



REGIONAL DEMOCRACY CONFERENCE ON THE HORN OF AFRICA

A vital platform for fostering dialogue, sharing best practices, and tackling shared challenges on the path to stronger, more inclusive democracies

MARCH 11–12, 2024
ADDIS ABABA

SETTING THE SCENE

VENUE



DAY 01

EXPLORING THE BASELINES IN THE DEMOCRATIC AND GOVERNANCE LANDSCAPE: SPACE AND ACTORS

The day will start with keynote address on the democratic and governance in the HoA region. The keynotes will also touch upon the role of cross-boarder cooperation and regional and international multilateral institutions such as IGAD and the United Nations (UN) in fostering democratisation and good governance.

Day one of the Conference will host three consecutive panels anchored on baseline study presentations intending to set the agenda and tone for the remaining part of Conference.

Panel One: The Political, Democratic, Governance & Conflict Landscape in the HoA: Taking Stock

Panel Two: Democratic civic actors and Space in the HoA: Exploring the Ecosystem

Panel Three: Gender in Democratic and Governance Processes in the HoA

Each session will start with presentation of key findings from the specific baseline study by the lead speaker. Reflections from other panelists will follow the presentations. Participants of each panel will be provided with the opportunity to raise questions and make reflections during the session.

The panel on the Political, Democratic, Governance and Conflict landscape in the HoA will seek to highlight on the trends and contexts through taking stock of the prevailing situation in region. Researchers and practitioners with ample experience in the region will reflect and highlight the most important challenges the region is grappling with. The session on Democratic Civic Actors and Space in the HoA will dwell on analysis of the physical and digital civic space and actors in the region. The analysis includes operational space of national and regional Civil Society formations, regarding their role in the promotion and agency to democracy, including understanding their institutional, resource, capacity and situational development needs. The session will also identify opportunities for national and cross-border co-creation and coalition building.

Women's representation and role in democracy goes beyond the electoral processes, including constitution building, political participation and representation. A broader look at the structural barriers is necessary to understand women's access to education, including higher education, specialized training and networking, to claim the democratic space and have meaningful participation and yield substantive benefits. Moreover, open civic space and enabling environment, economic empowerment, having equal opportunity and access to finance and leadership roles, and making it safe for women to engage in democracy are all interconnected factors to understand the challenges directly impacting women's representation in democratic processes. Despite the deeply rooted attitudes and patriarchy undermining women in democracy, the understated role of women influencing decision-making within their community and in state machinery needs new light. Therefore, this session will contribute to an understanding of the representation and role of women in democratic exercises in the Horn, including the structural barriers.

DAY 02

Solution bound: what should be done?

CHARTING THE WAY FORWARD: EXPERT OPINIONS ON STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

The second day of the Conference will be action-oriented. It will culminate in actionable recommendations at policy and program levels in the effort to upscale democratisation efforts in the region.

The day will start with a recap of the discussions from day one. The recap will be followed by an expert panel charting the way forward through recommendations on strategic interventions. Experts in this panel will try to distil and suggest strategic policy, research, and programmatic interventions based on the findings of the studies and discussions from day one. This panel will also include an experience-sharing opportunity from West African Democracy Solidarity Network (WADEMOS) on co-creation and cross-border coalition building.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

The panel will be followed by two breakout sessions that will give all participants the opportunity to reflect on charting the way forward. The breakout sessions will culminate in a plenary presentation of the recommendations by each group.

SESSION 1: PRACTICALITIES OF DEMOCRATISATION AND GOVERNANCE PROCESSES IN THE HOA: CHARTING THE WAY FORWARD

Participants of this break out session will be given the opportunity to reflect on practicalities of democratisation and governance processes and possible short, medium, and long-term programmatic intervention areas.

SESSION 2: STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF PRO-DEMOCRACY ACTORS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

This session will dwell on ways of strengthening the role of pro-democracy civic actors in entrenching the culture of democracy and good governance in the HoA. The discussions will include opportunities and ways of national and cross-border co-creation and coalition building.

POST CONFERENCE ACTION

HCD will be responsible to compile the recommendations stemming from the Conference and share with all the relevant stakeholders. However, the Conference may suggest a coordination and follow up mechanism that will be responsible for translating the recommendations into an actionable plan with a follow up mechanism.

REGIONAL DEMOCRACY CONFERENCE AGENDA

DAY 01

Time	Title
09:00-09:30	Registration & Coffee
09:30-10:15	Opening Session Welcoming Remarks Sinkinesh Beyene- Horn Center for Democracy (HCD) Board Chair- Chief, Marine and Coastal Ecosystems at United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Opening Remarks Dr Paul-Simon Handy- Institute for Security Studies- Regional Director East Africa and Representative to the AU- Addis Ababa Joachim Beijmo- Head of Regional Development Cooperation-Africa, Embassy of Sweden in Addis Ababa Key Note Address Mr Hassan Shire- DefendDefenders-East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project-Executive Director AfricanDefenders-Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network-Executive Director
10:15-10:30	
10:30-12:00PM	SESSION 1 Title: The Political, Democratic, Governance & Conflict Landscape in the HoA: Taking a Stock Study Presentation: Dr Dereje Feyissa Dori Panelists: Professor Kidane Mengisteab- The HoA Political and Democratic Landscape Dr Sarah Bireete- The Governance Realities in the HoA Study Presentation: Dr Muhammad Dan Suleiman Dr Michael Woldemariam- The HoA Regional Conflict Analysis Chair: Mr. Brian Kagoro
12:00-12:30	Plenary session Q&A
12:30-1:30PM	
1:30- 2:45PM	SESSION 2 Title: Democratic civic actors and Space in the HoA: Exploring the Ecosystem Study Presentation: Dr Seife Ayalew Panelists: Mutemi wa Kiama- Social Movements Hassan Shire- Civic Space and Coalition Building Gilbert Sendugwa- AFIC- Digital Space and Youth Engagement Chair: Professor Kwasi Prempeh
2:45-3:15	Plenary session Q&A

3:15-3:30 PM

Coffee Break

3:30-4:45 PM

SESSION 3

Title: Gender in Democratic and Governance Processes in the HoA

Study Presentation: Dr Addiswork Tilahun

Panelists: **Namara Claire**- Women in the Democratic process: Social norms as Enablers and Inhibitors

Naomi Mwangi-The Legal and Policy Space

Azmera Kassahun- Political Participation and Governance

Chair: Dr Elshaday Kifle

4:45-5:15

Plenary session Q&A

5:15 PM

End of Day One

DAY 02

Time

Title

9:30-10:30 AM

SESSION 4

Title: Charting the Way Forward: Expert Opinions on Strategic Interventions

Panelists:

Dr Adem Kassie- Democratisation and Constitutional Building aspects

Dr Aleu Garang- Engagement of Inter-Governmental Organisations and Cross-Border Cooperation

Professor Kwasi Prempeh- Solidarity and Experience sharing on cross-border coalition building on democratisation- From the West African Democracy Solidarity Network (WADEMOS)

Chair: **Frew Demeke**, Executive Director, Horn Center for Democracy (HCD)

10:30-11:00

Plenary session Q&A

11:00-11:15 AM

Coffee Break

11:15 AM-12:15 PM

Breakout Sessions

SESSION 1: Practicalities of Democratisation and Governance Processes: Policy and Programmatic Interventions.

Organizer: **Yemisrach Kebede**-Program Director, HCD

SESSION 2: Strengthening the role of pro-democracy actors in the Horn of Africa: co-creation and coalition building.

Organizer: **Rabel Desalegn**-Research and Advocacy Advisor, HCD

12:15-1:00 PM

SESSION 5

Plenary Session:

Presentations from breakout sessions and Q&A

Chair: **Yemisrach Kebede**-Program Director, HCD

1:00- 1:30 PM

Closing Session

Vote of thanks: **Frew Demeke**- Executive Director. HCD

1:30-2:30 PM

Lunch

2:30 PM

End of Day



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