

Memorandum of Understanding Follow-Up Agenda: Ethiopia and Somaliland

Background:

Following the signing of the initial Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on January 1, 2024, Ethiopia and Somaliland we anticipate the reconvening of a follow-up meeting to define further and finalize the terms of their agreement. This document outlines some of the key topics for discussion, specifically clarifying crucial terms and considerations for Somaliland moving forward.

Clarification of Key Terms:

- "20km Sea Access":
 - Specific Location: Identify and map the designated 20km stretch of coastline allocated for Ethiopian access including the nautical and inland side,
 - Scope of Activity: Precisely define the permissible activities, including cargo handling, vessel types allowed, potential infrastructure development, and limitations on Ethiopian involvement in port operations.
 - Security Arrangements: Establish joint security protocols for the designated area, outlining responsibility for maritime security, personnel movement, and potential restrictions on Ethiopian military or law enforcement presence within Somaliland territory and local community relations.
- "Diplomatic Recognition":
 - Nature of Recognition: Specify whether recognition is de facto or de jure, clarifying its implications for international legal standing and potential impact on Somaliland's relations with other countries.
 - Timeline and Implementation: Define the process for formalizing recognition and set a clear timeline for its implementation.
 - Reciprocity: Explore avenues for reciprocal recognition from Ethiopia in areas beyond port access, such as trade agreements, cultural exchange, and diplomatic representation.
- "Commercial & Naval Base":
 - Commercial Access:
 - Activities: Clearly define allowable commercial activities by Ethiopia, including limitations on types of goods, proposed share ownership of

Berbera Port and any other relevant joint ventures, and regulations regarding environmental and labour issues, .

- Infrastructure Development: Outline Ethiopia's participation in related infrastructure development, if permissible, establishing transparent decision-making processes and ensuring no detriment to Somaliland's control over strategic assets.
- Regulatory Framework: Develop a joint framework for managing customs, tariffs, and legal procedures affecting Ethiopian commercial activities within the designated port areas.
- Naval Base:
 - Purpose and Activities: Clearly define the base's sole purpose as logistical and refueling support for Ethiopian naval vessels, with no offensive capabilities or broader military operations permitted.
 - Size and Location: Precisely designate the base's location within the 20km access zone, ensuring minimal disruption to commercial activities and civilian access along the coast.
 - Security and Oversight: Establish robust joint security protocols, including oversight mechanisms for personnel movement, adherence to regulations, and transparent communication on-base activities.
 - Troop Presence: Specify the number and type of Ethiopian personnel allowed at the base, establish a rotational system if applicable, and clearly define restrictions on their movement outside the designated area.
- Additional Considerations:
 - Duration and Renewal: Define the initial term of the agreement for both commercial and naval access, including procedures for potential renewal or renegotiation after a designated period.
 - Exit Strategy: Establish a clear protocol for possible termination of the agreement, outlining responsibilities and procedures for both parties in such a scenario.
 - Dispute Resolution: Define a transparent and efficient mechanism for resolving any disputes arising from interpretation or implementation of the agreement.

Somaliland Considerations:

- Internal Consensus: Secure broad domestic support for the agreement through transparent communication, engagement with opposition parties, and public outreach highlighting potential economic and political benefits.
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- Regional Implications: Anticipate and address potential concerns from neighbouring countries, by emphasising the agreement's focus on economic development and regional cooperation.

- **International Recognition:** Leverage the Ethiopian pact to actively pursue further international recognition from other countries, demonstrating progress towards stability and good governance.
- **Economic Opportunities:** Beyond port access, explore and negotiate mutually beneficial economic partnerships with Ethiopia, including joint ventures in infrastructure, agriculture, and trade.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Implement robust mechanisms for transparent monitoring and evaluation of the agreement's implementation, ensuring equitable benefits and addressing potential grievances.

Somaliland Action Teams:

1. **Technical Negotiation Team:**
 - **Composition:** Comprised of legal experts, economists, maritime specialists, and infrastructure engineers.
 - **Responsibilities:**
 - **Deep dive into MoU details:** Analyze the MoU clause by clause, identify potential ambiguities, and draft amendments for clear and practical wording.
 - **Negotiate specific terms:** Advocate for Somaliland's interests while actively engaging with Ethiopian counterparts to reach mutually beneficial solutions on key issues like commercial and naval base operations, security protocols, and economic partnerships.
 - **Draft the bilateral pact:** Translate agreed-upon terms into a comprehensive legal document, ensuring adherence to international standards and safeguarding Somaliland's sovereignty.
2. **Internal and Regional Engagement Team:**
 - **Composition:** Members represent diverse groups, including politicians, civil society leaders, businesspeople, and media representatives.
 - **Responsibilities:**
 - **Domestic communication:** Develop a comprehensive communication strategy to inform the Somaliland public about the agreement's details, potential benefits, and safeguards in place.
 - **Address concerns:** Facilitate open dialogues with opposition parties and address any doubts or reservations about the agreement, fostering internal consensus and national unity.
 - **Regional diplomacy:** Proactively engage with neighboring countries, particularly Somalia, to explain the agreement's objectives and emphasize its commitment to regional stability and peaceful coexistence.

- International outreach: Collaborate with diplomatic officials and international organizations to leverage the Ethiopian pact and advocate for further international recognition of Somaliland.

Integration of Teams:

- Regular interaction: Establish channels for continuous communication and collaboration between the two teams, ensuring technical negotiations align with domestic and regional considerations.
- Joint strategy development: Involve both teams in formulating a cohesive strategy for advancing the MoU, selling the agreement internally and regionally, and building broad support.
- Shared resources: Allocate necessary resources and expertise to both teams, ensuring they have the capacity to fulfill their critical roles effectively.
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Conclusion:

This follow-up engagement presents a crucial opportunity for Ethiopia and Somaliland to solidify their agreement and lay the foundation for a successful partnership. By focusing on detailed clarification of key terms, consideration of Somaliland's domestic and international needs, and commitment to transparency and accountability, both parties can transform the MoU into a tangible instrument for regional stability, economic prosperity, and continued progress towards Somaliland's international aspirations.

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