

**PREREQUISITES TO MACRO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND
GLOBALIZATION IN THE HORN OF AFRICA:
HUMAN AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS**

by

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The title of our panel today is “Macro-Economic Development and Globalization.” Its objective is to assess the Horn of Africa’s macro-economic conditions, identify the main challenges and potentials, and recommend practical medium and long-term overall development strategies. These include required capacity building measures aimed at achieving substantial poverty reduction and sustainable economic progress through increased collaboration and equitable mutual support.

Macroeconomics is the study of the entire economy in terms of the total amount of goods and services produced, total income earned, the level of employment of productive resources, and the general behavior of prices. Macroeconomics can be used to analyze how best to influence policy goals such as economic growth, price stability, full employment and the attainment of a sustainable balance of payments.

My definition of globalization agrees with that of Australian sociologist Malcolm Waters: “Globalization is theorized as a process and not as a static endpoint.”¹

By the Horn of Africa, we refer to the nations of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Somalia. This area encompasses 737,000 square miles, about the size of three Texas plus Louisiana and Connecticut, inhabited by 87.5 million people, a population larger than that of Germany, the most populous nation of Western Europe..

THE POTENTIAL OF THE HORN OF AFRICA

The Horn—or at least the highlands of Ethiopia--is a part of Africa that some of the world’s best scientists for over fifty years have been predicting should be the bread basket of Africa or the Middle East. Blessed by a splendid climate, rich soil, and intelligent human resources, the area’s potential was great. In the words of the renowned

comic strip philosopher, Pogo, the region was “surrounded by insurmountable opportunities.”

What happened? Instead of being a bread basket, the region suffers from a lack of food, not to mention poverty, disease, and continuous internal strife. What blocks the nations of the Horn from realizing their potential? What constitutes a realistic strategy for development in this region? The hard answers to these questions are the substance of our conference here this weekend.

From my perspective, a development strategy for the Horn of Africa must be founded upon two pillars.

The first pillar is promoting freedom, justice, and human dignity—working to end tyranny, to promote effective democracies, and to extend prosperity through free and fair trade and wise development policies. Free governments are accountable to their people, govern their territory effectively, and pursue economic and political policies that benefit their citizens. Free governments do not oppress their people or attack other free nations. Peace and international stability are most reliably built on a foundation of freedom.

The second pillar is based on the idea that many of the problems the Horn of Africa faces—from threat of pandemic disease, to proliferation of weapons, to terrorism, to human trafficking, to natural disasters—reach across borders. Effective multinational efforts by the Horn nations are essential to solve these problems.

If one accepts these two pillars as basic to development in the region, all the strategies and proposals being generated in our conference will amount to nothing unless they are built on the firm foundation of truly democratic governments in the region that get along with one another.

To create a democratic, well-governed state that can meet the needs of its citizens and conduct itself responsibly in the international system may well be the work of generations. But this is the best way to provide enduring economic well-being for the people of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Somalia.

The record of governance in the Horn is well-known and depressing. Some governments have regressed, eroding what few democratic freedoms their peoples might once have enjoyed. Tyranny persists in its harshest form in most of the nations. Tyranny is the combination of brutality, poverty, instability, corruption, and suffering, forged under the rule of despots and despotic systems. Too few governments honor and uphold basic human rights, including freedom of religion, conscience, speech, assembly, association, and press.

THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE NATIONS OF THE HORN

The governments in the Horn and their human rights records are described in the polite language of the U.S. State Department as:

1. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia under the leadership of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) coalition continues its transition from a unitary to a federal system of government. In 2005, although there were some improvements, the government's human rights record remained poor and worsened in some areas (U.S. Department of State, *Ethiopia, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices-- 2005*. Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, March 8, 2006).

2. Eritrea is a one-party state that became independent in 1993 when citizens voted for independence from Ethiopia. The People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), previously known as the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, is the sole political party and has controlled the country since 1991. The country's president, Isaias Afwerki, is also the leader of the PFDJ. The government continuously postponed presidential and legislative elections. An unresolved border dispute with Ethiopia seriously hindered international trade and affected the government's external relations. In 2005, the government's human rights record worsened, and it continued to commit numerous serious abuses. Tensions increased over the border impasse with Ethiopia, and the government increased its roundups of young men and women for national service and imposed additional travel restrictions on diplomats, humanitarian and development agencies, and UN Mission to Eritrea and Ethiopia (UNMEE) (U.S. Department of State, *Eritrea, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices-- 2005*. Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, March 8, 2006).

3. Djibouti is a republic with a strong presidency and a weak legislature. In 2005, President Ismail Omar Guelleh of the ruling People's Rally for Progress (RPP), won reelection; Guelleh ran unopposed amid an opposition boycott. The government's human rights record remained poor, and it continued to commit serious abuses; however, the government made improvements in some areas (U.S. Department of State, *Djibouti, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices-- 2005*. Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, March 8, 2006).

4. Somalia has been without a central government since 1991. The country is fragmented into three autonomous areas: the Union of Islamic Courts and the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) struggle for control in the south, the self-declared Republic of Somaliland in the northwest, and the State of Puntland in the northeast. The country's human rights record remained poor and serious human rights abuses continued. Unemployment, malnutrition, drought, floods, ethnic fighting, the Indian Ocean tsunami, and the displacement of more than 400 thousand persons exacerbated the country's already extremely poor human rights situation (U.S. Department of State, *Somalia, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices-- 2005*. Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, March 8, 2006).

All of the governments share commonalities in abusing human rights. Among the most egregious listed by the State Department are: abridgement of citizens' rights to change their government; abuse of prisoners and detainees; harsh prison conditions; official impunity; arbitrary arrest and detention and prolonged pretrial detention; interference with privacy rights; restrictions on freedoms of press, assembly, and association; use of force to disperse demonstrators and strikers; violence and discrimination against women; and discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, nationality, and clan background.

In summary, the nations of the Horn exist in instability and perennial internal conflict based on such vulnerabilities as ethnic, religious, clan and other divisions. Deficits of democracy and abuse of human rights are rampant.

THE NEED FOR HUMAN AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS

Truly democratic nations are responsive to their citizens, submitting to the will of the people, especially when people vote to change their government; exercise effective sovereignty and maintain order within their own borders, protect independent and impartial systems of justice, punish crime, embrace the rule of law, and resist corruption; and limit the reach of government, protecting the institutions of civil society, including the family, religious communities, voluntary associations, private property, independent business, and a market economy.

In effective democracies, freedom is indivisible. Political, religious, and economic liberty advance together and reinforce each other. Thus the people of the Horn need to figure out how to successfully manage their agricultural systems and then harness the tools of economic assistance, development aid, trade, and good governance to help ensure that their governments are not burdened with economic stagnation or endemic corruption.

Elections are the most visible sign of a free society and can play a critical role in advancing effective democracy. But elections alone are not enough – as we have seen all too clearly in Ethiopia--they must be reinforced by other values, rights, and institutions to bring about lasting freedom. The goal of governments in the Horn should be human liberty protected by democratic institutions.

Participation in elections by individuals or parties must include their commitment to the equality of all citizens; minority rights; civil liberties; voluntary and peaceful transfer of power; and the peaceful resolution of differences. Effective democracy also requires institutions that can protect individual liberty and ensure that the government is

responsive and accountable to its citizens. There must be an independent media to inform the public and facilitate the free exchange of ideas. There must be political associations and political parties that can freely compete. Rule of law must be reinforced by an independent judiciary, a professional legal establishment, and an honest and competent police force.

Although good governance is essential to creating the conditions needed for entrepreneurship and investment to flourish, it is the private sector that makes development and well being sustainable. As the experience of many nations attests, it is the private sector, not the government sector, that is “the driver of prosperity.” The private sector creates wealth, while the government merely transfers wealth.

The connection between good governance and globalization highlights the significance of development of civil societies in the Horn. According to Canadian philosopher G.B. Madison, “democracy” and “human rights” are devoid of meaning outside the context of “really existing” civil society.² Madison defines a civil society as one organized in a particular way, a pluralistic society that safeguards autonomy of different spheres of human agency (social-cultural, political, and economic). Such a civil society demands individuals be accorded constitutional guarantees necessary to be able to pursue their own self-development, their own individual destiny, in freedom and security. Thus, the protection of human rights, the preservation of human dignity, is a *sine qua non* of a genuine civil society and a market economy. In other words, civil society is every thing that totalitarianism is not.³

The fundamental meaning of such a civil society is that individuals must have the unquestioned right to act freely in their own interests, either individual or collective,

without government interference or obstruction. That is what human rights are all about. So long as the nations of the Horn are criticized by international human rights organizations and even the U.S. State Department for shortcomings in protecting human rights, their path to economic development remains in jeopardy. Reformers in the Horn doubtlessly are aware that the most well-to-do countries enjoying the highest “quality of life” are, on the whole, those which permit the freest expression of civic spirit.⁴

What the people of the Horn want are basic economic rights: the right to exercise one’s creative abilities (the right to work), the right to enjoy the fruits of one’s labor, and the right to be secure in one’s possessions. These rights cannot exist in the absence of the appropriate legal framework. From this view, the single most important human right that is the supreme function of the State to ensure is the right to private ownership of property. The right of private property must be granted to people if their freedom and dignity are fully to be respected and if they are to be empowered to pursue their own economic well-being. According to enterprise economy theorists, where the right of private property does not exist, everyone must work for the state, and no one can be in control of his or her own destiny. Thus, the institution of private property and the free market economy are designed to serve the interests not of a minority but of society as a whole. Viewed that way, economic freedom is a moral imperative. The liberty to create and build or to buy, sell, and own property is fundamental to human nature and foundational to a free society. Economic freedom also reinforces political freedom. It creates diversified centers of power and authority that limit the reach of government. It expands the free flow of ideas; with increased trade and foreign investment comes

exposure to new ways of thinking and living which give citizens more control over their own lives.

As Madison explains, “Freedom of economic activity is a common good even though some will invariably put this freedom to better use and will draw greater profit from it than will others, and the common good itself will be enhanced the more democratic an economy is, i.e., the greater the number of people there are who are able actively to participate in it and are free to exercise their entrepreneurial skills.”⁵ In the newly emerging world order, the speed and thoroughness with which countries are able to embrace free trade and effect the necessary economic and political liberalization measures will determine the pace of their development.

By definition, human rights are always universal and belong to individuals as such, in contrast to group rights based on nationalism, ethnicity, race, clan, or religion. By privileging group rights over individual rights, ethnic nationalism stands squarely opposed to the implementation of individual human rights, the condition for the creation of a civil society. In ethnic states, citizenship rights are treated not as individual rights extended equally to all, but as collective rights of ethnic or “national” groups. Internecine warfare becomes almost inevitable as seen in the case of Yugoslavia. There, calls for “national self-determination of peoples” meant the suppression of individual human rights for those not members of the ethnic in-group and total destruction of civil society—a reversion to the Hobbesian “war of all against all” and the very opposite of civility. According to Madison, “There is no instance where an ethnic obsession has facilitated democracy and human rights, and there is no lack of instances where it has actively frustrated democratization.”⁶ When for reasons of ethnic nationalism a people

rejects the idea of democracy and civil society, “anarchy or despotism in some form is all that is left,” according to the American political theorist, Abraham Lincoln.

Related to human rights is the concept of the rule of law. Hence it will be of utmost importance for the nations of the Horn to demonstrate that they have independent judiciaries enforcing the due process of the law. Respect for minority rights and equality before the law also are fundamental in judging the effectiveness of independent courts. Increasingly the judiciary will umpire the transition of Horn nations from traditional societies to modern ones, with their concomitant gradual disintegration of traditional, collectivist value orientations, and the emergence of value pluralism. If truly independent, the courts will decide the fundamental issue in the process of modernization: how to facilitate coexistence in spite of pluralism and extensive politicization. In other words, judges will preside over the acceptance and toleration of plurality and the assurance that politicized groups are reliably protected by institutional means.⁷

Political freedom and economic freedom are inseparable. Only when the nations of the Horn bring together accountable, representative governments, respect for human and minority rights, respect for the rule of law, civil society and open markets will economic development and poverty reduction be possible.

Globalization presents many opportunities. Much of the world’s prosperity and improved living standards in recent years derive from the expansion of global trade, investment, information, and technology. Globalization has also helped the advance of democracy by extending the marketplace of ideas and the ideals of liberty. These new flows of trade, investment, information, and technology are transforming some nations in significant ways.

To bring the benefits of globalization to more nations, the Doha Development Agenda negotiations of the World Trade Organization (WTO) were instigated. These negotiations have worked to open markets and integrate the global economy. Ministers from participating nations agreed to adopt around 50 decisions clarifying the obligations of developing country member governments with respect to issues including agriculture, subsidies, textiles and clothing, technical barriers to trade, trade-related investment measures and rules of origin. Although many problems remain to be worked out in these negotiations, they are a start to reforms that may have a beneficial impact on the Horn.

Other problems involve the health of residents of the Horn. The lack of sufficient food and malnutrition throughout the region demand government initiatives to end hunger. Ways must be found to use science, technology, and market incentives to increase the productivity of farmers in the Horn. Related to such an initiative is the pressing need to provide clean water to the poor. Governments in the Horn must continue efforts to turn the tide against AIDS and other infectious disease. Improved health programs must focus on increasing child survival and immunizations for measles, polio, and meningitis; strengthening reproductive health planning; improving maternal and child nutrition practices; treating and controlling malnutrition, pneumonia, diarrhea, tuberculosis and malaria; and improving health care systems.

Regional conflicts are a bitter legacy from previous decades that continue to affect security interests in the Horn today. Regional conflicts do not stay isolated for long and often spread or devolve into humanitarian tragedy or anarchy. Outside parties can exploit them to further other ends, much as al-Qaida exploited the civil war in Afghanistan. This

means that even if the United States or the European Union do not have direct stakes in a particular conflict, their interests are likely to be affected over time. Outsiders generally cannot impose solutions on parties that are not ready to embrace them, but outsiders can sometimes help create the conditions under which the parties themselves can take effective action. Therefore, it follows that the fewer the regional conflicts, the fewer outside influences will muddy the waters of economic development in Horn countries.

In Ethiopia and Eritrea, a festering border dispute threatens to erupt yet again into open war. The conditions in Somalia may well lead to surrogate wars of Horn countries in that troubled land.

CONCLUSION

The problems facing the nations of the Horn in modernizing and establishing their rightful places in the global economy are formidable. The region's challenge will be to unleash its strengths and to realize its promise. Countries that respect markets and the rights of the individual are more likely to grow economically. They are more likely to achieve political stability. They can raise education standards, deliver better health care and protect their environment. May the nations of the Horn soon join the ranks of such countries, and may this conference provide a helping theoretical hand in this effort.

Notes

1. Malcolm Waters, *Globalization*, Second Edition (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 225.
2. G.B. Madison, *The Political Economy of Civil Society and Human Rights* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 8.
3. Madison, pp. 7-11.
4. Madison, p. 112.
5. Madison, p. 180.
6. Madison, pp. 22-24.
7. Dieter Senghaas, *The Clash within Civilizations* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 8.