



## **INTER-GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY FOR DEVELOPMENT (IGAD) AND ETHIOPIA'S INFLUENCE IN PEACE KEEPING AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION AMONG THE MEMBER STATES**

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### ***The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development ((IGAD)) and Ethiopia's Influence on Peace keeping and Economic Integration among the Member States***

#### **Abstract**

Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Southern Sudan, and Uganda make up the geopolitical map of East Africa. East Africa, as the region has come to be known, is known for its security concerns and instability. It has been recognized as one of the world's most conflict-prone locations for the past seven years, as well as a hotspot in Africa. Major incidents of terrorism, domestic and inter-state conflicts, such as in Somalia, South Sudan, North Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea, with Sudan and Ethiopia being prominent. In March 1996, as conflict and insecurity in the region intensified and spread, the leadership of these countries established a regional block termed Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) to strengthen the region's peace and security. This followed the revitalization of the then Inter-governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) in 1986. Hence, the key objective of this study was to investigate Ethiopia's membership role in IGAD and her opportunities, while ensuring her geopolitical advantages and her role in maintaining peace and security among member states. To achieve the aforementioned objective, the study used a descriptive research design since the very act of investigating Ethiopia's role within the context of the block, in line with the targeted objectives, is descriptive in nature. To this end, the study employed both quantitative and qualitative research approaches and cross-sectional primary data was collected from 259 respondents with a self-filled questionnaire. In addition, a simple random sampling technique was used to select respondents from three public universities. In addition to this, the collected data was analyzed with descriptive analysis methods and SPSS version 25 was used to help achieve effective analysis. According to the study's findings, the majority of respondents said that IGAD supports member nations to live according to their individual constitutional mandates, to follow the democracy process, and to maintain acceptable levels of governance. A significant number of respondents affirmed that IGAD has a strong part in bringing about peace and security among the member states, with another percentage, however, disagreeing with the assertion. Also, a significant percentage of the respondents opined that Ethiopia has an upper hand in the decision-making affairs of IGAD. However, another cohort of the respondents maintained a position of neutrality, registering no commitment to both the peace-and-security role of IGAD and the role of Ethiopia within the block. Within the selected respondents, a significant majority of the respondents believed that IGAD member countries have a vested interest in regional matters and, are not free of biases. Generally, the study found that IGAD's conflict mitigating power is weak, the countries' internal conflicts and even the war in Tigray. However, Ethiopia still has opportunities to influence and contribute to peace keeping and security in the region, especially if she resolves her internal conflicts and improves her foreign diplomacy, as the country is the heart of East Africa. The study recommended that IGAD member states work together to secure regional peace and security and integrate economic and political integration among themselves, as per the founding objectives.

**Key words: IGAD, Geopolitics, East Africa, IGAD member countries, GERD**



## 1.0. Introduction

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Ethiopia, behind Nigeria, is Africa's second most populated country, with approximately 110 million inhabitants and a population growth rate of 2.5% (World Bank, 2017). Since 2004, the country's economy has grown by about 10% per year (World Bank, 2015). According to (Awulachew, 2017), Ethiopia is endowed with various natural resources and high renewable energy potential, such as hydro-power, wind energy, geothermal energy, solar energy, and biomass.

To strengthen its energy base, Ethiopia is implementing various hydro-power projects, including the Greater Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) for energy production (Schoeters, 2013). In essence, GERD is a multipurpose infrastructure with the potential to transform Ethiopia's economy through the sustainable provision of cheaper electricity, water storage reservoirs, and irrigation systems, together with flood and drought protection, while meeting the necessary environmental standards.

The central issue in the region's geopolitical problems, giving rise to the objective, is regional conflict. The causes behind the conflict are broad and multi-layered, but the ethnicity factor appears to be the most underlying one. Most countries in East Africa have the same ethnic groups. For example, a part of the Somali ethnic group is found in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Somalia-Lander and Djibouti, just as the other large ethnic group, the Afar, is found in Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti. In addition to these overlapping ethnic issues, these groups have very similar cultural, linguistic, and historical backgrounds, which is a powerful factor behind the germination of the ethnic conflicts in East Africa that have been building up for a long time. One face of the conflict is manifested in the territorial and border conflicts, such as Kenya-Somalia; Ethiopia-Somalia; Eritrea-Ethiopia; Eritrea-Djibouti; Eritrea-Sudan; Kenya-Ethiopia; South Sudan-Ethiopia South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia, and Somali-land.

The tendency in the study of intrastate and inter-ethnic conflicts was to focus on Ethiopia, yet the conflicts are broad and deep, including counter conflicts in the following sub-states and regions: Anuak vs. Nuer in Gambella; Dinka vs. Nuer in South Sudan; Somalia vs. Afar in Ethiopia and Djibouti; Amhara vs. Tigray in Velkai), Kemant vs. Amhara, Oromo vs. Somalia and Amhara vs. Oromo in (Wolo); Somali Ogadeni vs. government in Ethiopia; Oromo (Borona) vs. Somalia at the Kenyan border.

According to research, East Africa has "had more interstate wars than any other region on the planet" (Berouk, 2011). Territorial and border conflicts are the main causes of conflict in the region. Since the region's borders were established by pre-colonial empires, contextual circumstances played a crucial influence on interstate warfare. "Unfortunately for war researchers, East Africa is a conflict laboratory" (De Waal, 2015). In general, the region has seen a wide range of wars and conflicts, including "inter-state and civil wars, conventional wars fought in trenches with aerial battles overhead, and irregular wars waged by jihadists and messianic cult followers; international military interventions and maritime piracy; mass genocides and non-violent popular uprisings" (De Waal, 2015: 46). There were three significant turf battles and three secessions up until recently. In 1996, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development IGAD was founded to address the acute interstate and intra-conflict conditions in East Africa. In 1986, the region, concerned about food scarcity caused by drought and desertification, as well as weak economic growth, formed the Intergovernmental Drought and Development Governance, a six-state group. IGADD became the foundation upon which IGAD was erected, amidst the growing culture of conflict in the region. IGADD's six founding states, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Sudan, Somalia,



Kenya, and Uganda, increased to eight when the Eritrea state emerged in 1993 and joined, the body was subsequently added by South Sudan, which became a sovereign state in July 2011.

While matters of effectiveness, promptness, and biasness remain contentious when dealing with IGAD's response to the region's conflict challenges, it is undoubted that the block has visibly emerged as an intervener and visible player in the political struggles of the region. One notable example where IGAD's intervention was vital in mediating conflicts and building peace in Greater East Africa was in resolving the North-South conflict in Sudan, leading to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). As the custodian of the Peace Agreement, IGAD implemented several peace-building initiatives to promote peace and stability in the region.

Tracing back to the inception of IGAD, Ethiopia's role has been significant, covering the very formulation of the block's core objectives, policies, and mission and, most critically, driving the decision-making process. Being cognizant that such blocks are financially dependent on the membership, Ethiopia was, for a long time, the only IGAD member country that paid its IGAD contribution regularly and on time. Some member countries developed suspicions about Ethiopia's role in creating and driving the IGAD agenda as a result of Ethiopia's active participation and influential role, implying that she was using the organization to further her own personal agenda. Some, however, saw and still regard IGAD as a neutral platform for addressing bilateral disputes and rivalries, as well as, at least in part, to counteract the influence of specific members like Ethiopia or foreign actors.

It is well documented that IGAD was instrumental in forging and ensuring regional integration in cross-border infrastructure such as transportation, power, oil, and water. This reflects the IGAD member nations' geopolitical interests as well as the infrastructure's "politically significant" nature. National interests and bilateral agreements, on the other hand, promote economic and trade integration, which is once again headed by Ethiopia. Kenya and Uganda's membership in IGAD is primarily motivated by security concerns rather than economic concerns.

## **1.2.Problem Statement and Rationale**

The geopolitical map of the East Africa region includes Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Uganda. Popularly referred to as East Africa, the region, strange as it may sound, has distinguishing characteristics, features of political volatility, causing conflict and insecurity problems within the region.

The East Africa region, with its multi-ethnicity attributes, has been painted as the most unstable region in the world. Border conflicts have been prevalent in the past, such as those between Somalia and Ethiopia and Eritrea and Ethiopia. Internal conflicts between governments in power, nationalist groups seeking to maintain the status quo on the one hand, and nationalist groups seeking to separate from other groups on the other, as well as civil wars between southern and northern Sudan, tribal and ethnic wars in Somalia, and internal conflicts between governments in power, nationalist groups seeking to maintain the status quo on the one hand, and nationalist groups seeking to separate from other groups on the other, are all common. "Existing political entities and becoming sovereign or joining other countries that they consider morally compatible makes East Africa very unstable," (Assefa, 2005).

According to experts, the East African bloc is "widely considered to be the most insecure, dangerous, and conflict-prone region in the world" because of the above description (Kessels, Durner, and



Schwartz, 2016). The region has also been dubbed one of Africa's political hotspots, since it has been ravaged by significant conflicts in Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. "Interstate wars, secessionist movements, violent intra-state disputes, international interventions, terrorist attacks and piracy, and violent post-election crises" have plagued the region for more than four decades (Witt, 2014.1). The thirty-year struggle for independence in Eritrea, as well as the equally long war between North and South Sudan "(Healy, 2014: 217), indicate that the region is Africa's most contentious and longest-running conflict zone. The current situations in Ethiopia, Sudan, and Egypt are likewise considered dangerous, posing a threat to East African relations. The atrocities committed by Al-Shabaab in Somalia and Kenya are typical of the dangerous environment in East Africa, which impedes regional economic and political integration.

Judging from the volatility and many years of history in the region described above, this research is necessary. First, we must trace back the attempts that have been made to deal with the threatened peace and security of the region, and further provide useful information to the governments of East Africa. Other possibilities and ways to achieve peace, security, and political integrity in the information area, in addition, this research can also help other organizations, such as IGAD, the African Union, the European Union, or the United Nations, to actively intervene in the region to ensure sustainable peace and security.

### **1.3, Objectives of the Study**

The overall objective of this study is to analyze the geopolitical impact of Ethiopia's role on the peace and security situation in East Africa. The specific purpose of this study is to examine the role of Ethiopia as a member state. of IGAD and her ability to harness the geopolitical advantage in the process of maintaining peace and security among the member states.

## **2.0. Review of Relevant Literature**

### **2.1. Theoretical Framework**

For the most part, in recent history, East Africa has been a volatile part of the world, with major regional conflicts giving rise to political and economic challenges. The tragic legacy of domestic power deficits sadly coexists with an international context that often undermines the political development of local solutions.

The geopolitics of East Africa and East Africa is often seen as a "political marketplace" whose problems can lead the region down a path to violence. It is very important to note that while geopolitics deals with political, economic, and strategic influences and the value of political geography and how grand strategy is determined by geographic factors, on the other hand, hydrography refers to the study of disagreements and cooperation between countries over shared water resources (mainly between countries sharing international rivers). Clearly, modern Western geopolitics has supported East Africa for more than half a century because of its geographic and strategic importance in combating terrorism and transporting commodities, especially oil.

### **2.2. General Overview of IGAD and its Roles in East Africa**

Early East African cooperation efforts led to the establishment of IGADD in 1986, with the primary goal of addressing drought and environmental problems that resulted in food insecurity and famine in the region "(Kidist, P 22; 2009). Because of the high occurrence of inter-state and intra-state conflicts



in East Africa, UN agencies pushed for the creation of IGADD. They perceived a clear need for a regional coordination body to focus on famine and drought issues.

As a result of IGADD's evolution, which was motivated by the region's simmering political and socioeconomic tensions, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development was established in 1996. At a conference in Addis Ababa in April 1995, the assembly of Heads of State and Government decided to renew IGADD and broaden areas of economic cooperation and security among member countries, resulting in the formation of IGAD.

While the IGADD's main concerns were food hunger and environmental degradation, the IGAD's mandate was far broader. The Summit, for example, has passed three key, high-priority measures to improve regional collaboration. Food security and environmental protection were among the top objectives, followed by economic cooperation, regional integration, and social development, as well as peace and security (IGAD 2016). The new African Peace and Security Architecture is usually founded on the core principle of subsidiarity, which governs the social connection between the UN, the African Union, and regional mechanisms. However, there is still ambiguity as to how to achieve subsidiary in terms of decision-making mechanisms, labor division, and burden sharing.

### **2.3.Performance of IGAD in Ensuring Security among Member States**

IGAD's role in maintaining peace and security is critical. IGAD aspires to be the leading organization among East African member states in promoting peace, prosperity, and integration, while supporting and complementing member states' efforts via strong partnerships. Food security and environmental protection were prioritized in the outset, followed by promotion and maintenance of peace, security, and humanitarian concerns, and finally economic cooperation. " (Solomon, 2014a, pg. 4).

When weighing IGAD's observable accomplishments in light of the aforementioned aims, one might confidently assert that IGAD has reached a watershed moment in its role as an agent of peace and security architecture. According to (Marathi, 2009), the main goal of IGAD was to promote peaceful resolution of inter- and intra-state disputes through discussion and implementation of regional peace and security principles and norms. As a result, this section highlights IGAD's accomplishments in ensuring regional security among member states since the mid-1990s. The IGAD's peace and security mandate was established in 1996 in the context of "regional organizations should have extensive international harmony for managing conflicts and upholding international order," according to the introduction" (Healy, 2009).

IGAD's peacemaking work in Sudan (1993-2005) and Somalia (2002-2004) is widely regarded as a significant contribution to regional peace and security, and it continues to actively participate in efforts to end the two major conflicts in the region. This is because these two "major conflicts occurring between South Sudan and North Sudan, as well as Somalia, have, more than any other, greatly tested and challenged the initiatives and contributions of IGAD, as well as the capacity of its members to act independently and decisively in the peacekeeping process." Omeje (2008, p. 83).

### **2.4.IGAD as a Legitimate Provider for Intra-regional and Extra-regional Action**

The role of IGAD as a recognized contributor to intra- and extra-regional initiatives is discussed in this section. As a result, this section lays out the interdependencies between IGAD and intra- and extra-regional actors in concrete terms. IGAD and extra-regional players operating within the existing power



structure and legitimacy framework "have some agency and do have an impact on normative reform and international legitimacy. These members rely on UN Security Council approval for international recognition; nonetheless, they are not in a preset subordination relationship "(Bergholm, 2010: 19).

International legitimacy is the property of IGAD in maintaining regional peace and security due to the idea of subsidiarity (Williams, 2013). In this connection, IGAD is given precedence as a source of legitimacy for extra-regional actors in terms of establishing shared values for regional peace and security (Slaughter 2004). The idea of subsidiarity refers to "an acceptable rule to define intra-regional peacemaking priorities and so avoid the problem of organizational competition" (Nathan, 2016). A clarification is required before presenting and briefly exploring the term "international legitimacy" as a crucial organizing concept in this section. This relates to the idea that "processes, actors, and institutions' legitimacy can also be measured by their ability to produce "effective solutions to common issues" (Williams, 2013: 56). When we look at the actions and processes of the IGAD and other intra- and extra-regional organizations in sustaining peace and security, we see that their legitimacy is intertwined with and dependent on their effectiveness in guaranteeing regional peace and security, which is their primary purpose.

### **2.5.Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration (RECI) Sector**

Regional economic cooperation and integration among IGAD member states is a significant pillar and responsibility of the organization, alongside peace and security. The IGAD's major goal for regional economic cooperation and integration is to create an open and united regional economic space for business communities; a single market that is competitive and fully connected into the mainland and global economy. To achieve the aforementioned objectives, member countries will require regional infrastructure as well as efficient coordination strategies to reduce and eliminate barriers. These objectives demonstrate how members will benefit if they are developed as suitable policy actions and structural improvements as part of a cooperative effort.

### **2.6.Governance Issues in the IGAD Region**

In the last few decades, the IGAD area has made great progress toward democratic administration and in developing a competitive economy. This progress, however, has been hampered at times by frequent and unpredictable internal and intra-State disagreements among member nations, as well as the region's destabilizing terrorist and secessionist agenda. At all levels, good governance with suitable and enabling structures and institutions is a must for attaining beneficial outcomes for long-term development. IGAD Life has also been working to create a healthy ecosystem in the country and region by ensuring policy continuity and integration, reducing duplication and waste of resources, strengthening institutional capacities, and expanding structures and institutions in all development sectors and their interconnections. However, rifts in Sudanese hearts and minds, as well as their maintenance and struggles, have recently become serious factors in the situation in East Africa. On the other hand, enhanced openness and accountability, decentralization and empowerment, social inclusion, and democratization have all helped the region achieve excellent economic results. A number of macroeconomic difficulties remain, however, and institutional improvements as well as the construction of an enabling environment for private sector development and capacity building must continue. Civil society and non-state actors have yet to play a large role in IGAD development initiatives such as project planning and execution, but they have the ability to do so. The IGAD Civil Society and NGO Forum, established by a decision of the IGAD Council of Ministers, should serve as a mechanism for civil society participation in policy formulation and strategic planning discussions, as



well as the planning, design, and implementation of IGAD action plans and processes. Governance, peace and security, and humanitarian crises will have to play a larger role in addressing the region's many challenges if IGAD is to stay relevant.

## **2.6.IGAD's Thrusts in Regional Development**

IGAD has assiduously dedicated major resources and energy to addressing the harmful consequences of drought, desertification, and food insecurity in East Africa as part of its efforts to fulfill its mandate. IGAD has, nevertheless, continued to face issues such as protracted drought and food insecurity as major and serious dangers to the area, despite the above-mentioned dedication and efforts. As a result, IGAD has taken a multi-sector and interdisciplinary approach to fighting these risks. This integrated multi-sector and interdisciplinary approach aims to contribute more effectively to East Africa's free economic growth, particularly in places where primary production is the economic pillar. As a result, IGAD insists on encouraging the achievement of the following multi-sector and interdisciplinary alternatives in order to solve drought situations while improving food security and environmental protection, sustaining peace, and fostering economic integration in the area.

## **3.0. Methodology**

### **3.1.Research Method**

In order to achieve the research objectives, the study adopted a descriptive research design and a mixed research approach, mixing quantitative and qualitative methods for the analysis. The target population of the study was university lecturers working in three public universities, namely Addis Ababa University, Kotebe Metropolitan University and DireDwa University. Since both Addis Ababa University and Kotebe Metropolitan University are located in the capital, Addis Ababa, these universities were purposefully selected. Addis Ababa University is located in the seat of the African Union, the center and melting pot of East Africa's politics. It is where different foreign and national political issues take place, formally or informally, and is therefore considered to have more political awareness. In addition, both universities have a great population of intellectuals endowed with extensive experience and higher educational qualifications, and were therefore selected to provide meaningful and informed information about the above-mentioned research objectives. On the other hand, DireDwa University was selected because it is located in the eastern region of Ethiopia and, therefore, its intellectuals and academic professionals were considered to be aware of the geopolitical situation in the eastern countries, such as Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia, Kenya, and Djibouti, which are geographically adjacent to the university. Therefore, 333 samples were selected from these three universities based on a proportional simple random sampling technique. Of the 318 questionnaires distributed, only 259 were used for the final analysis, as 33 were incomplete. and the remaining 26 were not fully completed. Assessing the total responses, the rate stands at 78%. According to Mugenda (2003), this response rate percentage is adequate for a questionnaire to offer useful and informative data in research. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire by the lecturers and focus group discussions with a number of lecturers with relevant qualifications in the fields of diplomacy, political science, and international relations.

## **4.0,Results and Discussion**

In this section, the focus is on the results associated with Ethiopia's role within IGAD, her exploitation of her membership advantage and also her influence over the region in relation to matters of peace and security, trade facilitation, mitigating drought, infrastructural development and regional integration.



Hence, to successfully achieve that, the first issue raised by respondents was whether they considered IGAD to be encouraging its member states to live according to their individual constitutional requirements or not. The inquiry further sought to find out how IGAD helps the membership to adhere to the processes of democratization and to maintain internationally acceptable standards of governance. In line with this, respondents reported their responses on a 5-point liker scale. The respondents agreed that IGAD urges member nations to live according to their particular constitutional mandates, to adhere to the democracy process, and to maintain acceptable levels of governance, with a majority, 143 in total, or 55.2%, agreeing. IGAD has a vital role in helping member nations live according to their constitutional values, adhere to the process of democratization, and maintain acceptable levels of governance, according to 57 of the respondents (22%) who strongly agreed. IGAD does not promote member states to live according to their respective constitutional requirements, to adhere to the process of democratization, or to help promote acceptable levels of governance, according to a small number of respondents (9 in total, accounting for 3.5% of the total). Twelve people, or 4.6 percent of those polled, said they disagree with the premise that the IGAD plays a role in democracy and sustaining acceptable levels of governance. The remaining 38 respondents were undecided on the subject. Based on the foregoing findings, it is clear that a majority of respondents (77%) believe that IGAD plays a key role in assisting member states in living up to their constitutional mandates, adhering to the democratization process, and maintaining acceptable levels of governance.

Part of the investigation towards meeting the stated objective was to obtain respondents' views on IGAD's strength and power in the region in bringing about peace and security. In principle, the study sought to obtain informed views with regard to IGAD's strength and power to bring peace and security to the region. The results from this part yielded a total of 120 responses, 46.3% of whose position was in disagreement with IGAD playing a significant role in bringing about peace and security in the region, particularly in Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Djibouti. In addition, 64 respondents, or 24.7% of the population, registered their strong disagreement that IGAD was playing a major role in bringing about peace and security. On the other hand, 43 of the respondents, or 16.6%, replied affirmatively regarding IGAD's role in bringing peace and security to the region. The other group of respondents that accounted for only 3.9%, which is number 10, registered a strong agreement on IGAD's role in bringing peace and security to the member states in the region. However, a total of 22, which is 8.5% of the respondents, assumed a neutral stand on their response to the issue. Assessing the response as a whole, it can be said that IGAD, as a regional group, can rightly be regarded as an entity that aims to bring peace and security among member states, but has not yet fully achieved its set goals. This conclusion was arrived at as a result of the situation in the region, which has continued to be a turbulent one, with high tensions even among the member countries, such as Sudan and Ethiopia.

The other aspect of the study concerns Ethiopia's role within IGAD, and more precisely, the subject of whether Ethiopia assumes a more active and domineering role in the decision process of IGAD's affairs. The objective of this question was to explore how much influence Ethiopia exercises and, as such, whether she has an upper hand or if there exists any form of vetoing other members in decision making processes while working towards safeguarding peace and security in the region. From the obtained results, a majority of the respondents, totaling 130 and accounting for 50.2%, believed that Ethiopia has a strong involvement and active participation in IGAD affairs pertaining to peace and security, drought mitigating measures, and regional economic integrity. In addition to this figure, the other cohort of respondents, which is 43 in total and makes up 16.6% of them, reported their strong agreement that Ethiopia has played a major role in IGAD's major decisions. On the other hand, another significant number of respondents, which was 44, and being 17%, proved to be scarcely informed on





the subject and thus could not state whether Ethiopia has major decision-making powers and thus applying a veto power in the decision affairs of IGAD. The latter respondents' position may be due to their concern that Ethiopia's preoccupation with her own domestic affairs does not allow her to devote most of her time and resources overseas. Instead, they believe that Ethiopia's current situation in IGAD may not be important because the country is busy managing its demanding internal affairs. Moreover, the other group of respondents, numbering 17 and making up 6.6% of the population, and 25 of them, which is 9.7% of the respondents, believed that Ethiopia has no active participation and strong power over the decisions of IGAD pertaining to regional peace, security, economic and political integration. This may be due to the internal conflicts and political instabilities in the country. It remains important to observe that the result of this study showed that most of the respondents that accounted for nearly 69% believe Ethiopia still has significant decision-making power and influence over IGAD's decision making process concerning regional matters. Whereas, the other significant number of respondents, 31%, either disagreed with Ethiopia's significant power in IGAD affairs or have doubts about its influence over regional matters. Ethiopia's internal conflicts should be understood to play a dual influence on the subject of study. On one hand, it strains the country's both financial and time resources, yet on the positive end, it offers the most needed experience in both war and matters of conflict resolution. For example, after the country embraced political change, turbulent situations and internal conflicts, displacements were common incidents in the country and the country had to manage them. Therefore, the country has applied itself to mitigating these situations in full war all over the country and in the region.

The other important question that needed to be explored was the consensus of state members on matters brought to IGAD. Concerning this issue, respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with the existence and respect of consensus. Therefore, the following table presented the respondents' view of the IGAD's member countries' decision consensus and implementation of the decision. Hence, as the table clearly showed, the majority of the respondents, 109 of them, expressed their disagreement concerning the consensus of group decision making among the member countries and acceptance of the decision passed. Moreover, 55 (21.2%) of the respondents added their strong disagreement that member states do not reach consensus when matters arrive at IGAD and decisions fail to be implemented. Whereas, the other group of respondents that accounted for 52 (20.1%) of the respondents believed IGAD member states reach decisions on consensus and implement them in practice. But a negligible number of respondents, i.e. 8 (3.1%) of the respondents, do strongly agree that decisions among the state members are based on consensus and implemented accordingly. However, the rest 35 (13.5%) of the cohort were neutral in their view concerning the issue.

Generally, the study revealed that a majority totaling 164, which is 63.3% of the respondents, believe that member countries in IGAD have a vested interest in regional matters and are not free of biases. Some countries always focus on their own concerns and benefits, so that most decisions fail to materialize and member countries cannot often reach a consensus. Such a position from the members is perceived to affect the block, especially Ethiopia, who seeks to play a hegemonic role over regional matters, and, as a result, she relinquished her dominance in the horn of Africa, which is not healthy for the organization.

The other issue raised to respondents was to elicit their views about the effort IGAD made to resolve conflicts in Ethiopia. As presented above, Ethiopia has encountered conflicts and a war which was opened to Tigray by the central government of Ethiopia and Eritrean and Amhara region invaders'



efforts. Therefore, it was important to know the role of IGAD) member states in resolving internal conflicts, and a war broke out in Tigray. Hence, 113 (43.6%) of the respondents reported their disagreement that IGAD members exerted their effort to resolve the internal conflicts and the war which was opened to Tigray by the central government of Ethiopia and the Eritrean and Amhara region invaders of Ethiopia. Moreover, the other significant number of respondents, 50 (19.3%), affirmed their strong disagreement with the IGAD member states to solve Ethiopia's internal conflicts, displacements, and the war which is open to Tigray in order to assure regional peace and security. However, the insignificant cohort of respondents that accounted for 44 (17), 14 (5.4) and 38 (14.7%) respondents reported their agreement, strong agreement and neutral responses respectively. Hence, from the table below, annexed, the result showed that the majority of the respondents, i.e., 163 (62.9%) of the respondents, reported their disagreement that the (IGAD) member states have made an effort to resolve the Ethiopian internal conflicts and the war which was opened to Tigray by the central government of Ethiopia and the Eritrean and Amhara region invaders. This indicates that IGAD has weak power to mitigate the internal affairs of countries to resolve conflicts and, as a result, can not assure regional stability. That is why in East Africa, internal conflicts, terrorism, and intra-member country conflicts are always on the agenda.

The other important concern was IGAD's role in GERD conflict resolution with Ethiopia-Egypt and Sudan. Therefore, one of the objectives of IGAD's establishment was to resolve conflicts among member countries and with other countries in the region. Therefore, respondents were asked to provide their opinions and understandings about IGAD's role and effort in resolving the conflict between Ethiopia, on one hand, and Egypt, on the other hand, over the Great Ethiopia Renaissance Dam. Therefore, the result revealed that most of the respondents that account for 87 (33%) reported their disagreement with the role played by IGAD in negotiating between Ethiopia and Egypt and Sudan over the GERD conflict and negotiation process. Moreover, the other significant number of respondents, i.e., 77 (29.5%) of the respondents, reported their strong disagreement with the role played by IGAD in bringing agreement and positive negotiation among the conflicting parties. On the other hand, 61 (23.4%) of the respondents affirmed their agreement that IGAD has a role in negotiating and resolving the dispute between Ethiopia and Egypt and the Sudan, and another 17 (6.5%) replied their strong agreement with the role played by IGAD in negotiating and resolving the conflict between Ethiopia and Egypt and the Sudan. The other 19 (7.3%) of the respondents were different in their perspective about the role of IGAD in negotiating and conflict resolution between Ethiopia and Egypt and Sudan. Hence, 164 (63%) of the respondents reported their disagreement with the IGAD's role and effort in bringing a positive and fertile environment between Ethiopia and Egypt and Sudan to resolve the conflict.

This result shows that IGAD has nominal power and effort in facilitating active negotiations between member states and other countries. As a result of this inability of IGAD to solve the conflict and bring peace among the interested countries, the negotiation is taken away from IGAD and the African Union. Therefore, the result implies Ethiopia's strategic weakness and loss of power in influencing IGAD to secure its benefits.

In addition, the research also supports the advantages of being a member of IGAD and the development of getting support GERD. This question was aimed at soliciting whether Ethiopia's membership in IGAD helped to cultivate support from member countries for the construction of the Great Ethiopia Renaissance Dam. This question is posed to respondents to elicit their perspectives on whether Ethiopia is cultivating an advantage using its strategic geopolitics in East Africa to utilize its water resources.



One of the objectives of IGAD is to bring economic integration among member countries and help countries to use their resources to ensure economic development. Therefore, the following table presented the results of the respondents about the strategic advantage of Ethiopia in IGAD as a member state. Therefore, 128 (49%) of the respondents reported that they disagree that Ethiopia did not get support from member countries by being a member of IGAD to peacefully construct the GERD. This implies that member countries did not show firm stand and support for Ethiopia in different incidents by the time the country got into conflict and negotiation with Egypt and Sudan. Moreover, 52 (20%) of the respondents also affirmed their strong disagreement that Ethiopia is not in a position to safeguard the development of the GERD by getting support from IGAD member states. This indicates that IGAD member countries have either weak decision power or have less interest in GERD development. However, the other cohort of the respondents that accounted for 53 (20.4%) replied that Ethiopia's membership in IGAD helps the country to get support for developing the GERD so that member countries stand by the side of Ethiopia in utilizing its water resources. 22 (8.5%) reported their neutral response to the question. However, the least number of respondents that accounted for 4 (1.5%) reported their disagreement that Ethiopia got the support of IGAD member state countries in the development of the GERD.

Therefore, the result clearly showed that the majority of the respondents, i.e. 170 (69.4%), believed that Ethiopia's membership in IGAD has not brought the necessary benefits. In the Horn of Africa, through strategic geopolitical assurance GERD development Overall, the result affirms that IGAD member states are not strong enough to mitigate the interest of each member state standing together. Because IGAD was established with the goal of becoming the premier regional organization for the promotion of peace, prosperity, and integration by assisting and complementing member states' efforts to achieve food security and environmental protection, as well as the promotion and maintenance of peace, security, and humanitarian affairs, through increased cooperation. However, because drought and food security are recurrent challenges in the area, this proved difficult to achieve in practice. The area is defined by its focus, with Sudan and South Sudan's unique conditions serving as the territory's top priorities. The contention over the waters of the Nile between Sudan and Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya. These situations and conflicts are a manifestation of IGAD's weak decision-making power in the region and make the resolution more complicated.

The other question posed to respondents was Ethiopia's strategic importance to IGAD's objective of economic cooperation and integration. As it is indicated in the question, one of the very reasons IGAD was established as a regional organization was to promote economic cooperation and integration among member countries by pooling common resources and helping their economies prosper. Therefore, the question is intended to investigate the benefits that Ethiopia, as a member state, derives from IGAD economic cooperation. Thus, the majority of respondents, 98 totals, or 37.5%, expressed their disagreement with Ethiopia benefiting from its strategic geopolitics in East Africa and IGAD membership. In addition to this, 39 of the respondents, or 14.9%, registered their strong disagreement with the idea of Ethiopia securing economic benefit from its strategic geopolitics in East Africa and its membership with IGAD.

Generally, the study showed that a majority of the respondents did believe that Ethiopia's membership in IGAD has been successful in bringing about a significant benefit in securing her strategic geopolitical space in East Africa and IGAD. It also emerged that, as a regional block, IGAD is perceived as a weak regional organization and lacks the ability to bring peace and security to the region



and has also failed to achieve significant economic integrity among the member countries by pooling their common resources to prosper together.

Part of the data was obtained through a focus group discussion. The Focus Group Discussion interview posed general questions about the role of Ethiopia in IGAD and IGAD's power to strengthen economic integration, maintain peace and security among member states, and Ethiopia's geopolitical advantage in IGAD. The results of the interviewees are summarized and also presented below.

Hence, the first respondent submitted,

*"Ethiopia, being a member state since the beginning of the establishment, has made a strong contribution to safeguarding peace and security in Somalia and positively intervening between Sudan and South Sudan. As a result, it has brought a miraculous achievement in these regards, and Ethiopia's role in IGAD affairs in chairing IGAD to achieve its purposes and strategic issues was also a paramount that should not be overlooked." Ethiopia's role in IGAD was paramount before the country underwent a change. However, the change aftermath has relinquished its power and role in influencing IGAD and securing its benefits as a geopolitically advantaged country. The interviewee also added that IGAD, as a regional organization, has more goals in the region, but IGAD's efforts have not brought major peace achievements. Security and economic integration, though a meticulous effort has been exerted". The other scholar also affirmed that "IGAD and IGAD members do not strongly stand together to mitigate their common problems such as drought, economic development challenges, regional peace and security. As a result, the region is still the most chaotic and turbulent region in the world."*

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **Conclusion**

As it was presented in Chapter Four, i.e. Results and Discussion, the first issue raised was IGAD's strength and power in the region to bring about peace and security. A majority of the respondents believed that IGAD does not have the power and strength to bring about peace and security in the region. As a result, East Africa remains a volatile region, with volatile internal conflicts, border conflicts, and terrorism among member states.

In line with this, respondents were also asked to reply about Ethiopia's role in IGAD's decision making. The objective of this question was to explore how much Ethiopia exercises its regional superiority in safeguarding peace and security in the region. Hence, the majority of the respondents believed that Ethiopia has a significant role in the decisions of IGAD affairs. However, another group of the respondents argue that Ethiopia's role in IGAD decisions and affairs is declining from time to time as it is managing the change aftermath at home. The result of the study also confirmed that the role of IGAD in resolving conflicts in Ethiopia and with other countries such as Sudan and Egypt were perceived as low and not satisfactory. In addition, the results also show that Ethiopia, as a member state, has not benefited significantly from IGAD in terms of cultivating and developing GERD, because IGAD or member states have failed to support the development of GERD. This indicates that IGAD could not make an effort to safeguard Ethiopia's interest and right to use its resources, and the majority of the Nile River is sourced and flows in Ethiopia.

### **5.2.Recommendations**



Based on the above key findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made. First, Ethiopia, as a member of IGAD, is potentially capable, and, should play a leading and pivotal role in the policy-making affairs of IGAD in order to safeguard its sovereignty and national interests, and should not lose its leadership in all IGAD affairs through active participation in the region. This includes the responsibility to urge IGAD members to jointly and independently support the country's efforts in the development of the GRP in order to promote its economic development through its own resources.

IGAD should also work towards regional economic integration to achieve peace and security among its member states. In addition, the organization should protect member states from external attacks and war aggression. To this end, the member states should develop mechanisms to protect the member states from external influences.

Ethiopia, as a member state of IGAD, should maximize her interests because of the strategic geopolitical importance of the country in mitigating the Al-Shabaab terrorist group and achieving relative peace and security between the two Sudanese states. Therefore, its contribution and role in East Africa should not be overlooked.

The country should also take advantage of IGAD's opportunity to resolve its own internal conflicts as well as external conflicts with Egypt and Sudan. This can be done by actively working to address its concerns about the war in Tigray at home and urging it to address the concerns about building GERD to the international community through IGAD.

Last but not least, Ethiopia should influence IGAD and IGAD member states to safeguard its interests and unite to protect Egypt's territorial incursions and proxy wars through Sudan. Lastly, part of the region's threat to peace, which calls for an urgent and proactive response from IGAD, concerns Esys Afwerki, the President of the Eritrean government, who should stop his direct involvement in regional affairs in a manner that destabilizes the region's peace and is a threat to security. This is emerging through his own coalition of Essayas/Eritrean/Dr.Abiy/Ethiopian/and Formajo/Somalian/. They are all reckoning and bragging about dismantling IGAD in the regions. All international states and the community must impose the above critical issues in order to find a solution.

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