underlined that the Horn of Africa requires coordinated, preventive, and long-term responses that combine peacebuilding, economic cooperation, climate resilience, and institutional collaboration. Climate shocks increasingly affect pastoral livelihoods, agricultural production, migration patterns, local markets, and social stability. For this reason, environmental and climate policies should be treated not only as technical matters, but also as central elements of regional security, human development, and economic planning.

The Somalia representatives highlighted the deep historical, cultural, economic, and social ties linking Somalia with Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, and the wider Horn. These relationships have been sustained for generations through trade, pastoral mobility, shared communities, family connections, cultural exchange, and religious traditions. The delegation stressed that these long-standing ties should be mobilized as foundations for dialogue, reconciliation, commerce, and people-to-people cooperation.

The delegation called for stronger regional coordination in several priority areas, including climate resilience, cross-border trade, pastoral mobility, maritime security, disaster preparedness, and institutional cooperation. It emphasized the importance of improving early warning systems, sharing climate and security information, coordinating humanitarian preparedness, and investing in livelihood recovery for communities affected by drought, displacement, and conflict.

On trade and economic cooperation, the delegation noted that border markets, transport links, ports, livestock trade, agricultural exchange, and small-scale commerce are essential to the livelihoods of millions of people. Strengthening these systems through clearer regulations, improved infrastructure, customs cooperation, and safer trading environments would contribute to employment, food security, public revenue, and regional stability.

The Somalia delegation also underscored the strategic importance of maritime security and cooperation in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and Indian Ocean. It noted that secure sea routes, ports, and coastal economies are vital not only for Somalia, but also for the wider region. Maritime cooperation should therefore support trade, prevent insecurity, protect coastal livelihoods, and strengthen regional economic integration.

A central message of the delegation was that borderland communities should be recognized as bridges of cooperation rather than treated primarily as zones of suspicion. These communities often carry the greatest burden of insecurity, climate stress, and weak service delivery, yet they also possess deep knowledge, social networks, and economic relationships that can support

peace and regional integration. Policies toward border areas should therefore prioritize development, mobility, dialogue, trade, and inclusion.

The delegation further stressed that institutional cooperation among Horn countries should be strengthened through regular consultation, joint planning, technical exchange, and practical cross-border initiatives. The Jigjiga Forum can play an important role by providing a trusted space where governments, parliamentarians, local leaders, scholars, businesses, and communities can discuss shared challenges and develop regionally owned solutions.

In conclusion, the delegation of the Federal Republic of Somalia reaffirmed its support for the Jigjiga Forum and its commitment to a peaceful, resilient, economically connected, and cooperative Horn of Africa. The delegation called for dialogue to be translated into practical action in climate adaptation, trade, mobility, maritime security, borderland development, and institutional partnership, with the interests and well-being of the region's people placed at the center.

7.8 Remarks by the Delegation of Djibouti - H.E. Ilyas Dawaleh, Minister of Finance,



The delegation of the Republic of Djibouti, represented by H.E. Ilyas Dawaleh, Minister of Finance, together with members of parliament and other senior delegates, expressed strong support for the establishment and strategic direction of the Jigjiga Forum. The delegation welcomed the Forum's emphasis on regional agency, shared responsibility, and locally owned solutions to the complex political, economic, and security challenges facing the Horn of Africa.

The Djibouti delegation underlined that the future stability and prosperity of the Horn will depend on the region's ability to deepen connectivity, expand infrastructure, strengthen trade and transport corridors, mobilize finance, and build durable mechanisms for cooperation. Djibouti's own experience as a center of maritime access, logistics, port services, and regional connectivity demonstrates that economic integration can serve not only as an engine of growth, but also as a foundation for peace, interdependence, and political confidence.

The delegation emphasized that the geography of the Horn should not be viewed primarily as a source of rivalry or vulnerability. Rather, it should be transformed into a strategic asset. The Red Sea, regional ports, road and railway corridors, border markets, energy networks, digital links, and financial cooperation offer major opportunities to create shared prosperity across the region. These opportunities, however, can only be realized through trust, coordinated investment, predictable policy frameworks, and a common regional vision.

The delegation further noted that stronger economic integration can help reduce conflict incentives by creating mutual interests among states and communities. Infrastructure corridors, trade facilitation, cross-border markets, and joint investment platforms can generate employment, improve livelihoods, increase public revenues, and connect previously marginalized areas to national and regional economies. In this sense, regional economic cooperation is not separate from peacebuilding; it is one of its most practical and sustainable foundations.

The Djibouti delegation also stressed the importance of regional ownership in external engagement. International partnerships, foreign investment, development finance, and security cooperation should be aligned with the priorities collectively defined by the countries and peoples of the Horn. External engagement should reinforce regional institutions, expand connectivity, support local capacity, and strengthen cooperation among neighboring countries, rather than deepen fragmentation or strategic competition.

The delegation encouraged the Jigjiga Forum to become a trusted platform for sustained dialogue among governments, parliamentarians, business leaders, intellectuals, communities, and development partners. Such a platform can help the region move beyond crisis-driven engagement and toward long-term strategic cooperation based on shared interests, mutual respect, and practical regional initiatives.

In conclusion, the Djibouti delegation reaffirmed its support for the Jigjiga Forum as an important instrument for strengthening regional agency and promoting a more connected, stable, and prosperous Horn of Africa. The delegation called for the Forum to translate dialogue into concrete cooperation in transport, ports, trade, finance, investment, energy, and cross-border development, while ensuring that the benefits of integration are broadly shared among the peoples of the region.

7.9 Remarks by the Delegation of Kenya - Governor Nadif Jamac of Garissa County



The delegation of the Republic of Kenya, including Governor Nadif Jamac of Garissa County, Hon. Abdi Omar Shurie, Chairperson of the Public Debt Committee, members of parliament, and other senior officials, warmly welcomed the convening of the Jigjiga Forum and expressed strong support for its focus on regional dialogue, locally grounded peacebuilding, and practical cooperation across the Horn of Africa.

The delegation underlined Kenya's deep political, economic, social, and security connections to the wider Horn. It noted that peace and development in the region are inseparable from the realities faced by border counties and communities, particularly those that experience cross-

border movement, pastoral mobility, trade flows, drought, displacement, and security pressures on a daily basis.

Drawing on the experience of Garissa County and other frontier areas, the delegation emphasized that borderlands are not peripheral spaces. They are central to regional peace, commerce, social cohesion, and human mobility. These areas often serve as the first points of contact between states and communities, and their stability has direct implications for national security, regional trade, and the resilience of local livelihoods.

The Kenyan representatives stressed that counties and local administrations have an essential role in regional peacebuilding. Local governments are often closest to the communities affected by conflict, climate shocks, migration, and market disruption. Their knowledge, institutions, and relationships should therefore be integrated into national and regional strategies for peace, development, and cross-border cooperation.

The delegation called for stronger coordination among border administrations, national governments, and regional institutions. Such coordination should include regular consultation, joint planning, information sharing, conflict early warning, coordinated humanitarian preparedness, and practical agreements on trade, mobility, and access to shared resources. The delegation also encouraged closer cooperation among neighboring counties, regions, and local authorities across national borders.

Infrastructure was identified as a major foundation for regional integration. The delegation highlighted the importance of roads, border markets, water systems, digital connectivity, energy infrastructure, transport corridors, and social services in reducing isolation and creating economic opportunity. Better-connected border areas can support trade, improve access to public services, and reduce the conditions that contribute to marginalization and insecurity.

The Kenyan delegation also emphasized the urgency of creating meaningful opportunities for young people. High youth unemployment, limited access to education and skills, and weak economic prospects can increase vulnerability to crime, irregular migration, and violent extremism. Investment in education, vocational training, digital skills, entrepreneurship, local enterprise, and cross-border commerce should therefore be treated as central components of both development and security policy.

On trade facilitation, the delegation noted that many border communities already participate in regional commerce through livestock trade, agricultural exchange, transport services, retail markets, and informal business networks. These economic relationships should be supported through better infrastructure, simplified procedures, safer trading environments, access to finance, and improved customs coordination. Formalizing and strengthening legitimate cross-

border trade can increase household income, expand public revenue, and build mutual economic interests.

The delegation further stressed the importance of community-based peacebuilding. Traditional leaders, religious institutions, women, youth, traders, pastoral associations, and civil society organizations possess valuable local knowledge and trusted networks. Their participation is essential for mediation, conflict prevention, reconciliation, and the management of shared natural resources.

A key message from the Kenyan delegation was that the future of the Horn cannot be shaped solely through national capitals and central institutions. It must also be built through borderlands, counties, local governments, and communities that experience regional interdependence every day. Regional policy should therefore move beyond a capital-centered approach and give greater attention to the voices, needs, and opportunities of frontier communities.

The delegation encouraged the Jigjiga Forum to serve as a sustained platform linking national leadership with local government experience and community perspectives. By bringing together parliamentarians, governors, regional administrations, community leaders, businesses, scholars, and development partners, the Forum can help translate high-level dialogue into practical cooperation in border development, peacebuilding, trade, infrastructure, education, and youth employment.

In conclusion, the delegation of the Republic of Kenya reaffirmed its support for the Jigjiga Forum and its commitment to a more peaceful, connected, and prosperous Horn of Africa. The delegation called for stronger cooperation among national governments, regional institutions, local administrations, and border communities, emphasizing that durable regional stability will be achieved when borderlands are developed as spaces of opportunity, cooperation, and shared prosperity.

7.10 Opening Speech by Honorable Tagesse Chafo, Speaker of the FDRE House of Peoples' Representatives



Honorable Tagesse Chafo, Speaker of the House of Peoples' Representatives and Guest of Honour, officially opened the Horn Inter-Elite Dialogue — Jigjiga Forum. In his opening remarks, he expressed his appreciation for being part of the Forum in Jigjiga, a city he described as carrying deep meaning for Ethiopia and the wider Horn of Africa.

He noted that Jigjiga is not only a regional capital, but also a place of movement, exchange, culture, resilience, and connection. He emphasized that the Horn of Africa should not be understood only as an abstract geographic space, but as a lived reality for communities, traders, pastoralists, families, young people, elders, and institutions whose futures are closely interconnected.

Honorable Tagesse Chafo thanked the Somali Regional State for hosting the Forum and appreciated the convening institutions, including the Center for Responsible and Peaceful Politics, the Institute of Foreign Affairs, HANKAAL Institute, and other partners, for creating a timely platform for reflection and dialogue.

Reflecting on the theme, "Strengthening Regional Agency for Durable Peace in the Horn of Africa," he stated that the theme was both urgent and wise. According to him, it invited participants to think not only about the challenges facing the region, but also about the responsibility of the region itself. He stressed that the Forum should move beyond analysis and focus on what leaders, institutions, scholars, communities, and citizens must do to shape a more peaceful and stable future.

He described the Horn of Africa as one of the most important regions in the world, serving as a bridge between continents, seas, markets, cultures, and strategic interests. He noted that the region's geography gives it importance, its people give it life, its diversity gives it richness, and its history gives it depth. At the same time, he spoke frankly about the challenges facing the region, including conflict, mistrust, displacement, political fragility, humanitarian stress, and external pressure. He observed that the Horn has too often been viewed through the lens of crisis and that external actors have frequently defined the region's problems and future on its behalf.



He stressed that this situation must change. He stated that the future of the Horn of Africa should not be written only in foreign capitals, international reports, or emergency meetings after crises have already occurred. Rather, it must be shaped by the people, governments, regional

institutions, communities, scholars, elders, women, youth, and all those who understand both the pain and the promise of the region. Honorable Tagesse Chafo explained that this is the meaning of regional agency. He defined regional agency as the ability of the region to think for itself, speak for itself, cooperate within itself, and take responsibility for its shared destiny. He clarified that regional agency does not mean rejecting partnership, as the Horn of Africa needs friends and partners. However, he emphasized that partnership must strengthen the region's priorities, support regional peace, avoid deepening division, and respect the agency, sovereignty, and dignity of the peoples of the region.

He further noted that durable peace is not built by wishes alone. It is built through institutions, trust, justice, inclusive politics, and continuous dialogue, even when disagreements are difficult. Speaking from his experience as a parliamentarian, he emphasized that peace must be anchored in public trust and accountable institutions. He stated that when citizens believe their voices matter, peace becomes stronger; when communities feel included, stability becomes deeper; and when institutions act with fairness and responsibility, conflict loses ground.

He then linked these ideas to the three core themes of the Forum. On the first theme, External Engagement, Emerging Alignments, and Security Implications, he explained that the Horn of Africa must understand how changing global and regional dynamics affect its peace and sovereignty, and that the region must engage the world with clarity, unity, and strategic maturity.

Regarding the second theme, Harnessing Cross-Border Communities and Regional Institutions in Managing Fragile Transitions and Conflict, he emphasized that peace is not made only in capitals. It is also made in borderlands, communities, local markets, traditional mediation spaces, and through regional institutions that carry legitimacy and experience.

On the third theme, Trade and Economic Engagement as a Vehicle for Regional Integration, he noted that people who trade together, build together, and benefit together are more likely to protect peace together. He underlined that economic cooperation can become a bridge where politics has created distance.

H.E. Tagesse Chafo observed that the three themes are not separate, but part of one broader conversation. He emphasized that security, governance, community engagement, and economic cooperation are all part of the same foundation for durable peace.

He reaffirmed that Ethiopia has a deep interest in a peaceful, stable, and integrated Horn of Africa. He stated that Ethiopia's peace is connected to the peace of its neighbors; its development is connected to regional markets, ports, corridors, and cooperation; and its security is connected to mutual trust and responsible regional engagement.



He stressed that no country in the Horn can achieve lasting peace alone, no community can prosper in isolation, no border can be secure if the people living along it are poor, excluded, or afraid, and no regional institution can succeed without the support, trust, and political will of member states and communities.

According to him, the key lesson is that the Horn of Africa must choose cooperation over suspicion, dialogue over confrontation, and shared prosperity over narrow competition. He acknowledged that differences among countries and communities will not disappear but emphasized that what matters is how such differences are managed. He stated that mature regions are not those without disagreements, but those with the wisdom, institutions, and discipline to address disagreements peacefully.

He emphasized that the Jigjiga Forum should help promote a new regional mindset suitable for the realities of the Horn of Africa. This mindset, he noted, should move the region away from fragmented reactions and toward shared responsibility, strategic coordination, and practical cooperation. It should encourage leaders and institutions to see peace not as a temporary political arrangement, but as a long-term project that requires trust, inclusion, patience, and disciplined engagement.

He further underlined that this required mindset must recognize border communities as bridges of connection rather than margins of the state; regional institutions as practical instruments for peace rather than ceremonial platforms; trade and economic cooperation as tools for confidence-building rather than only commercial activity; and dialogue as a continuous habit rather than an occasional event. In his view, such a mindset is essential if the Horn of Africa is to move from crisis management toward durable peace, regional agency, and shared prosperity.

Honorable Tagesse Chafo called on participants to make the Forum more than a meeting. He encouraged them to contribute to a new regional mindset: one that sees border communities not as margins but as bridges; regional institutions not as ceremonial platforms but as instruments of peace; trade not only as business but as confidence-building; and peace not as a temporary pause but as a long-term national and regional project.

He emphasized that the Horn of Africa deserves such a future. He stated that the region's young generation deserves a Horn where talent is not wasted by conflict, trade is not blocked by mistrust, politics is guided by responsibility, and diversity becomes a source of strength.

In concluding his remarks, he encouraged all participants to speak with honesty, wisdom, and practical purpose. He urged them to avoid speeches that only repeat problems and instead search for solutions, move from complaint to commitment, and leave Jigjiga with clearer thinking, stronger relationships, and actionable ideas that can support peace and cooperation in the region.





He again thanked the Somali Regional State for its warm hospitality, the organizers for their leadership, and all distinguished participants for their presence and contribution. He expressed hope that the dialogue would strengthen trust, deepen regional understanding, and help the Horn of Africa move from uncertainty to confidence, from fragmentation to cooperation, and from crisis management to durable peace.

With these remarks, Honorable Tagesse Chafo officially declared the Horn Inter-Elite Dialogue — Jigjiga Forum open.

8 Thematic Group Discussions

The forum proceeded into three thematic group discussions. Each group examined one major theme and developed key observations, challenges, and recommendations.

8.1 Theme One: External Engagement, Emerging Alignments, and Security Implications



8.1.1 Key Issues Discussed

Participants noted that the Horn of Africa is increasingly affected by global and regional power competition. External actors are engaging the region through military partnerships, port access, investment, diplomatic influence, security cooperation, and strategic alignments.

While external engagement can bring investment, infrastructure, security support, and diplomatic opportunities, participants warned that it may also deepen polarization if regional actors are not coordinated.

8.1.2 Key Outcomes

The group agreed that:

1. The Horn of Africa should strengthen its collective diplomatic voice.
2. External partnerships should be guided by regional priorities, sovereignty, and mutual benefit.
3. Regional countries should avoid being drawn into rivalries that weaken peace and cooperation.
4. IGAD and other regional institutions should be supported to provide platforms for strategic consultation.
5. Security cooperation should be linked to governance, development, and trust-building.
6. A regional mechanism for regular strategic dialogue on external engagement should be considered.

8.1.3 Proposed Action Points

- Establish a Horn strategic dialogue platform on external engagement and security alignment.
- Strengthen coordination among national security, foreign policy, and regional institutions.
- Promote transparency in external partnerships.
- Support IGAD-led preventive diplomacy and early warning mechanisms.
- Encourage research institutions to produce regular analysis on geopolitical trends affecting the Horn.

8.2 Theme Two: Harnessing Cross-Border Communities and Regional Institutions in Managing Fragile Transitions and Conflict



8.2.1 Key Issues Discussed

Participants emphasized that cross-border communities are central to peace and conflict dynamics in the Horn of Africa. These communities are often affected by insecurity, climate shocks, weak service delivery, displacement, and political instability. However, they also possess strong social networks, traditional mediation systems, trade linkages, and cultural ties that can support peace.

The group also discussed the role of regional institutions in managing fragile transitions, supporting dialogue, and strengthening conflict prevention.

8.2.2 Key Outcomes

The group agreed that:

1. Cross-border communities should be recognized as peace-building assets, not only as security concerns.
2. Traditional elders, women, youth, religious leaders, traders, and local authorities must be included in peace processes.
3. Regional institutions should work more closely with local actors and border administrations.
4. Fragile transitions require early engagement, inclusive dialogue, and practical support.
5. Climate change, displacement, and resource competition must be integrated into peacebuilding strategies.
6. Trust-building among communities is essential for durable peace.

8.2.3 Proposed Action Points

- Create cross-border peace committees supported by local administrations and regional institutions.
- Strengthen traditional and community-based conflict resolution systems.
- Establish regular dialogue among borderland communities, local governments, and security actors.
- Integrate climate resilience and livelihood support into peacebuilding programs.
- Promote women and youth participation in cross-border peace initiatives.
- Develop a regional knowledge platform on community-based peacebuilding

8.3 Three: Trade and Economic Engagement as a Vehicle for Regional Integration

8.3.1 Key Issues Discussed

Participants discussed the role of trade, connectivity, transport corridors, border markets, private-sector cooperation, and economic interdependence in building peace. The group noted that economic engagement can create shared interests and reduce incentives for conflict.

Participants also discussed barriers such as poor infrastructure, insecurity, informal trade restrictions, customs challenges, lack of finance, weak market information, and limited coordination among regional states.

8.3.2 Key Outcomes

The group agreed that:



1. Trade and economic cooperation should be treated as peacebuilding tools.
2. Borderland commerce should be formalized and supported without undermining community livelihoods.
3. Transport corridors and market linkages can strengthen regional integration.
4. Private-sector actors should be included in regional peace and integration discussions.
5. Youth employment and enterprise development should be linked to peacebuilding.
6. Regional governments should improve trade facilitation and reduce unnecessary barriers.

8.3.3 Proposed Action Points

- Develop cross-border trade facilitation programs.
- Support border markets, livestock corridors, logistics services, and small traders.
- Promote joint business forums among Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti, and Kenya.
- Strengthen customs cooperation and information sharing.
- Link youth entrepreneurship with regional integration initiatives.

- Encourage investment in roads, digital connectivity, storage, transport, and market infrastructure.

8.4 Synthesis of Key Messages

Participants appreciated the Somali Regional State's organization of the forum in collaboration with CRPP and other partners. They noted that the forum represented an important step toward broader regional conversation, partnership-building, and practical problem-solving in the Horn of Africa.

Participants emphasized that the selected themes were timely, relevant, and comprehensive. The three thematic areas were seen as sufficiently broad and strategic to guide discussion and action over the coming decade. The forum helped build a shared understanding of the structural deficits and fragilities affecting the Horn of Africa, including institutional weaknesses, exclusion of border communities, poor infrastructure, weak coordination with grassroots actors, and the over-securitization of regional priorities.

8.4.1 Remarks by H.E. Getachew Reda – Minster, Advisor to the FDRE Prime Minister on East African Affairs



H.E. Getachew Redda, Minister and Advisor to the Prime Minister on East African Security Affairs, reiterated that the discussions focused on the structural deficits and fragility of the Horn of Africa.

He noted that internal weaknesses, the exclusion of borderland communities, and poor infrastructure remain defining features of the region's challenges.

He emphasized that the group discussions examined both the problems and the possible solutions, and that the key message of the forum was the need for collective action. According to him, "coming together is where to start," and this represents the core value of the forum.

H.E. Getachew further observed that the three topics selected for the forum were highly relevant and could remain useful for implementation over the coming ten years, as they comprehensively cover the key issues facing the region. He also stressed that the Horn of Africa has often been shaped by over-securitized priorities, while what is equally needed is the development of transboundary cooperation, infrastructure, and regional socio-economic integration.

8.4.2 Remarks by H.E. Zeynu Jemal, Director of the UNDP Resilience Hub for Africa

H.E. Zeynu Jemal, Director of the UNDP Resilience Hub for Africa, described the initiative as timely, relevant, and important for understanding local realities and strengthening locally grounded responses. He emphasized that such forums are valuable because they connect regional policy discussions with the lived experiences of communities.



He stressed that the Horn of Africa should be approached through a socio-economic integration lens rather than only through a security-focused or securitized borderland approach.

Borderlands, he noted, should not be seen only as areas of challenge and insecurity, but also as spaces of opportunity, connection, trade, natural resources, youthful population, mobility, and regional integration.

H.E. Zeynu further emphasized that security cooperation remains important, but development cooperation strengthens and sustains security outcomes. Regional integration, therefore, requires continuous dialogue among stakeholders, practical cooperation, and trust-building. He underlined that signing agreements alone does not guarantee integration; what matters is implementation, ownership, and sustained follow-up.

He also raised an important question regarding the framing of the dialogue: why should the process be limited to inter-elite dialogue when the issues at hand require wider stakeholder involvement? He recommended that pastoralists, peri-urban communities, women, youth, cross-border traders, migrants, researchers, private sector actors, and local communities be meaningfully included in the future Jigjiga Forum.

H.E. Zeynu also noted that UNDP has developed several knowledge products on the region, but many knowledge efforts have not fully captured the delicacies and lived realities of borderland communities. He therefore recommended that research, knowledge development, and knowledge dissemination become integral parts of the forum. Finally, he proposed that the private sector should be encouraged to sponsor and take ownership of the forum, and that the agenda should be linked to the broader aspirations of Agenda 2063.

8.4.3 Wrap-Up of the Group Discussion: Key Issues Raised and Agreed - By Dr. Husien Kasim - Chief of Staff, Office of the President, Somali Regional State



Dr. Husien Kasim, Chief of Staff of the Office of the President of the Somali Regional State, presented the wrap-up of the group discussions and summarized the key issues raised, points of agreement, and emerging priorities from the Jigjiga Forum.

He expressed appreciation to all participants, speakers, panelists, partners, and institutions for their active engagement, thoughtful contributions, and commitment to constructive dialogue. He noted that the discussions reflected a shared recognition that the Horn of Africa requires practical cooperation, stronger regional ownership, and sustained dialogue to address its complex and interrelated challenges.

Dr Husien reiterated and highlighted the following key issues from the group discussions:

Borderland integration - Borderlands should not be treated only as security-sensitive spaces. They should also be understood as bridges for trade, mobility, cultural exchange, cooperation, and regional integration.

Economic cooperation as a foundation for peace -Economic interdependence was seen as a key foundation for peace, stability, and prosperity in the Horn of Africa.

Inclusion of border communities - Youth, women, pastoralists, peri-urban communities, migrants, cross-border traders, and local populations should be meaningfully included in regional peacebuilding and integration processes.

Development of transboundary infrastructure - Infrastructure development, trade corridors, and cross-border economic initiatives should be treated as part of the wider peace and prosperity agenda.

Regional institutions and dialogue - IGAD and other regional institutions should strengthen regular platforms for dialogue, prevention, mediation, cooperation, and follow-up.

Need for practical implementation - Participants stressed that agreements must be followed by concrete action, implementation mechanisms, monitoring, and local ownership.

Knowledge production and research - Research should be part of future forums, and knowledge products should be grounded in evidence from border communities and local realities.

Private sector participation - The private sector should be encouraged to support, sponsor, and take ownership of future initiatives, while development partners and large stakeholders support the wider agenda.

8.4.3.1 Comprehensive Policy Recommendations

To translate the dialogue into action, the forum produced an integrated matrix of recommendations across five key areas:

8.4.3.1.1 Geopolitical Coordination & Regional Autonomy

- **Establish a Horn Strategic Dialogue Platform -** Create a structured, regular forum for member states to share information and coordinate positions on external security partnerships and Red Sea dynamics.
- **Increase Transparency in External Alliances -** Develop shared guidelines for international agreements to ensure foreign investments support, rather than divide, regional integration.
- **Enhance Research-Led Policymaking -** Support regional think-tanks to provide regular analysis on global geopolitical trends and their local impacts.

8.4.3.1.2 Cross-Border Governance & Peace Architecture

- **Institutionalize Cross-Border Peace Committees -** Formally connect traditional elders, women's networks, youth leaders, and local authorities with formal regional early-warning systems.

- **Strengthen Traditional Conflict-Resolution Mechanisms -** Provide structural support to community-led mediation systems to help resolve resource-sharing disputes before they escalate.
- **Improve Local Inter-Administrative Coordination -** Establish regular communication channels between local border administrations, national security teams, and regional bodies.

8.4.3.1.3 Economic Cooperation & Infrastructure Development

- **Implement Cross-Border Trade Facilitation Programs -** Simplify customs procedures and harmonize cross-border trade regulations to help integrate local border markets.
- **Invest in Shared Corridors and Infrastructure -** Prioritize joint investments in regional roads, digital connectivity, storage facilities, and livestock transport networks.
- **Support Inclusive Public-Private Partnerships -** Establish regular business forums among Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti, and Kenya, while funding entrepreneurship programs to connect youth employment with trade integration.

8.4.3.1.4 Climate Adaptation, Mobility, and Resource Security

- **Integrate Climate Change into Peace Strategies -** Treat environmental stress and pastoral mobility as core factors in regional conflict prevention and early warning systems.
- **Coordinate Cross-Border Resource Agreements -** Create shared management systems for water access and grazing routes along border areas.

8.4.3.1.5 Institutional Capacity & Dialogue Continuity

- **Strengthen IGAD's Mediation Capacity -** Increase political and financial support for IGAD's preventive diplomacy and early warning mechanisms.
- **Regularize the Jigjiga Forum -** Establish a permanent follow-up mechanism to ensure the forum remains a continuous space for tracking progress, building trust, and coordinating regional policy.

9 Declaration of the Establishment of the Jigjiga Forum

The Jigjiga Forum was formally declared in Jigjiga, Somali Regional State, Ethiopia, on Monday, 18 May 2026, as a permanent partnership platform for regional dialogue, strategic coordination, policy analysis, public engagement, research, and durable peace in the Horn of Africa. The declaration recognized the urgent need for a trusted, practical, and regionally owned platform

capable of supporting the Horn of Africa in addressing its complex challenges through regular dialogue, shared analysis, institutional coordination, and collective action.

The declaration presented the Horn of Africa as a region shaped by deep historical, cultural, social, economic, and geographic connections. At the same time, it acknowledged that the region continues to face serious and interlinked challenges, including conflict, fragile political transitions, migration, displacement, climate pressure, borderland insecurity, economic vulnerability, and increasing geopolitical competition. It emphasized that these challenges cannot be effectively addressed through fragmented or isolated efforts. Rather, they require coordinated regional action, inclusive engagement, evidence-based analysis, and locally grounded solutions.

Jigjiga was recognized as a strategic and symbolic headquarters for the Forum because of its close connection to borderland realities, cross-border communities, trade, mobility, culture, and regional cooperation. The Forum's headquarters will be based in Jigjiga, and its activities will be coordinated by a Secretariat established by the founding members. The Secretariat will be responsible for coordinating Forum activities, organizing forums and consultations, preparing reports and policy briefs, managing communication among partners, supporting research and documentation, following up on recommendations, and maintaining the institutional memory of the Forum.

The purpose of the Jigjiga Forum is to strengthen regional dialogue, policy coordination, knowledge production, public engagement, and peacebuilding in the Horn of Africa. It seeks to connect high-level policy discussions with community-level realities and to promote regional ownership by encouraging the people and institutions of the Horn to define their priorities, analyze their challenges, and develop coordinated solutions.

The Forum will pursue seven major objectives. These are to create a permanent platform for strategic dialogue; strengthen coordination among governments, IGAD, academic institutions, media, civil society, and development actors; link policy decisions with local and cross-border realities; promote peacebuilding and conflict prevention; support evidence-based policymaking; encourage regional ownership of peace, security, migration, trade, climate, governance, and development agendas; and position Jigjiga as a regional hub for dialogue, knowledge, coordination, and durable peace.

The declaration identified seven guiding principles for the Forum: regional ownership, inclusiveness, neutrality and professionalism, evidence-based engagement, respect for existing institutions, practical follow-up, and community connection. These principles are intended to ensure that the Forum remains constructive, non-partisan, inclusive, professionally managed, and focused on practical outcomes rather than dialogue alone.

The Forum's core areas of engagement will include peace and security, migration and displacement, cross-border trade, climate resilience, youth and women's participation, borderland governance, regional diplomacy, research, media engagement, and public understanding. Its working methods will include annual regional forums, policy roundtables, expert consultations, community dialogues, cross-border consultations, research papers, policy briefs, media discussions, strategic reports, and follow-up meetings.

Overall, the Jigjiga Forum is expected to contribute to stronger regional coordination, greater trust among Horn of Africa actors, improved understanding of regional challenges, stronger conflict prevention, better connection between policy and community realities, and enhanced recognition of Jigjiga as a center for regional dialogue and cooperation.

The declaration concluded by affirming the Forum as a bridge between policy and practice, institutions and communities, and local realities and regional aspirations. It presented the Jigjiga Forum as a long-term platform to support a more peaceful, coordinated, resilient, and self-directed Horn of Africa.



9.1 Remark By Representative of Jigjiga University - Dr. Nasir Warfa



The representative of Jigjiga University welcomed the establishment of the Jigjiga Forum and emphasized the urgent need for a sustained, regionally owned platform dedicated to dialogue, strategic cooperation, knowledge generation, and peacebuilding in the Horn of Africa.

The representative noted that the Horn is one of the world's most interconnected regions, linked by shared history, culture, livelihoods, trade, pastoral mobility, natural resources, and social relations. At the same time, the region continues to face recurring conflict, political mistrust, climate shocks, displacement, economic fragmentation, and weak institutional cooperation. These challenges cross national borders and cannot be addressed effectively through isolated national responses.

The Jigjiga Forum is therefore necessary as a trusted platform through which governments, parliamentarians, universities, researchers, traditional leaders, religious institutions, businesses, civil society organizations, youth, women, and border communities can openly examine regional challenges and develop practical, locally grounded solutions.

The representative emphasized that the Forum should strengthen regional agency by enabling the countries and peoples of the Horn to define their own priorities, produce their own

knowledge, and shape their own regional future. External partnerships remain important, but they should support regional ownership, institutional capacity, peace, and cooperation rather than impose fragmented agendas or deepen existing divisions.

Jigjiga was described as an appropriate location for such a platform because of its historical, geographic, cultural, and strategic position. The city reflects the realities of borderland communities and sits at the intersection of trade, mobility, pastoral livelihoods, culture, and regional interdependence. Hosting the Forum in Jigjiga ensures that regional dialogue is informed not only by the perspectives of national capitals, but also by the lived experiences of communities that encounter the opportunities and challenges of the Horn every day.

The representative further stressed that universities have a special responsibility in building peace and supporting regional transformation. Universities are not only centers of teaching; they are institutions of research, dialogue, innovation, documentation, and public service. They can provide independent analysis, preserve institutional memory, train future leaders, connect policy with evidence, and create safe spaces for difficult but necessary conversations.

In this regard, Jigjiga University expressed its commitment to support the Jigjiga Forum through:

- Conducting evidence-based research on peace, governance, climate resilience, trade, migration, pastoral mobility, borderland development, and regional integration.
- Providing academic and technical support for policy dialogues, conferences, consultations, and working groups.
- Documenting the proceedings, recommendations, declarations, and lessons generated through the Forum.
- Supporting the preparation of policy briefs, research papers, regional assessments, and knowledge products.
- Mobilizing scholars, students, researchers, and academic partners from across the Horn and beyond.
- Creating opportunities for youth and emerging leaders to participate in regional dialogue and peacebuilding.
- Promoting university-to-university cooperation among institutions in Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti, Kenya, and the wider region.
- Supporting training, leadership development, mediation, and capacity-building programs linked to the priorities of the Forum.
- Contributing to the institutional continuity and long-term knowledge base of the Jigjiga Forum.
- Helping translate research and dialogue into practical policy options and regional initiatives.

The representative emphasized that the Forum should not become a one-time event or a platform limited to speeches. It should develop into a continuous process with clear institutional arrangements, regular meetings, thematic research, follow-up mechanisms, and measurable regional initiatives. Its credibility will depend on its ability to connect dialogue with action and regional aspirations with practical results.

Jigjiga University also encouraged the Forum to give particular attention to borderland communities, young people, women, pastoralists, local governments, and groups whose voices are often absent from high-level regional discussions. These communities should be recognized not only as beneficiaries of peace and development, but also as active contributors to regional knowledge, cooperation, and problem-solving.

In conclusion, Jigjiga University reaffirmed its readiness to contribute its academic capacity, institutional experience, research networks, facilities, and intellectual resources to the development and sustainability of the Jigjiga Forum. The University expressed its commitment to helping build the Forum into a respected regional platform that promotes dialogue, produces credible knowledge, strengthens regional agency, and advances a peaceful, connected, and prosperous Horn of Africa.









10. Closing Remark by H.E Ibrahim Osman Deputy President, Somali Regional State



H.E. Ibrahim Osman, Deputy President of the Somali Regional State, delivered the closing remarks of the Jigjiga Forum. He expressed sincere appreciation to all participants, speakers, panelists, delegations, partners, and institutions for their active engagement, thoughtful contributions, and commitment to constructive dialogue throughout the Forum.

He noted that the closing session reflected the overall spirit of the Forum: honest conversation, respect for diverse perspectives, and a shared commitment to building a more peaceful, cooperative, and integrated Horn of Africa. He observed that the quality of the discussions, the diversity of voices represented, and the strong engagement of governments, parliamentarians, regional institutions, development partners, experts, researchers, and community representatives had given the Forum both substance and credibility.

H.E. Ibrahim Osman emphasized that the Horn of Africa should not be defined solely by conflict, fragility, drought, displacement, and political tension. The region also possesses deep traditions of resilience, local wisdom, cross-border cooperation, shared history, cultural connection, and

economic interdependence. These strengths, he stated, should provide the foundation for a renewed regional approach based on trust, inclusion, cooperation, and practical action.

He underlined that economic integration is a critical foundation for peace, stability, and shared prosperity. The discussions demonstrated that borderlands should not be viewed only through the lens of insecurity and vulnerability. They are also spaces of trade, mobility, natural resources, cultural exchange, social interaction, and regional opportunity. Borderland communities should therefore be recognized not as marginal actors, but as central partners in shaping peace, development, and regional transformation.

H.E. Ibrahim Osman reaffirmed the commitment of the Somali Regional State to peace, dialogue, cooperation, and regional integration. He stressed that the Jigjiga Forum should not be regarded as a one-time event, but as the beginning of a sustained process of trust-building, policy dialogue, knowledge exchange, and practical cooperation across the Horn of Africa.

Reflecting on the Forum's thematic discussions, he highlighted several common messages. First, the Horn of Africa must strengthen its own agency. Regional governments, institutions, communities, and intellectuals must define their priorities, shape their future, and take ownership of the region's peace and development agenda.

Second, peace and development are inseparable. Security cannot be sustained in the absence of economic opportunity, social inclusion, public trust, functioning institutions, and development cooperation.

Third, external engagement should support regional priorities. International partnerships are welcome when they respect sovereignty, dignity, local realities, and regional cooperation, and when they strengthen rather than fragment the region.

He further noted that cross-border communities are central to durable peace. Borderlands should be treated as bridges of cooperation rather than margins of insecurity. Trade, mobility, shared infrastructure, and economic interdependence can build confidence, reduce mistrust, and create common incentives for stability.

H.E. Ibrahim Osman also emphasized the importance of strengthening regional institutions, including IGAD and other cooperation platforms, so that they can better support conflict prevention, mediation, policy coordination, economic integration, and follow-up on regional commitments.

He stressed that dialogue must continue beyond the Forum. Regional integration cannot be achieved through declarations and agreements alone. It requires sustained consultation, practical cooperation, inclusive participation, clear implementation mechanisms, and ownership

by governments, regional institutions, local administrations, the private sector, researchers, youth, women, pastoralists, and cross-border communities.

He further emphasized that the sustainability of the Jigjiga Forum will depend on its ability to move from dialogue to structured follow-up. He encouraged the establishment of clear mechanisms for documenting recommendations, assigning responsibilities, tracking agreed actions, and maintaining regular communication among participating governments, institutions, and regional partners. The credibility of the Forum, he noted, will be measured not only by the quality of its discussions, but also by its capacity to generate practical initiatives, policy coordination, and measurable progress.

H.E. Ibrahim Osman also highlighted the importance of ensuring that young people, women, local leaders, business communities, universities, and civil society remain actively engaged in the future work of the Forum. These groups are essential to building trust, generating innovation, expanding economic opportunity, and sustaining peace at community level. By broadening participation and creating space for new ideas and emerging leadership, the Jigjiga Forum can connect high-level regional vision with the everyday realities and aspirations of the people of the Horn of Africa.

He described Jigjiga as a highly appropriate and meaningful venue for this regional conversation. Its location, history, and lived realities make it a natural platform for dialogue on borderland development, mobility, trade, peacebuilding, regional integration, and the future of cooperation in the Horn of Africa.

In conclusion, H.E. Ibrahim Osman affirmed that the Horn of Africa is not condemned to conflict. It is capable of cooperation, renewal, and transformation. The region is not only defined by its challenges, but also by its resilience, wisdom, opportunity, and shared destiny.

He called on all participants and institutions to build on the momentum created by the Jigjiga Forum by strengthening regional agency, expanding economic connections, supporting borderland communities, investing in inclusive dialogue, and translating agreed priorities into practical action.

He concluded by reiterating that economic integration is not only an economic agenda. It is a pathway to peace, stability, shared prosperity, and the long-term transformation of the Horn of Africa.

11 Participant List

No.	Name	Institutional Affiliation
1	Abdi Omar Shurie	MONA, Kenya
2	Abdilhekim Ahmed	SRS/TRC
3	Abdillahi Elmi	Hiraal
4	Abdoulkader Hussein	Institute of Political Studies, Djibouti
5	Abdoulrazak Aref Abdilahi	Researcher, IP&SS, Djibouti
6	Abdourazack Aney	CERD-IEPS, Djibouti
7	Abdreshad Ismail	Heritage Institution
8	Abdubaker Abdi	Office of the President
9	Abdulrazack H	AAU
10	Abdurahma Ahmed	Jigjiga University
11	Abebaw Zeleke	Individual
12	Abraham Tadesse	NISS
13	Abubaker Abdi	UNICEF, Somalia
14	Adan Ahmed	—
15	Adnan Maheme	Maamali Region Youth
16	Adan Jelle	Governance and Security Analyst
17	Adan Jelle	ASEP
18	Ahmed Mohammed	Tima'ade University
19	Ali Ibrahim	Puntland Development & Research Centre (PDRC)
20	Ali Issa	HESPI
21	Amanuel Tadesse	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
22	Ambassador Peter Roble	HESPI

No.	Name	Institutional Affiliation
23	Ambassador Mustafa Dek	KASMO Development Consultancy
24	Anwar Abdifatah, PhD	President and Founder
25	Asma Redi	CPO, Ethiopian Investment Holding
26	Asnake Kefale	AAU
27	Ayantu Gemechu	MFA Ethiopia
28	Bethelhem Fikru	Horn Review
29	Blen Mamo	Horn Review
30	Brook Abdu	Rift Valley Institution
31	Chekole Alemu	Horn News Hub
32	Chepkwony Charity Kathambi	MOP, Kenya
33	Daniel Birhanu	Tigray Broadcasting
34	Dr. Abdiaziz Abdulahi	Director of Laboratories, Jigjiga University
35	Dr. Abdorheman Ali Omer	Djibouti University
36	Dr. Abdoulkadir Houssein Mohammed	Senior Researcher, IP&SS, Djibouti
37	Dr. Ali Sheikh	Former President, Mogadishu University
38	Dr. Ali Sheikh Ahmed	East Africa Association
39	Dr. Tecla Namachanja	Kenyan Eminent Peace Builder
40	Dr. Abderezak	Mogadishu University
41	Dr. Abdirashid Ismail	Deputy Director, Heritage Institute
42	Dr. Abdisalam Abdulahi	Academic VP, Kabridahar University
43	Dr. Abdourahman Ali Omar	Djibouti University
44	Dr. Abdulrahman Abdullahi Baadiyow	Chairman, Mogadishu University Board
45	Dr. Abdurahman	Mogadishu University

No.	Name	Institutional Affiliation
46	Dr. Ali Ibrahim	Puntland Development & Research Centre (PDRC)
47	Dr. Ali Isse	Horn Economics and Social Policy Institute
48	Dr. Ali Miganeh Mandi	University of Djibouti
49	Dr. Ayana Beyene	Peace Institute, Haramaya University
50	Dr. Bashir Abdulahi	SRS Chamber of Commerce
51	Dr. Hamdi Mohammed	—
52	Dr. Juweria Ali	Westminster University
53	Dr. Mohammed Muse Jibriil	President, Amoud University
54	Dr. Osman Yesuf Magan	President, Tima'ade University
55	Dr. Yusuf Omar	Heritage Institution
56	Dr. Yusuf Sh. Omar	Senior Researcher, Heritage Institute
57	Eng. Abdifetah Ahmed	President, Kabridahar University
58	Ermias Mekonnen	MFA Ethiopia
59	Farah Mohamud Osman	State Minister, Puntland Presidency
60	Fethi Res. Ahmed	Somali Region Youth
61	Fistumeshet Shimeles	ENA/POA
62	Frew Demeke	HCD
63	Gosaye Feyissa	ENA/POA
64	H.E. Mohammed Indris	Minister, FDRE Ministry of Peace
65	H.E. Abebaw Bihonegn	IGAD
66	H.E. Jafar Bediru	Director, FDRE Institute of Foreign Affairs
67	H.E. Assefa Abiyu	Deputy Director General, FDRE NISS
68	H.E. Amb. Redwan Hussen	Director General, FDRE NISS

No.	Name	Institutional Affiliation
69	H.E. Amb. Zerihun Abebe	African Affairs Director General, FDRE Ministry of Foreign Affairs
70	H.E. Biniyam Ero	CEO, Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation
71	H.E. Ambassador Birhanu Tsegaye	State Minister, FDRE Ministry of Foreign Affairs
72	Honorable Dima Negewo	Chair, Parliament's Foreign Relations Committee, FDRE HoPR
73	Honorable Dina Mufti	MOP - FDRE HoPR
74	H.E. Dr. Aberham Belay	Minister, FDRE Ministry of Irrigation and Lowlands
75	H.E. Dr. Endegena Abebe	State Minister, FDRE Ministry of Tourism
76	H.E. Dr. Workeneh Gebeyew	Secretary General, IGAD
77	H.E. Fethi Mahdi	Deputy Chair, Parliament's Foreign Relations Committee
78	H.E. Getachew Reda	Minister, Advisor to the Prime Minister on East African Security Affairs
79	H.E. Kassahun Gonfa	Minister, FDRE Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration
80	H.E. Marshal Berhanu Jula	Chief of General Staff, ENDF
81	H.E. Otukanna Oda	Deputy Chief of Staff, Oromia President Office
82	H.E. Suban Abdulahi	—
83	H.E. Zeyenu Jemal	Director, UNDP Resilience Hub for Africa
84	H.E. Sulub Ahmed	—
85	H.E. Tesfaye Gobezay	State Minister, FDRE Government Communication Service
86	Hassen Mohammed	Hiired Institute
87	Henok Getachew	Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration

No.	Name	Institutional Affiliation
88	Hiss Ahmed Nur	Management Institution
89	Hon. Agegnehu Teshager	Speaker, FDRE House of Federation
90	Hon. Tagesse Chafo	Speaker, FDRE House of Peoples' Representatives
91	Hon. Hassan Budul	MOP, Somalia
92	Hon. Mohamed Ibrahim	MOP, Somalia
93	Hon. Osman Muse	Mayor, Merca, Lower Shebelle Region, Somalia
94	Hon. Mohamed Abdullahi	MOP, Somalia
95	Hon. Abdirizak Omar	MOP, Somalia
96	Hon. Gen. Bashir Mohamed	Minister, Environment and Climate Change, Somalia
97	Hon. Abdi Ibrahim	Governor, Isiolo County, Kenya
98	H.E. Abdi Ibrahim	—
99	H.E. Nathif Jama	—
100	Houssa H. Djawa	Djibouti Consulate
101	Hussein Osman	—
102	Hiss Ahmed Nur	Management Institution
103	Idris Yeba	Jimma University
104	Idris Seid	Jigjiga University
105	Irshad Nur	Horn Report / Geopolo Report
106	Issack Hillow Hassan	Post-border Relief and Development
107	Isse Abdi	—
108	Jama Ige	Peacebuilding Advisor, Somaliland
109	Khadir Abdirahman	SRS
110	Khadar Abdius	—
111	Kaldeq Skelkabd	Youth Council

No.	Name	Institutional Affiliation
112	Mahder Nesibu	Horn Review
113	Mohammed Abubakar	BRS/TRC
114	Mahmed Abdilker	University of Kab
115	Mahmed Shi Ibrahim	Somali Region
116	Melkye Mesfin	Ethiopian Broadcasting Sevice
117	Mengistu Assefa	Rift Valley Institution
118	Mesfin Solomon	The Reporter
119	Mohamed Abdilkedir	BRS/TRC
120	Mohamed Ahmed Nur	S.P.Y.C
121	Mohamed Salah	Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD), Mogadishu, Somalia
122	Mohamed Sherif	Life & Peace Institute
123	Mohamed Khaser	Management Institution
124	Mohammed Adan	Vice President
125	Mohammed Ahmed Ali	SIPAM
126	Mohammed Hassan	TRC Commission
127	Mohammed Taha Tawakel	Al Jazeera
128	Mohyodin Mahmednur	SRS
129	Moussa H. Djama	Djibouti Consulate
130	Mr. Abdirahman Ahmed Yesuf	Youth Organization, SRS
131	Mr. Abdo Hilow Hassan	Youth Organization, SRS
132	Mr. Abdureheman Ahmed	PhD Candidate
133	Mr. Khaliif Abdikani Hashi	Youth Organization, SRS
134	Mr. Mahmed Ahmed Nur	Youth Organization, SRS

No.	Name	Institutional Affiliation
135	Mr. Mohamed Sh. Ibrahim	Political Advisor
136	Mr. Mohamoud A. Warsame	Investigation Manager, TRC
137	Mr. Shirwa Jama	IDLO Country Director, Kenya and Somalia
138	Mr. Abdi A. Hussein	Deputy Commissioner, SRS-TRC
139	Mr. Abdihakim Ahmed	Executive Manager, SRC-TRC
140	Mr. Abdisalam Hassan	Research Director, Amoud University
141	Mr. Adnaan Mohamed Ibrahim	Youth Organization, SRS
142	Mr. Ahmed Mohammed Omar	Foreign Relations Director, Tima'ade University
143	Mr. Hallelujah Lulie	PhD Candidate
144	Mr. Hassan Abdi Abdilahi	Director, IPCS, University of Hargeisa
145	Mr. Hussein Mussa	Diaspora Association
146	Mr. Ibrahim Khaireh Soubagleh	Economic Development Institution, Djibouti
147	Mr. Mohamed Keynan	Governance and Political Advisor, Somalia
148	Mr. Mohamed S. Ismail	KASMO Development Consultancy
149	Mr. Mohammed Dayi	Conciliation Resources
150	Mr. Mohammed Hussein Osman	FMBG
151	Mr. Mohyadin Mohamed Nor	Prosperity Media
152	Mr. Mustefa Omar Dagal	Somaliland Youth Organization
153	Mr. Mustefe Ali	Tima'ade University / Somaliland Youth Organization
154	Mr. Yasin Abdi Ahmed	SPS Chamber of Commerce
155	Mr. Yesuf Ali Gureys	Management and Public Service College
156	Ms. Zainab Hassan	Executive Director, Somali Gender Equity Movement
157	Ms. Fowsia A. Abdulkadir	Director, Hankaal Institute

No.	Name	Institutional Affiliation
158	Munira Abdelmenen	Vertex Consultancy
159	Mustefa Hassen	HANKAAL
160	Mustefa Omar Dagai	Somalilander
161	Mustefe Ali	Tima'ade University
162	Nardos Yoseph	The Reporter
163	Nasir Warfa	Jigjiga University
164	Nebyiu Seid Hassan	POA
165	Nuradis Jimal	HANKAAL
166	Peter Durito	Home Institute and Acacia Dialogue Center, Daystar University
167	Prof. Mengistu Urge Leta	Vice President, Haramaya University
168	Rashid Abdullah	Sahan Research
169	Roba Megersa	Chairman, Geda Transport PLC
170	Samiya Mohammed	Horn Review
171	Selam Tadesse	ISS
172	Shermarke Abdi Ade	Jigjiga Youth Council
173	Silabat Manaye	MAA
174	Tesfaye Seleabat	MOTRI
175	Tewodros Tadesse	EBC
176	Tiblet Tesfaye	BRICS Africa
177	Tilahun Tafere	Tigray Broadcasting
178	Tinsae Fetene	MoFA, Somalia Desk Officer
179	Tecla Wanjala	Heart of Africa Forum (HOAF)
180	Wondifraw Alemayehu	EBC

No.	Name	Institutional Affiliation
181	Yalew Kebede	GBC
182	Hon. Yesuf Adan Haji	MOP, Kenya
183	Yechale Degu	HCW
184	Yohannes Tekalegn	IPSS, AAU
185	Zahra Omer	SRS/TRC
186	Zerihun Mohammed	Good Governance Africa (GGA)

12CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Arrival Day — Sunday, 17 May 2026

Time	Description of Activity	Time Allotted	Presenter / Speakers	Moderator / Chair
Whole day	Arrival at Jigjiga	2 hours	Organizing Committee	Organizing Committee
Whole day	Guest check-in at respective hotels	1 hour 30 min	Organizing Committee	Organizing Committee
6:30 PM	Reception dinner and networking	2 hours	President's Office, Somali Regional State	Organizing Committee

Day One — Monday, 18 May 2026

Time	Description of Activity	Time Allotted	Presenter / Speakers	Moderator / Chair
8:15 – 9:00 AM	Arrival and registration	45 min	Organizing Committee	Organizing Committee
9:00 – 9:10 AM	Opening remarks: Setting the tone	10 min	H E Jaffar Bedru, Executive Director, Institute of Foreign Affairs	Organizing Committee
9:10 – 9:20 AM	Opening and program overview	10 min	H E Zerihun Teshome, Board Chairman, CRPP	Organizing Committee
9:20 – 9:30 AM	Welcome speech and reflection	10 min	H E Mustefa Mohammed Oumer, President, Somali Regional State	Organizing Committee
9:30 – 9:40	Opening remarks	10 min	H E Kasshun Gofe (PhD), Minister, FDRE Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration	Organizing Committee
9:40 – 9:50	Opening remarks	10 min	H E Workneh Gebeyehu, Secretary General, IGAD	Organizing Committee
9:50 – 10:00	Remarks by the Delegation of Somalia	10 min	General Beshir Mohamed, Minister of Environment and Climate Change	Organizing Committee
10:00 – 10:10	Remarks by the Delegation of Djibouti	10 min	H E Ilyas Dawaleh, Minister of Finance	Organizing Committee
10:10 – 10:20	Remarks by the Delegation of kenya	10 min	Governor Nadif Jamac of Garissa County	Organizing Committee

Time	Description of Activity	Time Allotted	Presenter / Speakers	Moderator / Chair
10:20 – 10:30 AM	Opening Speech	20 min	Hon Tagesse Chafo, Speaker, House of Peoples' Representatives (HoPR)	Organizing Committee
10:30 – 11:00AM	Coffee break and networking	45 min	Shabelley Resort	—
11:00 AM – 12:30 PM	Parallel Session — Theme 1: External Engagement, Emerging Alignments, and Security Implications	90 min	Panelists: Asnake Kefale (PhD), Associate Professor of Political Science and International Relations, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia Mr Ali Miganeh Hadi, Djibouti University, Djibouti Mr Mohamed Keynan, Governance and Political Advisor, Somalia Ms Zaineb Hassan, Executive Director, Somali Gender Equity Movement Moderators: H E Ambassador Zerihun Abebe, Director General for African Affairs, MoFA Irshad Nur, Founder and Co-Editor, Horn Report Rapporteur: TBA	Organizing Committee
11:00 AM – 12:30 PM	Parallel Session — Theme 2: Harnessing Cross-Border Communities and Regional Institutions in Managing Fragile Transitions and Conflict	90 min	Panelists: Dr Yesuf Sh Omar, Heritage Institute, Somalia Selam Tadesse, Researcher, Horn of Africa Security Analysis, Institute for Security Studies, Ethiopia Dr Jibriil, President, Amoud University, Somalia Adan Jelle Gure, Governance and Security Analyst, Nairobi, Kenya Moderators: Peter Durito, Partnerships and Programs Advisor, HOME Institute and Acacia Dialogue Center; Lecturer, Daystar University, Nairobi Mohamed Salah Ahmed, Regional Advisor, Center for Humanitarian Dialogue, Mogadishu, Somalia Rapporteur: TBA	Organizing Committee
11:00 AM – 12:30 PM	Parallel Session — Theme 3: Trade and Economic Engagement as a Vehicle for Regional Integration	90 min	Panelists: Dr Abdourahman Omar, Djibouti University, Djibouti Yechale Degu (PhD), Research and Communications Officer, Horn Center for Democracy, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Abubakar Abdi Osman, Special Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Mogadishu, Somalia Dr Ali Ibrahim, Puntland Development and Research Center (PDRC)	Organizing Committee

Time	Description of Activity	Time Allotted	Presenter / Speakers	Moderator / Chair
			Moderators: Hussein Osman, Program Officer, UNICEF, Mogadishu, Somalia Mr. Hallelujah Lulie Rapporteur: TBA	
12:30 – 2:30 PM	Lunch break	120 min	Shabelley Resort	—
2:30 – 4:00 PM	Joint session: Presentation of session reflections and adoption of common ground	90 min	Dr. Hussein Kasim, Chief of Cabinet and Head of the Somali Regional State President's Office H.E. Adam Tesfaye, Chief of Staff, Office of the Minister, MoFA Zerihun Teshome, Chairman, Center for Responsible and Peaceful Politics Rapporteurs: Mr. Semalegn Belay and Dr. Setargew Kenaw	Organizing Committee
4:00 – 4:30 PM	Break	30 min	—	—
Time	**Description of Activity**	**Time Allotted**	**Presenter / Speakers**	**Moderator / Chair**
4:30 – 6:00 PM	Enrichment and endorsement of the Jigjiga Forum	90 min	Dr. Hussein Kasim, Chief of Cabinet and Head of the Somali Regional State President's Office H.E. Jaffar Bedru, Executive Director, Institute of Foreign Affairs Zerihun Teshome, Chairman, Center for Responsible and Peaceful Politics Rapporteurs: Mr. Semalegn Belay and Dr. Setargew Kenaw	Organizing Committee
7:00 PM	Dinner	90 min	Shabelley Resort	Organizing Committee

Day Two — Tuesday, 19 May 2026

Time	Description of Activity	Time Allotted	Presenter / Speakers	Moderator / Chair
Morning	Facilitation of return flights for all guests except Somali-speaking participants	—	Organizing Committee	Organizing Committee
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Field visit	3 hours	Organizing Committee	Organizing Committee
12:00 – 4:00 PM	Lunch break	4 hours	Somali Regional State	—
4:00 – 6:30 PM	Reflection session: Regional integration, borderlands, and the role of Somali-speaking elites	2 hours 30 min	H.E. Mustefa Mohammed Oumer, President, Somali Regional State, and participants	Organizing Committee
7:00 PM	Farewell reception	—	President's Office	Organizing Committee

Day Three — Wednesday, 20 May 2026

Time	Description of Activity	Time Allotted	Presenter / Speakers	Moderator / Chair
TBA	Facilitation of return flights for all remaining guests	—	Organizing Committee	Organizing Committee

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Ethiopia | 17–19 May 2026