

## Horn of Africa Youth Initiative (HAYI)

Written by NUEYS Admin

Monday, 28 February 2011 15:14 - Last Updated Monday, 23 April 2012 13:29

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[Regional Youth Peace Forum report FINAL \(click here\)](#)

[Youth Forum Strategy Paper FINAL \(click here\)](#)

[Asmara Declaration 2008 \(click here\)](#)

[Final political resolution of forum \(click here\)](#)

### Background

Any cursory glance of the Horn of Africa reveals that most of its countries suffer from worsening

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living conditions and a marked deterioration in the quality of life. The Horn of Africa has witnessed a spur of new conflicts and tensions, making no country in the region free from the risk of the ignition of war. Never before has the tension been so high and unstable. In the Horn, there are countries that suffer from internal, ethnic and economic conflicts while others suffer from conflict with their neighbors. Examples of ethnic/economic conflicts include that of Sudan (Darfur), in Ethiopia (the Oromo and Ogaden regions) and within Somalia. There are also cross territorial conflicts, such as that between Eritrea and Ethiopia and Somalia and Ethiopia.

In general, this wretchedness is linked to several economic, social, political and physical variables such as:

- Social factors which include the massive movement of refugees or internally displaced persons leading to complex humanitarian emergencies; deteriorating physical environments, increasing demographic pressures and inter/intra group conflicts.
- Economic factors of marginalization, underdevelopment, uneven economic opportunities, unemployment, severe economic crisis and decline.
- Political factors of weak and ineffective state institutions; narrow bases of popular support leading to elite rivalry; corruption; deterioration of public services; foreign intervention and domination; armed conflicts within and between states; absence of democracy, rule of law, and violations of basic human rights; and a general delegitimization of state authority suspension.

No wonder then that basic economic growth and other developmental projects are stagnate and, in most instances, collapsed; and thereby rendering future prospects for job creation, education and improved welfare almost non-existent. These circumstances make young people most vulnerable and hardest hit of all social groups, either as combatants in conflicts or victims robbed of future opportunities for education and employment. In short, the region has fast become uninhabitable for its citizens, particularly the youth who are forced to embark on life-threatening journeys to developed countries where they will be confronted with new forms of exploitation. Moreover, the role of youth in lobbying for peace has been diminished.

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Faced with such challenges, the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students (NUEYS), has taken the initiative of inviting to Asmara parallel organizations from countries of the Horn of Africa, to shoulder their responsibilities and consider their contribution to sustainable peacebuilding and development.

The “Regional Youth Peace Forum” was convened between 22 and 24 July 2008 at Inter-Continental Hotel, Asmara, Eritrea. Ten youth organization from the horn of Africa have participated in this forum. These are the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students from Eritrea, the National Federation of Sudanese Youth, SPLM Youth League, Sudanese Communist Party-Students Chapter, Youth Secretariat of the Democratic Unionist Party, Sudanese Eastern Front Youth Secretariat, Somali Youth Congress from London and the Somali National Youth Union from the Sudan, the Ogaden Students and Youth Forum from London and the Mathare Youth Sports Association from Kenya.

The forum provided a real opportunity for Horn youth to examine unutilized opportunities to chart new horizons for collectively improving the lives of the youth and those of their communities, through collective and coordinated action in support of sustainable peace-building and development. The Forum endeavors to maximize the role of youth in the region to deal with challenges of peace building and development. Through organizing and networking, youth can make peace a reality and create viable alternatives to war, conflict and ethnic tension, and ultimately they can show that lasting just peace means more than the absence of war.

The intention of the “Regional Youth Peace Forum” was to establish a network of indigenous groups to generate ideas for regional sustainable peace-building and development. The youth organizations of the region represented in the forum after having in-depth discussions and deliberation for three days have agreed to work together to establish a network- the Horn of Africa Youth Initiative (HAYI) amongst themselves whose values, vision, missions, purposes and objectives and organizational structure are as under.