



The recognition of Somaliland

Achievements against all the odds



“Under subsequent civilian governments, Somaliland has signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; overseen the restoration of peace; demobilised former combatants; brought about social and economic rehabilitation; and overseen the adoption of a constitution based on universal suffrage, decentralisation and multi-party elections.”

Michael Walls & Steve Kribbe, ‘Beyond Polarity: Negotiating a Hybrid State in Somaliland’, *African Spectrum* (Vol. 45, Issue. 1, 2010), pp. 31-56

1. Economic advancement

1991...the economy had virtually ground to a halt. The army, policy and civil service had disintegrated; most government offices, banks, hospitals and schools stood derelict, their contents ransacked, and even their windows, doors and roofs pillaged and sold for scrap. In those early days, the task of reconstruction appeared so immense as to be insuperable.”

Matt Bryden, *Rebuilding Somaliland, Issues and Possibilities*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003)

- **Over two decades, Somaliland has built a successful market economy, with GDP rising to \$350 per capita** – higher than Tanzania (\$280), Eritrea (\$190) and Ethiopia (\$100).¹
- **Somaliland’s private sector has enjoyed sustained growth, catalysed by low levels of regulation and a comparatively small government bureaucracy.** A number of government services, such as vehicle licensing, are delivered through local businesses.
- **Total Somaliland central government income** has increased over the last few years and it reached almost \$147m in 2012.² This is still very small for the needs of the country but the increase shows a steady improvement in revenue collection for public services.
- **Somaliland is notable for its thriving livestock export. In 2011, 3.1million sheep/goats and 257,000 cattle/camels were exported to the Middle East.**³ Livestock remain the mainstay of Somaliland’s economy.
- **There is a thriving services sector, which hosts a number of major international businesses,** including, Dahabshiil money transfer company which is the largest in the region and operates across the world.

1. Cited in The Brenthurst Foundation, *African Game Changer? The Consequences of Somaliland’s International (Non) Recognition – Discussion Paper 2011/05*, (Johannesburg: The Brenthurst Foundation, 2011)

2. *Somaliland Budget 2012* (available in Somali at this link: <http://somalilandparliament.net/index.php/parliamentary-business/government-budget>)

3. Ministry of Planning Bulletin of Statistics, Vol 6, Issue 2, July 2012 – available at http://slministryofplanning.org/images/pdf_official_documents/bulletin%20of%20statistics%20volume6issue2.pdf



- **Somaliland boasts of a highly competitive telecoms industry**, providing mobile and landline services that are among the cheapest in Africa.⁴
- **In 2010, Somaliland Beverage Industries made the country's single biggest investment to date – opening a \$17 million Coca-Cola production facility to supply the region.** The factory has plans to expand into producing Dasani water and Minute Maid juices by 2013.⁵
- **Confidence in the country is reflected in the return of tens of thousands of people from the diaspora.** 15 out of 45 Cabinet and Ministerial positions in the current administration are made up of Somalilanders who have returned from abroad. **Somaliland is moving to develop what is estimated to be highly significant hydrocarbon reserves in the country.**
 - A 2D seismic survey of offshore Somaliland, consisting of 5,100 KM of modern seismic data (and an on-shore program of 34,600 kilometres of aeromagnetic data collection) was undertaken in 2008/9. Three international companies have signed Production Sharing Agreements with the government and are involved in early-stage surveying.⁶
 - Airborne survey and 2D Seismic surveying in Togdheer Region has already begun by Genel Energy.⁷
 - The first exploratory drilling programmes are expected to start in early 2014.
- **Somaliland is in the process of exploiting proven reserves of iron, manganese and coal.**
 - Minerals and Mining Ltd, a Kenyan company, has signed an agreement with the government to mine minerals in the country.
 - Somaliland will start producing by 2013, exporting an estimated half a million tonnes within five years.
 - Nubian Gold of Canada is currently prospecting for various minerals in the Maroodijeeh/Gabiley region.
- **Somaliland receives significant remittances from the diaspora**, valued at about \$800 million annually.⁸
- **Somaliland has quietly emerged as a reliable trading post along the Gulf of Aden**, which World Bank Africa Region Chief Economist Shanta Devarajan has hailed as a “success story” in Africa. The World Bank has assisted in the recent production of “Doing Business in Hargeisa”.⁹ The report comments that despite conflict and fragility in the surrounding region, the “relative peace and security in Hargeisa in the past decade has allowed a vibrant private

4. World Bank (2006), cited in Mark Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008)

5. The Guardian, M.Tran, Berbera port and pastoralism prove livestock's worth in Somaliland, 26 July 2012

6. Reuters interview with Hussein Abdi Dualeh, Energy & Mining Minister (November 2011) - <http://af.reuters.com/article/somaliaNews/idAFL5E7M12OZ20111101?sp=true>

7. Somaliland sun, 13 October 2012 : C:\Users\IJ\Documents\Somaliland Mining Concessions\Somaliland Genel Energy Earmarks \$37m for Initial Investment.htm

8. The Brenthurst Foundation, *African Game Changer? The Consequences of Somaliland's International (Non) Recognition* (2011) – A Study Report; Discussion Paper, May 2011

9. Available at: <http://www.doingbusiness.org/reports/subnational-reports/hargeisa>



sector to develop” and “that the government has made strides setting up some of the institutions and rules necessary for businesses to operate”.¹⁰

Somaliland is connected to the rest of the world by Berbera airport, which has one of the longest runways in Africa as well as Hargeisa International Airport, which is undergoing extensive modernisation. The country has entered agreements with international companies such as Ethiopian Airlines.¹¹

Berbera port already serves imports and exports to and from Somaliland as well as the neighbouring countries of Ethiopia and Somalia.

Tourism is a potential growth industry, with historic towns, offshore islands and coral reefs providing major attractions.

2. Peace and Security

“Recognition of Somaliland would be a most cost-effective means to ensure security in an otherwise troubled and problematic region.”

The Brenthurst Foundation, *African Game Changer? The Consequences of Somaliland’s International (Non) Recognition – Discussion Paper 2011/05*, (Johannesburg: The Brenthurst Foundation, 2011)

“Somaliland has made admirable progress in maintaining relative peace and stability in a difficult region.”

Official statement from the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office (2010)

- **Somaliland co-operates willingly with its neighbours and the international community in the fight against terrorism** by sharing information about potential threats, enforcing a UN arms embargo against Somalia and policing its own territory.¹²
 - Somaliland’s constitution is unique in committing the state and nation to combatting terrorism “regardless of motives”.
- **Somaliland has effectively tackled piracy along its coastline,** ensuring that the waters off Somaliland’s coast are largely free from pirate attacks. Nearly 90 pirates are currently in prison in Hargeisa.¹³
- **Somaliland has demobilised clan militia,** integrating them into unified police and military forces in the early 1990s.
- **Somaliland has removed and destroyed tens of thousands of landmines**

10. The report identified the need to implement key business regulations and put in place a formal banking system. A review of the necessary laws is being undertaken and the first banking laws have been passed over the last three months. The remaining commercial banking law is currently being considered by the House of Representatives.

11. BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopian Airlines resumes flights to Somalia’s breakaway region*, 2 July May 2012

12. *Ibid*

13. Cited by Mohamed A Omar (2011), Foreign Minister of Somaliland, *Recognizing Somaliland: Political, Legal and Historical Perspectives*, Somaliland: The Way Forward; Red Sea Press



- During the war, it is estimated that a million mines were planted in Somaliland, making it “among the most mine-polluted territories on the planet”.¹⁴

2. Democratic governance

In just 20 years, Somaliland has held four elections:

- All four elections have been observed by international election monitors and declared largely free and fair
- They include the closest Presidential election in African history, won by just 83 votes
- All four elections have led to peaceful transfers of power

“Somaliland’s model of development has enjoyed much genuine success, and is seen by some as representing the first, indigenous, modern African form of government to achieve stability through a regime employing traditional social systems within a democratising framework.”

Michael Walls & Steve Kribbe, ‘Beyond Polarity: Negotiating a Hybrid State in Somaliland’,
African Spectrum (Vol. 45, Issue. 1, 2010), pp. 31-56

“Somaliland has built itself up from war-torn rubble into probably the most democratic polity in the Horn of Africa. It has done this on its own.”

Mary Harper, BBC Africa Analyst

- **Somaliland has established a highly progressive constitution**, which entrenches the separation of power between the three arms of government, balances representative democracy with traditional governance institutions, ensures the existence of active opposition political parties and a free and pluralistic media.¹⁵
- **Somaliland has developed a unique form of governance that could serve as a model for state-building in other parts of the world.** Somaliland has proved that traditional social systems can be fused successfully with modern democratic principles to create popular and sustainable governments.¹⁶
- **After regaining independence, the Somali National Movement worked to establish a civilian representative government.** In so doing it has been credited as “one of the few movements in contemporary African history to have effectively dealt themselves out of power.”¹⁷

“There is an African state offering its people democracy, peace and security in a war-torn part of Africa... This state could serve as an inspiration not only to the African continent, but also to the whole world.”

Sylvie Aboa-Bradwell (2011), Executive Director, African People’s Advocacy, *The Unsung African Marvel, Somaliland: the way forward*

15. Cited in The Brenthurst Foundation, African Game Changer? The Consequences of Somaliland’s International (Non) Recognition – Discussion Paper 2011/05, (Johannesburg: The Brenthurst Foundation, 2011)

16. Steve Kibble, ‘Somalia/ Somaliland : Territory, State and Nation’, Progressio, lecture at Kings College (13 February 2007)

17. Michael Walls & Steve Kribbe, ‘Beyond Polarity: Negotiating a Hybrid State in Somaliland’, *African Spectrum* (Vol. 45, Issue. 1, 2010), pp. 31-56