

A person wearing a light green shawl and a head covering stands in the opening of a stone archway. The archway is constructed from large, irregular, light-colored stones. The background is a dry, rocky landscape with sparse, brown vegetation. The person is looking towards the camera.

kidane mengisteab

THE HORN OF AFRICA



# THE HORN OF AFRICA ———

Hot Spots in Global Politics

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# THE HORN OF AFRICA

Kidane Mengisteab

polity

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# Abbreviations

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ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
AFRICOM	Africa Command
AIAI	Al-Itihad al-Islamiya
ALF	Afar Liberation Front
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
ARDUF	Afar Revolutionary Democratic Union/Front
ARLS	Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia
ARPCT	Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter Terrorism
ASEAN/ARF	Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN Regional Forum)
AU	African Union
CEWARN	Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism
CFCs	Chlorofluorocarbons
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CJTF-HOA	Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa
COW	Correlates of War
CUD	Coalition for Unity and Democracy
DMLEK	Democratic Movement for the Liberation of the Eritrean Kunama
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EIJM	Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement

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ELF	Eritrean Liberation Front
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
EPPLF	Ethiopian People's Patriotic Liberation Front
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
EPRP	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party
ESF	Eritrean Salvation Front
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FRUD	Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
ICC	International Criminal Court
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority for Development
IGAD-ICPAT	IGAD Capacity Programme against Terrorism
IGASOM	IGAD Peace Support Mission to Somalia
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute (Nairobi)
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (fishing)
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MAAG	Military Assistance Advisory Group
MIO	Maritime Intercept Operation
MRC	Mombasa Republican Council
NALU	National Army for the Liberation of Uganda
NIF	National Islamic Front
NRM/A	National Resistance Movement/Army
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OEF	One Earth Future Foundation
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
PAIC	Popular Arab and Islamic Congress
PPP	Purchasing power parity
RPP	People's Rally for Progress (Rassemblement Populaire pour Le Progrès)
RRA	Rahanwein Resistance Army

RSADO	Red Sea Afar Democratic Organization
SLM/A	Sudan Liberation Movement/Army
SNM	Somali National Movement
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
SPM	Somali Patriotic Movement
SNA	Somali National Alliance
SSDF	Somali Salvation Democratic Front
SSDM/A	South Sudan Democratic Movement/Army
SSF	Somali Salvation Front
SSLA	South Sudan Liberation Army
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
TLF	Tigray Liberation Front
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Programme
UIC	Union of Islamic Courts
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNLA	Ugandan National Liberation Army
UNRF	Ugandan National Rescue Front
UPA	Uganda People's Army
UPDA	Uganda People's Democratic Army
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USC/SNA	United Somali Congress/Somali National Alliance
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WNBF	West Nile Bank Front
WSLF	Western Somali Liberation Front



Map of the Horn of Africa

## Acknowledgements

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I am grateful to the two anonymous reviewers of an earlier draft of the book. I benefited considerably from their insightful comments. I am responsible for all remaining shortcomings. This book is dedicated to all the victims of wars waged by brutal or irresponsible governments in the Greater Horn of Africa. How much it hurts when you realize how needless these devastating conflicts are and how thoughtlessly leaders drag their populations into them.

DKM, Semoo and Banci, this one is for you too.

Kidane Mengisteab

The Greater Horn of Africa is a region that contains one of the deadliest clusters of conflicts in the global system. It is also a region facing an alarming rate of environmental degradation, which has made it prone to humanitarian disasters, including sporadic droughts and famines. Moreover, without substantive changes in the political structures and institutional systems, the region is likely to remain one of the hottest spots in the global system for decades to come. Given this prognosis, this book grapples with two crucial tasks. One is to provide a comprehensive and yet concise analysis of the key factors which have engendered various levels of conflicts in the Greater Horn over the last sixty or so years and are likely to render the region prone to conflicts for some time to come. While key developments of the nineteenth century, which still impinge on contemporary conflicts, are examined briefly, the focus of this study is the post-decolonization era, which refers to the time period from the mid-1950s to the present.<sup>1</sup> Ethiopia, the largest country in the region, was not a colony and the concept of decolonization does not apply to it directly. However, decolonization has indirect relevance to Ethiopia since decolonization of neighbouring countries signified a new era in its regional as well as its internal relations. The second task is to explore rather briefly new political and institutional arrangements that may enable the region to transform the conflict factors and extricate itself from the devastations that have become its trade mark.

The conflicts that ravage the Greater Horn occur at multiple levels. Some of them are inter-state conflicts. Some are between the state and domestic armed entities that challenge it for various reasons, while others are among communities within the same country as well as across international boundaries. There are also one-sided conflicts where the state or rebel groups commit brutalities against civilian populations. The region has also seen some violent conflicts among armed groups, who, while fighting the state, also fight one another. Given such a variance in the nature of the region's conflicts, it is rather challenging to formulate a conceptual anchor that ties neatly together the factors that contribute to all the conflicts. One of the aims of this introductory chapter is to map out a workable conceptual framework that would help us in comprehending the complex set of factors that generate the region's various types of conflicts. A second task is to sketch the main objectives and tasks of each chapter in order to assist the reader in weaving through the various chapters and relate each one of them to the above identified two principal objectives of the book.

## **Conceptual Framework**

The region's various types of conflicts are caused by a complex mix of interrelated factors. While difficult to capture all the factors in a single coherent framework, it is nevertheless, plausible to contend that most of the conflicts emanate from two core conditions that characterize the region. One is the failure of the internal political and institutional systems to accommodate and advance the interests of the disparate identity groups and to facilitate peaceful management of conflicts that arise between the state and identity groups and among identities and communities. The second is the failure of the existing institutions of regional governance to promote peaceful relations among the countries of the region by a timely management of boundary and territorial disputes and also by creating socioeconomic arrangements that advance mutual well-being and reduce the burden of ethnic groups that are

partitioned by national boundaries. In other words, the factors for most of the region's conflicts are rooted in the failure of structures and institutions of domestic and regional governance. The failures in the two core areas identified, however, are to a large extent influenced by some contextual factors. One is the historical context, which left legacies that perpetuate the conflict-engendering conditions. Another is the existing global context, which often impinges on the region's ability to address the conflict-engendering conditions without external intervention. The environmental degradation the region has faced over the last several decades is another contextual factor that complicates governance and is exacerbated by poor governance.

Under this broad conceptual framework at least six categories of conflict-generating factors can be identified:

- One category of factors relates to the historical context and the manner in which the states in the region were formed and how the socioeconomic structures established during the formation of the states through the expansion of pre-colonial empires and colonization have impacted the interests of and relations among the various identity groups in the region. Pre-colonial empires, such as the Abyssinian empire and the Mahdiya state of Sudan have, for instance, altered and often poisoned inter-identity relations, as did the colonial state.
- A second category of factors relates to the nature of the post-colonial state, including the divergence of its economic and institutional systems from those adhered to by different segments of society, the structures of the state that hinder accountability within its component organizations, and the quality of its leadership. The societies in the Greater Horn, like those in the rest of the African continent, range from those who live under the traditional economies of peasants and pastoralists to those in the modern economic system that rapidly changes in complexity. The region's governments, regardless of their ideological or political orientations, operate under institutional systems that detach the state from large segments

of its populations. Even in the rare cases where leaders might be relatively committed to advancing broad social interests, they lack the structural and institutional capacity and flexibility to manage the socioeconomic diversity and challenges of their societies. Moreover, they also lack the farsightedness and audacity to disengage from the existing dysfunctional structures and construct new political and institutional systems that reflect the socioeconomic realities and cultural values of their populations and coordinate policy and resources with broad social interests. The institutional detachment of the state from segments of the population implies that those segments of the population are largely excluded from the political process. The different organizations of the state also lack independence from the executive branch of the government and strongmen, who subordinate the state and thereby hinder its development. The upper echelons of the functionaries of the state are also often 'ethnocratic', as Ali Mazrui (1975) notes. As a result, the state often is viewed to be an expression of certain identity groups instead of one that promotes the interests of society at large. In other cases the leaders, whose primary preoccupation has been to preserve their monopoly of power, are simply self-serving. In some cases, such self-serving leaders may even perpetuate various conflicts as they find them to be instrumental in extending their tenure on power, by either diverting public opinion from domestic ills to external enemies or by using wars as a means of squashing popular demands for democratization of the political system. Political entrepreneurs often exploit diversity in their struggle for power and instigate inter-identity hostilities. Under such conditions state-building by developing institutions and infrastructures for effective governance has been impeded. Such a grand failure in state-building has, in turn, created conditions that foster conflicts.

- A related category of factors is the poor management of diversity and crisis in the process of nation-building, which entails integrating disparate social, ethnic, clan,

religious or regional identities to form a community of citizens governed by a shared system of institutions. A state which lacks the structures that foster accountability and often represent ethnic identity, or fails to develop political structures and institutional systems that advance broad social interests, is unlikely to be effective in nation-building through effective management of diversity. Failure in diversity management is manifested by politicization of identity, power struggle among the elite of different identities and inter-communal conflicts over dwindling resources, which are exacerbated by a combination of environmental degradation and rapid population growth.

- A fourth category of factors which has generated conflicts and tensions among states is the absence of effective management of disputes over boundaries. Like the boundaries of most African countries, the international boundaries of the Greater Horn countries are not yet clearly demarcated on the ground. The countries of the region also lack effective institutional arrangements that would mitigate the effects of marginalization of ethnic groups who are split into several countries by national boundaries. In the absence of strong institutions of regional governance, such border disputes, along with weak or near absence of mechanisms for peaceful settlement of inter-state disputes, have led the states of the region to fight border wars and to intervene in each other's affairs and engage in proxy wars that destabilize the region and prevent regional cooperation. Religious zeal and intolerance between countries have also contributed to tense relations and conflicts among neighbouring states.
- A fifth category of factors relates to the global socio-economic environment and different forms of intervention by various actors from outside the region. On a number of occasions external intervention has been life-saving and conflict-reducing. In many other cases, however, external intervention has contributed to initiate or to intensify conflicts in the region. In some cases, it has even changed the region's course of history. To fortify their grip on

power, regimes in the countries of the region have often participated in advancing the agenda of external actors often at the expense of the region's stability and well-being. External intervention can under certain conditions help in mitigating conflicts as well as in advancing democratization. However, it can also adversely affect relations among the states of the region as well as inter-identity relations within countries. Since democracy entails self-determination in decision-making, external intervention, which tends to deliberately or inadvertently exert influence, can also undermine democratization and the development of indigenous political arrangements of conflict resolution and diversity management.

- A sixth category of factors is the alarming rate of environmental degradation, which has culminated in economic and social dislocations and widespread resource-based conflicts. Much of the Greater Horn region is arid or semi-arid and has over the last four or so decades faced a rapid rate of environmental degradation. No doubt, global climatic changes have contributed to this problem. However, local and regional factors are also major contributors. Rapid population growth, changes in land-use patterns and chronic conflicts are among the regional factors for environmental degradation, which is manifested by cyclical droughts, chronic food and water shortages and periodic famines. These conditions have exerted growing pressure on the region's populations, especially the peasants and nomads and have resulted in land and water-based communal conflicts.

The last two categories of factors may appear to be external to the identified conceptual framework since they do not entirely originate from the political and institutional systems in the region. On careful examination, however, it is clear that they are integral to the region's political and institutional systems as well as the conceptual framework. Competent domestic and regional governance systems do not allow destructive external intervention. The occurrence of self-serving external intervention is, thus, a clear indication of

problems of domestic and regional governance. Similarly, environmental degradation becomes as destructive as it has been in the Greater Horn when the existing political and institutional arrangements are incapable of controlling its occurrence or in managing its impacts. Environmental degradation factors such as inappropriate land tenure systems, poor conservation measures and rapid demographic growth are largely problems of management, although the global factors of degradation, such as global warming, set the context within which the countries of the region have to operate.

## Overview of the Book

The rest of the book consists of seven chapters. After briefly introducing the reader to the region's general socioeconomic characteristics, chapter 2 attempts to sort out the region's various conflicts into typologies and to provide a brief assessment of the socioeconomic costs of these conflicts. Chapter 3 examines the conflict-engendering contexts left behind by pre-colonial empires and kingdoms and the colonial state. Changes in inter-identity relations, fragmentation of economic and institutional systems and uneven development are some of the inherited contexts given special attention. Chapter 4 examines how and why the post-colonial state in the region continues to contribute to internal and external conflicts. To properly explain the role of the state, the chapter first conceptualizes the state and identifies the characteristics of a properly functioning and democracy-fostering state. The chapter then appraises the structures, institutions and quality of leadership of the Greater Horn's post-colonial state on the basis of the criteria of the properly functioning state. Chapter 5 examines how the state's failure in developing institutions of governance that accommodate the diverse groups of citizens has contributed in politicization of inter-identity relations and to the crisis of nation-building in the region. The sixth chapter examines the role of external intervention in fostering conflicts and instability in the region and in undermining its regional integration efforts. It also explains how lack of

strong regional governance has exposed the region to a high level of external meddling. Chapter 7 explores how the environmental degradation that has ravaged the region has contributed to resource-based conflicts and general instability by threatening the viability of the peasant and pastoral economic systems that employ sizeable portions of the region's populations. The chapter also attempts to explain how poor management of resources has contributed to the alarming rate of environmental degradation the region has faced over the last several decades. Chapter 8 serves as a conclusion and explores political and institutional arrangements that can help the region transform the various conflict-engendering factors. One objective of this chapter is to explain how a contextualized and comprehensive democratization can adjust the institutional and political structures in the region so that they advance state-building and diversity management and nation-building. A second objective is to explore a system of institutions for more effective regional governance that (a) demarcates boundaries before they become sources of conflicts, (b) accommodates the social and cultural ties of identity groups split by national boundaries, (c) establishes mechanisms of regional cooperation to control proxy wars and harmful external intervention and (d) fosters regional economic development by taking advantage of the region's unrealized economic complementarities and by cooperating in environmental management.

## Introduction

This chapter attempts to identify and categorize the key conflicts that have ravaged the region during the last half a century or so and to briefly outline some of the socioeconomic costs and implications of the conflicts. Before delving into these tasks, however, a brief description of the basic characteristics and socioeconomic conditions of the Greater Horn is provided in order to familiarize the reader with the region.

The region consists of eight countries with an estimated total population of about 226.9 million in 2012 and a total area of 5,209,975 sq km (see table 2.1 for details). The countries of the region include: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda, and they are all members of a regional integration, the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), although Eritrea's membership in the regional body has been suspended since 2007.<sup>2</sup> Two of the youngest countries of the region, Eritrea and South Sudan, were formed through secessions from Ethiopia in 1993 and from Sudan in 2011, respectively. Somaliland has also declared its independence from Somalia but it has not yet obtained international recognition as an independent state.

A notable characteristic of the region is that it is a mosaic of cultures with considerable ethnic diversity both regionally

**Table 2.1.** Area of territory and size of population of the countries of the Horn of Africa

	Djibouti	Eritrea	Ethiopia	Kenya	Somalia	Sudan (N&S)	Uganda
Area of territory (sq km)	23,200	117,600	1,104,300	580,367	637,657	2,505,813	241,038
Population in 2012 (000s)	923.0	5,581.0	86,539.0	42,749.0	9,797.0	45,722.0*	35,621.0
Average annual pop. growth rate 1970-90 (%)	6.2	2.7	2.6	3.7	3.0	2.9	3.1
Average annual pop. growth rate 1990-2010 (%)	2.3	2.5	2.7	2.7	1.7	2.5	3.2
Projected average annual pop. growth rate 2010-30 (%)	1.8	2.3	1.8	2.4	2.8	2.1	2.9
Pop. in 1960 (in 000s)	85.0	1,424.0	23977.0	8105.0	2,819.0	11,562.0	6,788.0
Change of population 1960-2012 (%)	1,085.9	392.0	361.0	527.4	347.5	395.5	524.8
Population projections for 2030 (in 000s)	1,263.0	8,394.0	118,515.0	65,928.0	16,360.0	51,775**	55,846.0

\* The population of South Sudan in 2012 is roughly 10,314,000. The projected population for 2030 is 15,082,000.

\*\* This figure excludes South Sudan.

Sources: UNCTAD Stat, <http://unctadstat.unctad.org/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=97>; UNICEF, <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/>; African Development Bank, *African Economic Outlook*, 2012; UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 2012; World Bank, *World Development Indicators*, 2012; and IGAD, *IGAD Environment and Natural Resources, Strategy*, April 2007.

and within countries. If language can serve as a proxy for ethnic identity, the region is said to be home to some 340 languages. Sudan (both north and south) is said to have 134 languages, followed by Ethiopia with eighty-nine languages, Kenya with sixty-two, Uganda with forty-three, Eritrea with nine and Djibouti with two local languages (Lewis, 2009). The countries of the region are also characterized by religious diversity with various denominations of Christianity and Islam coexisting, along with various forms of traditional religions. No doubt peaceful governance of the countries of the region requires effective strategies of management of diversity.

Many of the region's ethnic groups are also split across several countries by national boundaries established by colonialism. The Somali people, for example, live in Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya. The Beja, Tigre and Rashaida live in Sudan and Eritrea. The Tigrigna speakers, the Kunama and Shaho live in Eritrea and northern Ethiopia; the Oromo live in Ethiopia and Kenya, the Afar live in Eritrea, Ethiopia and Djibouti. The Luo are spread over Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania and Eastern Congo, while the Luhya live in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania (see table 2.2 for further examples).

The partition of ethnic groups into different countries often involves the disruption of social and cultural ties. A number of studies have also shown that partitioned ethnic identities tend to face relatively greater levels of marginalization, ethnic struggles and civil wars (Asiwaju, 1985; Dowden, 2008; Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2011; Wesseling, 1996). In the case of pastoral communities partition also implies disruption of economic process as it hinders the movements of groups who rely on regional ecosystems for survival (Samatar and Machaka, 2006). Addressing the challenges facing partitioned ethnic groups requires arrangements that enable such groups to maintain economic, social and cultural ties across national boundaries. While such arrangements would have wider benefits, they are particularly essential for pastoralist communities, whose economic system entails seasonal movements in search of pasture and water.

**Table 2.2.** Selected list of ethnic groups that are split into different countries

Ethnic group	Countries of habitation
Afar*	Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia
Somali*	Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya
Luo*	Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, Tanzania
Luhya	Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania
Beja,* Rashaida, Tigre	Eritrea, Sudan
Tigrigna,* Kunama,* Shaho (Irob)	Eritrea, Ethiopia
Oromo*	Ethiopia, Kenya
Pokot, Teso	Kenya, Uganda
Kakwa, Sebei, Lugbwara, Madi, Ancholi,* Kaliko, Pojullo	Uganda, South Sudan
Anuak,* Nuer,* Bertha, Donyiro, Tirma, Shita, Gumuz, Murle, Kichepo, Wetawit	Ethiopia, Sudan
Daasanach	Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan

\* Identities that have engaged in violent protests or armed struggle against the state.

In the absence of such socioeconomic arrangements, the fragmentation of ethnic identities tends to become a source of instability and major conflicts as such groups often react by developing ethno-nationalist movements within their respective countries.

Another characteristic of the Greater Horn countries is the dichotomy of modes of production that govern their economies. The modes of production operating in the region range from a capitalist sector symbolized by emerging stock markets and relatively advanced financial systems to subsistence farming and pastoral economic systems, which are essentially non-capitalist. These parallel modes of production are associated with different economic, political and social institutions. Since institutions govern behaviour and social relations, parallel institutional systems represent different and often conflicting norms of behaviour and social relations.

Institutional clashes, such as conflicting land ownership systems between the customary (traditional/informal) and the state-sanctioned (formal) systems, easily become sources of social conflict and instability by creating parallel socio-economic spaces. The parallel existence of modes of production and the resulting dichotomous institutional systems also create the challenge of crafting economic policy that accommodates the interests of the different segments of the population, who live under different institutional spaces. In the absence of transformation of the modes of production and reconciliation of the fragmented institutions, poor governance and social instability become hard to avoid. Institutions of democratic governance also become difficult to establish, as will be explained in chapter 5.

## Socioeconomic Conditions

The Horn of Africa is one of the poorest regions of the world. All the countries of the region fall within the bottom 20 per cent of the UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) (see table 2.3 for social data). Kenya, which has the highest level on the HDI in the region, with a score of 0.509 in 2011, is ranked 143rd of 187 countries. Ethiopia is ranked 174th while Somalia is no longer ranked.

The economy of the region is dominated by a subsistence sector in terms of employment. In 2011 roughly 80 per cent of the population in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, and 62 per cent and 59 per cent in Somalia and Sudan respectively lived in rural areas (see table 2.4). The region also contains the largest cluster of pastoralists in the world, with roughly 17 per cent of the region's population engaged in pasture-based production systems. Excluding Somalia, livestock make up approximately 15 per cent of the GDP of the IGAD countries (Sandford and Ashley, 2008). The region as a whole contains roughly 68 million livestock units. Ethiopia and Sudan (before the secession of the South) have the highest livestock populations in Sub-Saharan Africa with 28.4 and 22.3 million respectively. Pastoralists also constitute 61 per cent of the region's poor.

Table 2.3. Selected indicators of socioeconomic conditions in Greater Horn countries

Indicator	Djibouti	Eritrea	Ethiopia	Kenya	Somalia	Sudan	Uganda
GDP (bn US\$) based on PPP, 2011	2.198	4.018	113.729	79.720	–	97.850	57.451
GDP/capita (PPP) US\$, 2011	2,427.0	742.0	1,342.0	1,916.0	–	2,192.0	1,665.0
Life expectancy at birth, 2011 (yrs)	57.9	61.6	59.3	57.1	51.0	61.5	54.1
Life expectancy at birth, 1970 (yrs)	43	43	43	52	40	45	50
Infant mortality/1,000 births, 2011	53.3	40.3	60.9	43.6	103.7	55.6	64.2
Adult (15 yrs +) literacy rate, 2005–10 (%)	67.9	67.8	42.7	87.4	37.8	71.8	76.8
Population below national poverty line, 2000–9 (%)	–	–	38.9	45.9	–	46.5*	24.5
Population living below US\$1.25 2000–9 (% total)	18.8	–	39.0	19.7	–	–	28.7
HIV rate of total population (%)	3.1 (2007)	1.3 (2007)	2.1 (2007)	6.7 (2003)	0.5 (2007)	1.4 (2007)	5.4 (2007)
HDI, 2011	2.5 (2009)	0.8 (2009)	–	6.0 (2009)	–	1.1 (2009)	6.5 (2009)
	0.430	0.349	0.363	0.509	N.A.	0.408	0.446

\* Data are for 2009.

Sources: African Development Bank, *African Economic Outlook*, 2012; UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 2011; UNICEF, <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/>.

Table 2.4. Selected indicators of food insecurity and environmental problems in the Horn of Africa

	Djibouti	Eritrea	Ethiopia	Kenya	Somalia	Sudan	Uganda
Net food production index, 2007–9 (1999–2001 = 100)	–	125.7	143.3	130.0	104.0	119.0	110.0
Ratio of population living in rural areas, 2011	23.7	77.9	83.2	77.5	62.1	59.2	86.5
Ratio of pastoral population	71.0	–	5.9	–	76.0	20.0	–
Irrigated land (% total cropland), 2007–9	–	3.1	2.1	1.9	20.0	9.6	0.1
Net cereal imports kg/capita, 2007–9	–	27.0	17.0	38.0	–	–	11.0
Share of food aid to total consumption, 1990–2006 (%)	9.6	27.9*	6.3	2.6	N.A.	5.0	1.3
Proportion of undernourished % of total population, 2010–12	26.0	65.0	40.0	30.0	–	37.0**	22.0†
Proportion of undernourished % of total population, 1990–2006	44.8	66.7*	57.3	30.8	N.A.	24.3	18.3

\* Data for Eritrea are for the 1993–2006 period.

\*\* Data for 2007–9.

† Data for 2006–8.

Sources: World Bank, *Africa Development Indicators*, 2009; FAO, *The State of Food Insecurity in the World*, 2009, 2012; UNDP, *Africa Human Development Report*, 2012; FAO, *The State of Food Insecurity in the World*, 2012.

The Greater Horn has also been highly vulnerable to environmental degradation. Over the last half a century the region's temperature has shown a rising trend while rainfall has become increasingly erratic (Ouma, 2008). The rains have also become more stormy when they come, causing severe soil erosion. During the same time period large parts of the region, which are arid or semi-arid, have faced rapid rates of degradation, in the form of frequent occurrence of droughts, deforestation, loss of vegetation and biodiversity, increased soil erosion, desiccation and desertification. Rampant poverty, along with rapid environmental degradation, has also contributed to the region's instability. The impacts of environmental degradation are discussed in greater detail in chapter 7.

## Food Shortages and Famines

Despite the fact that agriculture is the largest employer in all the countries of the region, most of them suffer from chronic food shortages, undernourishment and periodic famines. An IGAD official in 2010 described the region as 'the most critically food insecure region of the world'. The 2010 Global Hunger Index, for example, rates hunger severity of the countries of the region from 'extremely alarming' (Eritrea) to 'alarming' (Djibouti, Ethiopia and Sudan) and 'serious' (Kenya and Uganda) (Von Grebmer et al., 2010). The Maplecroft Food Security Risk Index of 2013 rates Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan as extreme ([http://maplecroft.com/about/news/food\\_security\\_risk\\_index\\_2013.html](http://maplecroft.com/about/news/food_security_risk_index_2013.html)). The countries of the Horn are also included in the FAO's 2013 list of low-income Food Deficit Countries. As shown in table 2.4, the region also contains a high ratio of malnourished people.

USAID's analysis of the region's food insecurity suggests that the root cause is unstable social and political environment that has precluded sustainable economic growth (<http://www.usaid.gov/regions/Afr/Ghai/cycle/causes.html>). Others attribute the food crisis to policies that neglect agriculture. Economic liberalization measures, which have been adopted

in the continent since the mid-1980s, are said to be among such policies. Declining and erratic rainfall, along with a near total dependence on rain-fed agriculture, are among other contributing factors for the region's chronic food insecurity. As will be seen in chapter 7, with growing population and longer and more frequent droughts, shortages of quality pasture and overgrazing have become serious problems in many parts of the region. Poverty among pastoralists, who witness the depletion of their stock with every drought cycle, is relatively much higher than among other sectors of the population. Famines also generally strike pastoral communities more frequently, although pastoralists are by no means the only victims.

Despite their chronic food insecurity and frequent conflicts over land and water, some of the countries of the region have become major players in granting farmland concessions to foreign investors. A growing food market in the Middle East and Asia, rising food prices and a growing worldwide demand for bio-fuels are some of the factors that have stimulated investments in farmlands in the region, as in many other parts of Africa and the developing world. Middle Eastern countries, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Kuwait, along with China, India, South Korea and Egypt, are among the newcomers to investing in farmland in the Greater Horn region. Sudan, Ethiopia and Uganda, in particular, and Kenya to a lesser degree have become major targets.

The benefits and risks of granting land concessions to foreign investors, the magnitude of land concessions given and the institutional mechanisms which allow land-takings by the state from customary holders are discussed in greater detail in chapters 4 and 7. Here it suffices to point out the potential risks to pastoralists and peasant farmers. Some of the land concessions given to foreign investors by the Ethiopian government in the late 1960s resulted in alarming humanitarian crisis. The starvation of thousands of Ethiopia's Afar population in the early 1970s was to a large extent a result of the displacement of Afar pastoralists by land concessions granted to foreign investors. Thousands of Afar nomads