



**THE HERITAGE INSTITUTE**  
FORUM FOR IDEAS



**THE ROLE OF SOMALIS IN PEACE  
IN THE HORN OF AFRICA:**

Unlocking Human Capital for a  
Shared Prosperity

**KAALINTA SOOMALIDA EE NABADDA  
GEESKA AFRIKA**

Dabar Furidda Karaanka Ummadeed  
Si Loo Hiigsado Horumar Baahsan

**19  
DECEMBER  
2019**

**DJIBOUTI  
DECLARATION**

## Djibouti Declaration

More than 200 participants from across the region and around the world joined distinguished Somalis including senior government officials, business people, civic and youth leaders in Djibouti in December for the third Annual Forum for Ideas (AFI). Organized by the Heritage Institute For Policy Studies (HIPS) from 15-19 December, the forum was aimed at fostering a dialogue among Somalis in the Horn of Africa on issues pertaining to peace and security in the region. The conference was generously hosted by the President of the Republic of Djibouti H.E. Ismail Omar Guelleh. The theme for this year was: ***“The Role of Somalis for Peace in the Horn of Africa: Unlocking Human Potential for Shared Prosperity.”***

In addition to H.E. President Ismail Omar Guelleh, Djibouti was represented by ministers of Islamic Affairs and Culture, Foreign Affairs, Finance and current and former ambassadors to Somalia. Somalia was also represented by senior ministers including Foreign Affairs, Finance, Education, Constitution and Health. The delegation from Ethiopia was led by the President of the Somali Region, H.E. Mustafa Muhumed Omar (Cagjar) and several of his key ministers. It also included the Foreign Affairs secretary for ONLF. Somaliland delegation included leaders of the opposition parties, prominent civil society leaders and businesspeople and academics. From Kenya, a number of prominent Somali leaders participated at the conference. They included elected officials and civil society leaders.

Other prominent personalities who participated this year’s AFI include businessman Ahmed-Nur Ali Jimale, the founder of Hormuud Telecom, chairmen of Amal and Premier banks, senior officials from Dahabshiil Group; Ambassador Mohamoud Dirir Gheddi of Ethiopia, Hon. Asho Haji Elmi, a renowned peacemaker, iconic Somali artists such as Hassan Adan Samatar, Abdi Qays, Awale Adan and K’naan; Special guests included ambassadors of Sweden to Somalia, senior representatives from the Switzerland and Danish Embassy and officials from the Somalia Stability Fund and a representative from UK embassy.

Issues discussed included peace and security in the Horn of Africa; the Somaliland issue; human capital development; the private sector as a catalyst for human development; electoral processes in the region in 2020; and youth as agents of change.

### Following robust deliberations, the forum resolved the following:

Somalis can and must play a role in the promotion of regional peace and stability. To this effect, the forum called on all Somali leaders to promote and accelerate the peace among, and unity of, the Somali people in the various jurisdictions in the Horn of Africa.

Somali leaders in the Horn of Africa should systemically remove barriers to trade among the Somali people in the region who are known for their entrepreneurship and innovation. Economic development is fundamental to lasting peace and security in the region.

The forum acknowledges the role played by women in the socio-economic and political wellbeing of the Somali people in the Horn. Somali leaders should acknowledge the important role of women in our society. HIPS should increase the attendance of women at future conferences and put them at the forefront of the discussions around national issues.

The forum resolves to increase the human capital of the Somali people across the Horn of Africa. Somali leaders should make the provision of a world class education to our young people their number one priority. The next decade should be recognized as “The Somali Human Capital Development Decade,” and the slogan “Education is the Key to Success” should be adopted.

Recognizing that healthy minds are more primed to learn, the forum calls on Somali leaders across the Horn to prioritize making adequate basic health care services available throughout the Somali inhabited areas in the Horn. To this end, the forum calls on every Somali person to play his/her role in the development of human capital in these areas.

The forum congratulates Ambassador Mohamud Dirir of Ethiopia on the commendable role he played in resolving the political conflict in Sudan in his capacity as the Special Envoy of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia and the African Union. The forum equally appreciates the role Ambassador Ismail Wais of Djibouti played in the pacification of the Republic of South Sudan as a special envoy of IGAD.





## I. On Djibouti

The forum expresses heartfelt gratitude to the President of the Republic of Djibouti H.E Ismail Omar Guelleh for the cordial reception he has extended to the AFI conference attendees over the last three years. The forum hopes that Djibouti can continue this crucial, albeit financially burdensome, support to the Somali people. The forum recognizes Djibouti as the umbilical cord of the Somali people dispersed in the Horn of Africa.

The forum salutes Djibouti's tangible reconciliation efforts in Somalia since 1991. The governments established in Djibouti, the Hiil-Walaal AMISOM contingent and the acceleration of the Somalia and Somaliland talks will never be forgotten by the Somali people and are living testimonies to Djibouti's tireless sacrifices in this regard. The forum appeals to Djibouti and President Guelleh to continue playing this invaluable role.

The forum welcomes the initiative by President Guelleh to develop the Somali language and promote it among those who speak it in the region and beyond. The forum urges all educational and research entities to support this endeavour.

In celebration of Djibouti's sacrifices, the forum has decided that the theme of next year's AFI (#AFI2020) will be the "Celebration and Recognition of the Outcome of the Arta Peace and Reconciliation Conference of the Year 2000" which effectively revived the Somali government after a 10-year absence from the international arena.

## II. On Somalia

The forum sends its deepest condolences to the families and relatives of the deceased in the recent floods across all of the affected regions of Somalia. The forum also commends the huge relief efforts undertaken by the Somali people and the Republic of Djibouti.

The forum calls for substantial budgetary increases for education and other essential services such as health and the productive sector by the government of Somalia. It calls on Somali leaders to double efforts aimed at developing the human capital in the country.

The forum is concerned about the political tensions that have engulfed Somalia this year and calls on the Somali government and other relevant political stakeholders to resolve their political differences through dialogue. The forum specifically calls on the political stakeholders to agree on the 2020 electoral model and to avoid anything that could further exacerbate the current political tensions or lead to insecurity. The forum also calls on the government to hold elections at the conclusion of its mandate.

The Forum commends the Federal Government of Somalia for the great efforts regarding the debt relief for the country. It also lauds the international financial institutions and donor countries for their unwavering support in this regard, which Somalis of all political persuasions consider a top priority.

The forum calls on the Somali government to restart talks with Somaliland with a view to resolving their issues amicably.

## On Somaliland

The forum is concerned about the political tension that resulted from the selection of the Election Commission in Somaliland. The forum is heartened by, and commends, the mediation effort made by the business community and faith leaders of Somaliland which calmed the tension. The forum calls on the Somaliland to sincerely implement the recommendations of the mediation panel.

The forum also calls on the Somaliland to continue talks with the Federal Government of Somalia with a view to finding a lasting solution.

## III. To the leadership of the Somali Region

The forum commends the substantial role the Somali region plays in the politics of Ethiopia. The forum also compliments the current leadership of the Somali Regional State government on the added emphasis it places on the promotion of peace and reconciliation among the Somali communities in the state. The forum further encourages the leaders and people of the Somali region to take a leading role in the important political debates currently underway in Ethiopia.

The forum welcomes the pledge made by President Mustafe Muhumed Omer that the new foreign policy of Ethiopia towards Somalia will be based on respect for the sovereignty and unity of the Somali people. The forum calls for the easy mobility of the Somali people and their businesses across the region, consistent with the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).

#### IV. On Kenya

The forum commends the prominent role Somalis play in the politics, business, and community leadership in Kenya. The forum also appreciates the way Somalis in Kenya welcomed their brethren when the central government disintegrated in 1991. The forum calls on the Somali-Kenyan leadership to continue to promote relations based on mutual respect and neighbourliness between the two countries. The forum calls on Kenya and Somalia to accept the adjudication of the International Court of Justice on the maritime dispute.

The forum is deeply concerned about the repeated destruction of telecom towers belonging to Somali companies by the Kenyan authorities. The forum calls on Kenyan leaders to address this matter without delay and facilitate trade in line with the principles of AfCFTA.

#### V. On the Somali Diaspora

The forum salutes the visible contributions that Somalis in the diaspora make in the countries where they settled. The forum further praises the Somali diaspora on their visibility in their communities and for the stellar achievements they make in the countries they settled including the US, UK, Canada, Norway, Sweden and others. The forum calls on them to preserve their culture and language as important pillars of their identity.

The forum calls on the diaspora to use their lobbying power for the welfare of the Somali people in the Horn of Africa.

#### Conclusion

The forum is grateful to the international community for the tireless and immeasurable support it gives to the Somali people and calls on it to continue to stand by the Somali people in their pursuit of lasting peace and security in the Horn of Africa.

Finally, the forum participants commended The Heritage Institute for Policy Studies for the invaluable contributions it has made to the Somali people during the last seven years.

