

## **Ethio-Türkiye's Relation from the Past to the Future: Ethiopia's Potential Areas in Focus**

### **Geçmişten Geleceğe Türkiye-Etiyopya İlişkisi: Etiyopya'nın Potansiyel Odak Noktaları**

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**Abstract:** Ethio-Türkiye relation being one of the longest relations between African country and Türkiye; it has gone through different historical moments from historical people to people and religious ties to trade relation through Red sea. The long-existing Ethio-Türkiye relation boosted in the end of 19th century when King Menelik and Sultan Abdülhamid II took the throne in Ethiopia and Türkiye respectively; and, after the establishment of the Modern Türkiye in 1923 it consistently grown in multi-dimensional facets. Even though Ethiopia and Türkiye had long history of relation the formal one started in 1912 when the latter opened its first African Consulate and later its Embassy in 1926 just three years after the inauguration of Republic of Türkiye. Given

the fact that the two countries have rich history; it's one of the list researched area. Ethiopia is the second most populous African nation while Türkiye has more than eighty million total population located in a very strategic geopolitical area between Europe and Asia. In international relations, there are different interests and policy priorities based on the uniqueness of every nation. In the same fashion, both Ethiopia and Türkiye have had their policy priorities and interests in different periods of time. Here, the policy crafts and relevant sources related with the topic are consulted and data from embassies and pertinent organs are used to analyze the historical, social, economic and other theme of the same. The paper gives an insight on the area by examining the historic Ethio-Türkiye relation vis-à-vis the potentials of the two mainly paying special attention to the current foreign policy orientation, strategic geopolitical setup and the fast-growing economies of both; and, pinpointing the unexplored historic and natural resources of Ethiopia which can benefit both given the fact that they entrenched exemplary legal and institutional frameworks to cooperate. Hence, Ethio-Türkiye relation can be excelled to a higher level through investors, tourists and even scholars who can benefit out of and study about it.

**Keywords:** Ethiopia, Türkiye, Ottomans, Potential, Areas of interaction

**Öz:** Afrika ülkesi ile Türkiye arasındaki en eski ilişkilerden biri olan Etiyopya-Türkiye ilişkisi; Kızıldeniz üzerinden tarihi insanlardan halka, dini bağlardan ticari ilişkilere kadar farklı tarihsel anlardan geçmiştir. Uzun süredir devam eden Etiyopya-Türkiye ilişkisi, 19. yüzyılın sonlarında Etiyopya'da Kral Menelik'in, Türkiye'de ise Sultan II. Abdülhamid'in tahta geçmesiyle güçlenmiştir; 1923'te Modern Türkiye'nin kurulmasından sonra da sürekli olarak çok boyutlu olarak büyümüştür. Etiyopya ve Türkiye'nin uzun bir ilişki geçmişi olmasına rağmen, resmi ilişki 1912'de Türkiye'nin ilk Afrika Konsolosluğunu ve daha sonra Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin açılışından sadece üç yıl sonra 1926'da Büyükelçiliğini açmasıyla başlamıştır. İki ülkenin zengin bir tarihe sahip olduğu göz önüne alındığında; bu araştırma alanı listelerinden biridir. Etiyopya en kalabalık ikinci Afrika ülkesi iken Türkiye, Avrupa ile Asya arasında çok stratejik bir jeopolitik bölgede yer alan seksen milyondan fazla toplam nüfusa sahiptir. Uluslararası ilişkilerde, her ulusun benzersizliğine dayanan farklı çıkarlar ve politika öncelikleri vardır. Aynı şekilde, hem Etiyopya'nın hem de Türkiye'nin farklı dönemlerde politika öncelikleri ve çıkarları olmuştur. Burada konuyla ilgili politika zanaatkarlarına ve ilgili kaynaklara başvurulmakta ve büyükelçiliklerden ve ilgili organlardan elde edilen verilerden yararlanılarak konunun tarihsel, sosyal, ekonomik ve diğer temaları analiz edilmektedir. Bu makale, her ikisinin de mevcut dış politika yönelimi, stratejik jeopolitik yapısı ve hızla büyüyen ekonomilerine özel bir önem vererek, tarihi Etiyopya-Türkiye ilişkisini ikisinin potansiyelleri karşısında inceleyerek alan hakkında bir fikir veriyor; ve Etiyopya'nın keşfedilmemiş tarihi ve doğal kaynaklarının tam olarak belirlenmesi ve işbirliği için örnek teşkil eden yasal ve kurumsal çerçeveler oluşturdukları gerçeği göz önüne alındığında her ikisine de fayda sağlayabilir. Dolayısıyla Etiyopya-Türkiye ilişkisi, yatırımcılar, turistler ve hatta faydalanabilecek ve bu konuda araştırma yapabilecek akademisyenler aracılığıyla daha yüksek bir düzeye çıkarılabilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Etiyopya, Türkiye, Osmanlılar, Potansiyel, Etkileşim alanları

## Introduction

The relation between Ethiopia and Türkiye remained for centuries in a strong bondage. Even though the ties between the two countries is growing; it can be improved further given the immense foreign policy orientation, historic, geopolitical, and economic potentials of the two countries.

The Ethio-Turkish relation stretches back to the Ottoman Empire in 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Ottomans' expansion and control of Egypt in 1517 was a turning point in the history of Africa-Türkiye relation that paved the way for Ottomans to contact with Africa in general and the Northern part in particular.

The beginning of the Ethio-Türkiye relation emanated from religious and economic aspects as Ottomans raised as a protectorate of Muslims in the world and were keen also to control the trade in the Red sea of the time. Ethiopia being one of the important countries in the history of Islamic religion by protecting followers of Prophet Mohammed who fled to it escaping persecution in the first Hejjira in 615 and located in the Horn of Africa as a crossroad to the Middle East and Red sea enabled it to become one of the interest areas for Ottomans in their rival with the Portuguese.

Ethiopia is the only African country which has never been colonized as it defeated the invading Italian power at the famous battle of Adwa in 1896 after which Ethiopia got wide global recognition so that many countries begun their ties.

Türkiye opened its first African Consulate in Ethiopia a city called Harar which is considered the fourth holiest Islamic city in 1912 and its Embassy in Addis Ababa in 1926 the first in Sub-Saharan Africa. The relation was very pacific at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century because of the reason that Menelik II and Sultan Abdülhamid II became the leaders of Ethiopia and Ottoman Empire respectively. The controversy about the possessive right of the Monastery of Deir Sultan in Jerusalem was resolved by the latter which enabled the ties to boost. They also maintained their relation after the establishment of the present-day Turkey Republic. The two countries relation is growing nowadays due mainly to the foreign policy adopted by the two in general and that of Türkiye's paradigm shift approach towards Africa in particular. After Türkiye embraced 'opening to Africa' in 2005 lots of efforts are exerted which have of course paid off.

In this writing, it is tried to elucidate the relation from the very historic point of view to other aspects of it. Unite one is devoted to narrate the historical relationship between the two in a brief chronological order while unite two discusses the relatively detailed diplomatic relation to economic and other spheres of interaction. Unite three gives special focus to the potentials of the two countries paying special attention to Ethiopia's unexplored resources that

can enhance the relation to an apex in the future. Finally, it concludes by giving remarks about ways forward.

## **1. Ethio-Türkiye Relations: historical perspective**

### **1.1 Ethio-Türkiye relation: from the beginning to 1923**

One of the most influential empires and civilizations in the world history was Ottoman Turkey. It expanded in various regions and controlled very important military and economic strategic places (Barnes-Brown, 2019). Its expansion to North-Africa and controlling Egypt in 1517 had been a turning point in the Ottoman's expansion to Africa (Starford Sow, 1976). Egypt's strategic location was a big advantage for Ottoman Turkey to extend its territorial control in the Horn of Africa such as the current Somalia, Djibouti, and Sudan to effectively supervise the security of the trade routes and to instill its influences on others (Hazar, 2000; Abir, 2013). Ethio-Türkiye's relation dates back to that time of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The Portuguese and Ottoman power-rivalry in the international trade and political arena from 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century and the Muslim and Christian Kingdoms internal contestation in Ethiopia combined made the former ones to involve in Ethiopia when Ottomans began to support the Muslim Kingdom of Adal while Portuguese were on the side of the Christian Kingdom. Imam Ahmed ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi (Gragh Ahmed) who was the ruler of Adal Sultanate achieved big successes in the battles and controlled large territories in Ethiopia (Abir, 1980; Marcus, 1994). After the huge battle success of Imam Ahmed such as at the battle of Shimbira Kure in 1529, finally defeated at the battle of Woyna Daga in 1543 (Haggai, 1995; Muhumed, 2015).

The relation after the Gragn war was relatively stable though there was a continued chase for the dominance of the Red sea trade between Ethiopia, Portuguese and Ottomans (Yimer, Chekol, 2022) which lasted till 1855 where all struggling to control the route. One of the most important concerns of the Ethiopian foreign relations during Tewodros II and Yohanse IV regimes were access to the sea outlets. The Ethiopian sea outlets such as Massawa and Asab were under the control and influence of Ottoman Turkey, Egypt, and Italy in several years. As a result, the Ethiopian relation with Ottoman Turkey was conflictual and tried to form alliance with Europeans such as with Britain and France to have an access for the sea outlets (Marcus, 1994; Rubenson, 1976; Rubenson, 2021). However, the formal relations between the two states started during Emperor Menelik II period (Bahru, 2002).

Ethio-Ottoman relation turned pacific and friendly in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century where Menelik II and Sultan Abdülhamid II became the leaders of Ethiopia and Ottoman Empire respectively especially after the famous battle of Adwa in 1896 (Bahru, 2002; Abota, 2002). One of the historic moments of the two parties'

relation was the controversy in the Deir Al Sultan monastery. Emperor Menelik II through the delegations requested the protection of Ethiopian monastery i.e. the Monastery of Deir Sultan nowadays situated in Jerusalem. Reciprocally, the Ottoman Turkey regime or Sultan Abdulhamid II replied to the concern Ethiopia in Jerusalem and promised to solve the problems related to Monastery of Deir Sultan and other properties (Marcus, 1994).

King Menelik II of Ethiopia sent Ato Josef and Kont de Leonitif to Istanbul with a letter of good will which also affirmed Muslims in Ethiopia can worship freely; and with gifts among which lion and gold buckler which pleased the Ottoman Sultan. In response, the latter send a delegation to Ethiopia with a letter mentioning the long historic relation of Muslims with Abyssinia and gifts including pistol, telescope, horses...etc. The welfare of Ethiopians and the possession of Deir Sultan monastery was assured by the Ottomans leader Abdulhamid II who permitted a church to be build and separate door to be done for Ethiopian Christians while Emperor Menelik confirmed that Muslims in his country can worship freely. Sultan Abdülhamid II expressed that he was against Italy's invasion of Ethiopia (Yimer, Chekol, 2022, YILDIZ, 2021). This period marked a turning point in laying the basis for the inauguration of official relation between the two.

The first Ottoman Turkey Consulate opened in Harar, Ethiopia, in 1912 which was the first in Africa (Keller, 1987; Bahiru, 2002). During Liji Iyasu's regime (1913-1916) who succeeded Menelik II (1913-1916) Ethiopia continued to establish and show the strong ties of Ethiopia and Ottoman Turkey (Tepedelen, n.d; Marcus, 1994; Nagayo, 2015; Sebsebe, 2015; Yıldız, 2021). Due to Necib Hac Efendi's passing away Mazhar Bey became the first consul who managed to strengthen the relation between the parties by convincing the Emperor to move the consulate from Harar to Addis Ababa and requesting his Empire to help Ethiopia through financial and material support including the request for the provision of two aero planes (Yıldız, 2021).

## **1.2 From 1923 to 1991**

In post-Liji Iyasu period, from 1916-1930 the foreign relation was dominated by Ras Tafari's role who was the regent of Empress Zewditu. He engaged in diplomatic struggle to make Ethiopia as the member of League of Nations and achieved in 1923. He had also visited many European countries to consolidate the diplomatic relations of Ethiopia and to get lessons and strengthen relations including Turkey. The regime attempted to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ethiopia when Italy occupied Ethiopia. For instance, the regime mainly committed to the principle of collective security which was the basic principle of League of Nations to defend member states (Spencer, 1984).

In 1923, Ottoman Turkey completely collapsed and the modern Republic of Turkey was established. Following the collapse of Ottoman Turkey, the modern Turkey accepted the western modernization as the best way to ensure productivity and development and to compete in international market (Enwere & Yilmaz, 2014; Negesso, 2021). The foreign relation of Turkey established itself based on the principle of sovereign equality and reciprocity. In the decolonization process, for instance, it immediately recognized the newly independent African states; and established diplomatic and economic relations (Hazar, 2000; Enwere & Yilmaz, 2014). Turkey opened its embassy in Ethiopia in 1926. The evidences showed that it was the first Turkey's embassy in Sub-Saharan Africa. Similarly, in 1933 Ethiopia opened an embassy in Ankara, Turkey. Moreover, Turkey was one of the countries which participated in the coronation of Emperor Hailesillase in 1931 (Nagayo, 2015). In 1923 Ethiopia became member of the League of Nations that was founded to preserve the international peace and security (Spencer, 1984; Bahiru, 2001; Marcus, 1983; Marcus, 1994). Similarly, in 1932 Turkey became member for this organization (MoFA Turkey, 2019).

However, this relation was slightly interrupted in early 1930's as a result of Italian aggression against Ethiopia and the Turkey's smooth diplomatic relation with Italy. The Ethio-Turkey relation was hindered due to the following reasons. Turkey like other member states ignored the complaint when Ethiopia explained the aggression acts of Italy before the League of Nations because its focus was the Mediterranean area. In other words, the responses of the League of Nations and its member states were not satisfactory. In April 1935, Turkey, Yugoslavia, and Greece agreed a Joint Mediterranean agreement or alliance with Italy (Barles, 2004; Negesso, 2021).

Later on, the relation between Turkey and Italy faced difficulty. As a result, following the aggression acts of Italy against Turkey, Turkey promoted its consulate in Ethiopia to the ambassadorial level in 1935. The Atatürk government diplomatically stood together with Ethiopia against the Italian aggression. For instance, Turkey government insisted Britain or great powers support Ethiopia to reverse the aggression and to avoid extra disasters in international peace and security and international politics because the Atatürk government perceived that aggression was a turning point. The Ethiopian regime liked this decision and reflected its interest for the development of diplomatic ties between the two states. Thereafter, the Turkish government and its institutions such as media tried to support the diplomatic struggle of Ethiopia for its independence and sovereignty. In addition, some volunteer Turkish soldiers, for instance Mehmet Vehip Pasha, Faruk Pasha, and Tarik Pasha, participated on the side of Ethiopia (Spencer, 1983; Negesso, 2021).

At the time of Second World War (WWII), Ethiopia used the strategy of one power against the other. The regime cooperated with Britain to fight against

Italy and to ensure the independence of Ethiopia. However, after liberation, the domination of Britain over the affairs of Ethiopia continued until 1948. As a result, the Haileselassie's government shifted its relation to United States of America which had a policy of anti-colonization unlike the European powers (Spencer, 1984). The relations resumed until the fall of the regime in 1974. During this period, Turkey also applied pro-western policy (Bahiru, 2002). After the liberation of Ethiopia, the friendly relations between the two countries continued particularly from 1950s until the downfall of imperial regime (Henze, 2000; Negesso, 2021). Turkey believed that the Western principle and practice of development is the best way to ensure strong economy (Enwere & Yilmaz, 2014). Turkey was pro-decolonization process in Africa. As a result, it immediately recognized the newly independent African countries and established diplomatic relations. In this regard, besides its relation with Ethiopia, it worked to develop its relations with newly independent African countries (Kavas, 2015; Hazar, 2000).

The relations between the two countries reached its peak during the Haileselassie I regime of Ethiopia. At the period of cold war, the two countries had nearly similar ideological line which had a pro-western stance. After World War II, the two countries were founding member states of the United Nations in 1945. They also engaged in international peace keeping missions under United Nations for instance in 1952 Korean War. The emperor also visited Turkey twice. Moreover, in 1952 Turkey became member for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (Spencer, 1984; Marcus, 1976; Kavas, 2015).

The Turkey government re-opened an embassy in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, in 1957 and reciprocally the Ethiopian regime opened an embassy in Turkey, Ankara, in 1959 (Henze, 2000; Negesso, 2021). Emperor Haileselassie visited Turkey in 1967 and 1971 so as to strengthen the diplomatic relations of the two countries. These diplomatic relations, however, were interrupted by regime change in Ethiopia in 1974 and the ideological shift of the newly coming socialist Derg government because the Turkey government remained attached to capitalism. In addition, the Ethiopian government closed the embassy at Ankara in 1984 (Negesso, 2021). The post-1974 ideological shift in Ethiopia, to socialism, disappointed western countries and their allies such as Turkey. Ethiopia had consolidated its ties with the socialist countries such as Soviet Russia, Cuba, and South Yemen (Bahiru, 2002). The Ethio-Turkey diplomatic ties had immediately declined (Abota, 2002).

### **1.3 Post 1991**

In the post 1991, following the regime change, the Ethiopian foreign policy was more or less designed in accordance with the idea of liberalism. The foreign policy document explains that democratization and globalization as international determinant factors and suggests how Ethiopia's national interests



can be defended. Under the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) administration the foreign policy in principle focuses on supporting the democratization process and combating abject poverty by addressing the economic problems through aid and trade negotiations and by creating wide opportunities for the foreign direct investment (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), 2002). As a result, in this period large opportunities were created for the foreign investments thereby to boost the economy of the state despite the presence of ups and downs. In this regard, Ethiopia tried to diversify its trade relations with Western and the Eastern world including the newly emerging powers i.e. China, India, Turkey, Brazil, Malaysia, and the Gulf states. Regardless of the state's ideological stance, the foreign policy promotes economic relations which may contribute for the economic development of Ethiopia. This foreign policy orientation opened door for Ethiopia to conduct trade relations and attract investments. For instance, Turkey's investors engaged in several investment areas such as agriculture, construction, textiles, technology, and so on. Moreover, the trade relations between the two states have been growing even though the trade deficit from Ethiopia side (Zaman, 2011; Tekle, 2021).

Ethiopia had not an embassy in Turkey for long years and the cooperation was very weak particularly from 1984-1991. However, in post 1991 the diplomatic ties between these states have been growing. Turkey has given big emphasis for Africa as potential place of large market, natural resource, and bargaining power (Kavas, 2015). The relations had more enhanced when Turkey opened the Turkish International Coordination Agency's (TICA) first office in Africa in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa in 2005 and when Ethiopia reopened its embassy in Turkey, Ankara, in 2006. Moreover, the Turkish Police Academy has started providing training opportunities at least for 5 Ethiopians (Shinn, 2012). The foreign policy of Turkey has aim of consolidating diplomatic relations, and helping the good governance and economic aspects (Ozkan, 2008; Shin, 2012). For instance, there are various economic cooperation agreements to develop the trade and investment relations between the two countries. Turkey is one of the countries which largely invests in Ethiopia in many areas and addresses the Ethiopian market. This investment and trade relations brought technologies, skills, and job opportunities to Ethiopia (Muhumed, 2015; Ozkan, 2008; Shin, 2012). However, Ethiopia has faced trade deficits in these trade relations because it usually exports raw materials which are cheap in international market and imports processed goods and sometimes raw material (ibid).

The current Turkey's president or former Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, was the first Turkish Prime Minister to visit Sub-Saharan countries. He visited Ethiopia and South Africa in 2015 which helped for the advancement of its relation with Africans in general and Ethiopia in particular (Kavas, 2015). In January 2015,



the Turkey President visited Ethiopia and met with Hailemariam Desalegn the late Prime minister of Ethiopia. In the meeting, the president confirmed that Turkey has special place for Ethiopia since ancient time. In addition, he noted that his government has strong interest to provide crucial technologies which will help to properly utilizing natural resources and contributing for the development of the state (Tewekel, 2015).

#### Ethio-Turkish Relations in Post-2018

Following the political transition in Ethiopia in 2018, many countries portrayed their interests towards the change and other aspects. The government has established friendly relations with many states including Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, and Turkey. At the time of Arabian Peninsula crisis, it undertook a kind of neutral position to accommodate interests though some of parties disliked the position (Mosley, 2020). Due to its location and capability; and its position in regional institutions, many powers need the cooperation of Ethiopia regarding the issues of Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Eritrea. The tension between Ethiopia and Egypt over the Nile River is another issue which attracted the attention of different powers.

As it is discussed, Ethiopia attracted the attention of many powers due to its location, resources, and demography. In post-2018 the new coming government bolstered the foreign relations to Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, and Turkey. The Ethiopian government was in dilemma during Gulf crisis which undertook neutral position. Though some consequences, it tried to friendly handle the parties in the crisis and tried to defend the national interest of the state. In this regard, following the 2018 political transition, the relation between Ethiopia and Turkey has further increased (Cafiero & Çok, 2020). In August 2021, summit diplomacy was conducted between Turkey and Ethiopia that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed met with Tayyip Erdoğan. During the meeting, they discussed on the areas of cooperation such as technology, military, economic, and social issues between the states and regional and international situations like international security (Tekle, 2021).

Moreover, in February 2022, the Turkish Ambassador, Amb Yaprak Alp, in Ethiopia in the interview with the Ethiopian News Agency (ENA) noted that the two states have strong relations which cannot be broken even at the time of difficulties. The two countries cooperated in several political, economic, business, and other areas. For instance, the Turkey government has been providing development assistance for Ethiopia and many Turkish government and non-government organizations have been engaging in building water projects, and agricultural supports such as seeds in the northern and southern Ethiopia. Moreover, the ambassador mentioned that Ethiopia and Türkiye have signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the areas of water resource

development, military financial cooperation, and implementation protocol on financial assistance in 2021 when Prime Minister Abiy visited Turkey (ENA, 2022). Turkey also had an interest to mediate the boundary conflict between Ethiopia and Sudan since 2020 (Tekle, 2021).

The Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia organized a trade and investment forum in Ankara in March 2022. The forum aimed at promoting investment and trade between Ethiopia and Turkey; and attracting investors in different areas in mining, energy, technology, tourism, health areas, textiles, and agro-processing. On this forum the Ethiopian Ambassador in Turkey, Ambassador Adem Mohamed noted that Ethiopia and Turkey have strong diplomatic ties. As to him, Turkish investors are second largest investors in Ethiopia and created large job opportunities for many peoples. Furthermore, the ambassador described the commitment of the Ethiopian government to host foreign investors or expand foreign direct investment (Walta, 2022).

Like the economy, Ethiopia and Turkey has established cultural and social relations. For instance, in 2000 the two countries agreed to cooperate on the social aspects particularly on the health sector related to medicine, professional development, and health institutions. They, moreover, agreed to cooperate on education, cultural aspects, tourism, and science (Mehreteab, 2019).

## **2. Examining areas of interactions: in a nutshell**

### **2.1 Diplomatic relation**

The Ethio-Turkish diplomatic relationship dates back to the Ottoman Empire in 16<sup>th</sup> century. As discussed above, the Ottomans and Ethiopian (the then Abyssinian) kingdoms had established a close relationship with regards to trade and military collaborations from which the diplomatic ties emanate. The Ottomans came to Africa with a non-colonization mentality (Stanford Shaw, 1976).

There are two stances towards the Ethio-Ottomans relations of the 16<sup>th</sup> century as the first being of suspicion and distrust due mainly to the power rivalry of the two with Portuguese over the Red sea and the strong stand of the Ethiopian Highland Princes to keep its political status quo (Yimer, Chekol, 2022); while the second can be considered as positive from the fact that the Ottomans raised themselves as leaders of Muslims in the world in the 16<sup>th</sup> century which can be witnessed in Ethiopia where the former had great place for the latter as Ethiopians welcomed the followers of Prophet Mohammed in 615 A.D (YILDIZ, 2021).

The Ottoman Sultan Suleyman the magnificent was helping the Muslim kingdom after which he decided to build administrative system in Abyssinia by appointing, Ozdemir Pasha, who was a successful grand ruler in Yemen, as a

senior to Abyssinia on 5 July 1555 to dominate the east trade and for the Muslims in Abyssinia reasons (Yusuf, 2001; YILDIZ, 2021). In the following decades, the Ottoman Empire continued to expand territorially in Ethiopian region particularly the Red Sea. Huseyin Pasha was assigned by the Ottoman Sultan to Habesistan Eyaleti the administration of the Abyssinia as a ruler (ibid). But, the Ethiopians resisted against any expansion with any kind of impossibility (Yusuf, 2001). In the 17<sup>th</sup> century Ethiopia was having internal problem called time of princes (zemene mesafint) where lords were governing themselves while Ottoman was having internal and external problems in 18<sup>th</sup> centuries due mainly to which both had no significant interest to each other.

Till the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the diplomatic relation remained without significant progress. But, the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century marked a turning point in the two countries' diplomatic relation. Türkiye opened its first African Consulate in Ethiopia in a city called Harar which is considered the fourth holiest Islamic city in 1912 and its Embassy in Addis Ababa in 1926 the first in Sub-Saharan Africa. The relation was very pacific at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century because of the reason that Menelik II and Sultan Abdülhamid II became the leaders of Ethiopia and Ottoman Empire respectively. The controversy about the possessive right of the Monastery of Deir Sultan in Jerusalem was resolved by the latter which enabled the ties to boost. They also maintained their relation after the establishment of the present-day Turkey Republic.

Turkey opened its embassy in Ethiopia in 1926. The evidences showed that it was the first Turkey's embassy in Sub-Saharan Africa. Similarly, in 1933 Ethiopia opened an embassy in Ankara, Turkey. Moreover, Turkey was one of the countries which participated in the coronation of Emperor Haileillasié in 1931 (Nagayo, 2015). In 1923 Ethiopia became member for the League of Nations that was founded to preserve the international peace and security (Spencer, 1984; Bahru, 2001; Marcus, 1983; Marcus, 1994). Similarly, in 1932 Turkey became member for this organization (MoFA Turkey, 2019).

The relations between the two countries reached at its peak during the Haileillasié I regime of Ethiopia. At the period of cold war, the two countries had nearly similar ideological line which had pro-western stance. After World War II, the two countries were founding member states of the United Nations in 1945. They also engaged in international peace keeping missions under United Nations for instance in 1952 Korean War. The emperor also visited Turkey twice. Moreover, in 1952 Turkey became member for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (Spencer, 1984; Marcus, 1976; Kavas, 2015).

In 2015, the Turkey President visited Ethiopia and confirmed that Turkey has special place for Ethiopia since ancient time. In addition, he noted that his government has interest to strengthen the ties; and, the current Ethiopian

Prime minister Abiy Ahmed visited Türkiye to discuss cooperation matters on technology, military, economic, and social issues between the states and regional and international security (Tewekel, 2015; Tekle, 2021).

## **2.2 Economic relations and its basis**

The economic relation between Ethiopia and Turkey is as old as the relation of the two; mainly based itself on coffee and slaves (Dagmawit Ayele, 2019; Abir M. 2013). But, it boosted after the 'Action Plan for opening up to Africa' was prepared in 1998 which was followed by the Strategy on the Development of the Economic Relations by Under-Secretariat of Foreign Trade in 2003 after AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma) party came to power (Elem Tepecikliou, 2017).

Turkey's investments in Ethiopia is around \$2.5 billion as the second-largest investor in Ethiopia after China. The bilateral trade volume between Turkey and Ethiopia amounted to 398,8 million USD in 2019 (exports were 378,3 million USD and imports were 27,5 million USD), and to 272 million USD in 2020 (exports were 231 million and imports were 41 million USD) (Anadolu Agency, 2021; ENA, 2021)

Turkey is one of the strategic partners of Ethiopia along with China and India. At this time, many Turkey investors have invested in Ethiopia i.e. about 200 Turkish companies are working in Ethiopia. They have created job opportunities for more than 20,000 Ethiopians and their investment amount is over \$2 billion. Turkey companies mainly invest on textile industries. Moreover, the current trade volume is more than \$400 million (Türkiye MoFA, 2021; Tekle, 2021).

The economic relationship has been based on legal and institutional frameworks. To mention some:

A Cooperation Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation and Trade signed in 1993 depending on which Memorandum of Agreement was entered that gives the two countries the responsibility to create a conducive environment to enhance bilateral trade partnership. (TGE Proclamation no. 77/93; Dagmawi A. Tilahun, 2019)

A treaty agreement about the Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investment was ratified by the Ethiopian Parliament in 2003 is the second treaty in the area of investment and trade which has the objective of promoting greater economic. The agreement mainly consists of the obligation and/or rights of each party to: -

- Promote investors by creating favorable conditions;
- Protect and accord fair and equitable treatment in its territory; treatment no less favorable than that accorded in similar situations to investments of its investors or to investments of investors of any third country, whichever is the most favorable;

- Not to expropriate, nationalize or take measures of similar effects except for a public purpose upon payment of prompt compensation accordance with due process of law;
- Allow all transfers related to an investment to be made freely and without delay into and out of its territory;
- Recognize any subrogation of the insurer which stems from the terms of the insurance agreement if the investment of an investor of one Party is insured against non-commercial risks under a system established by law;
- Seek in good faith and cooperation a rapid and equitable solution to any dispute between them; (FDRE, 2003: Proclamation No. 323/2003; UNCTAD, 2001)

Türkiye and Ethiopia have embraced the legal setup for the avoidance of double taxation with respect to taxes on income which will positively impact bilateral investment (FDRE, 2008: Proclamation No. 562/2008); on the field of Tourism (FDRE, 2008: Proclamation No. 577/2008); in the Military and defense Industry cooperation, development of the commercial and economic relations between the two countries through cooperation in maritime fields (FDRE: Proclamation No. 453/2005; Proclamation No. 888/2008 and Proclamation No. 969/2016) and also cooperation agreements and legal frameworks concerning cultural and educational cooperation (FDRE, 2005: Proclamation No. 462/2005); in the field of Agricultural (FDRE, 2005: Proclamation No. 462/2005).

Moreover, the establishment of the Ethiopia-Turkey Trade and Investment Forum realized the institutionalization of the relations between Turkey and Ethiopia upon which officials and businesspersons from the two countries can discuss challenges and prospects in bilateral investment and trade. In the same fashion, the Joint Commission on Economic, Trade and Technical Cooperation (JEC) is a strong regular institutional basis established on agreement for the two countries economic relation discussing trade, technical and finance cooperation on focus. (Nagayo, 2015; MoFA, 2014). It has been successful in examining the progress of agreements entered.

The other worth-mentioning is TUSKON (Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists of Turkey) which is a non-governmental organization business federation which organizes international trade summits. These summits not only brought Africa to the attention of Turkey but, most importantly, created a venue for both to know each other and explore possibilities (Özkan and Akgün, 2010). TUSKON has an office in Addis Ababa has managed to draw attention of Türkiye's companies to Ethiopia (Nagayo, 2015).

Turkish office of Commercial Counselor or attaché: The Turkish office of Commercial Counselor is the extension of the Ministry of Economy of Turkey

which has an objective is to guide Turkish businesspersons on commercial economic activities and giving information about the investment environment in Ethiopia (Dagmawit A., 2019).

The trade relation between the two countries though growing faster has been limited to some items compared to the potentials of the countries. Regarding Ethiopia it was exporting oil seed, pulse, textile and coffee whereas Türkiye exports Plastic, machineries, iron and steel and rubber (Dagmawit A. T, 2019).

### **2.3 Other spheres of interactions- TiKA and Maarif foundation**

The Maarif foundation has participated in building and carrying out educational activities within three cities including the one in Addis Ababa (TMF, 2021).

The countries have signed legal cooperation agreements. To mention two of them a bilateral Extradition agreement and Mutual Legal Assistance in criminal matters which will strengthen crime prevention and enhance criminals not to hide in the respective signing parties (ENA, 2022)

In addition, some volunteer Turkish soldiers, for instance Mehmet Vehip Pasha, Faruk Pasha, and Tarik Pasha, participated on the side of Ethiopia. Especially, Vehip Pasha was appointed as the general staff of the Sothern front proving his military skill built the stiffest defense called 'Hidenburg Wall' against Italians (Spencer, 1983; Negesso, 2021).

Worth to mention here is that there are societal and educational trips between the citizens of the two countries' nationalities including Ethiopians visiting Türkiye for medical reasons.

### **3. Potentials of Ethio-Türkiye relations: Ethiopia in focus**

The two countries relationship can be further enhanced based their conducive political, geopolitical and economic factors among others. Here under are some illustrations of the two countries' potentials based on which they can emerge as one of models of international relation in their respective regions.

Both Türkiye and Ethiopia have embraced a very welcoming foreign policy towards others. Ethiopia has crafted its foreign policy to base itself on national interest and economic diplomacy whereby mutual benefit can be secured (FDRE Constitution, 1995; MoFA, 2002). The same is true with Türkiye which came up with a paradigm shift measure towards Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular after it declared the policy of 'Opening to Africa' that emphasizes mutual benefit and complementation (Özkan and Akgün, 2010).

Historic moments in their past has a very crucial role in the betterment of their interaction. Their historic past stretches back to the Ottoman Empire in

16<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, beginning from 1896 to the opening of the first Turkish Embassy in Africa in the Ethiopian capital has laid a visible milestone added with the rich history of the two countries will boost the existing good relationship. In his visit to Ethiopia, H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan mentioned that Ethiopia is one of the oldest civilizations of the world and home of co-existence among which the Abyssinian King Nejashi has such a meaningful and special place in the Muslim world considered by Prophet Muhammed as a secured place (MoFA, 2015). The two countries have a strong friendly relation from past to present. In addition to this the success story of Türkiye in the field of Tourism can be a good example for Ethiopia which is the oldest African nation with 9 UNESCO registered world heritages (UNESCO, 2022; Nagayo, 2015)

The geo-political setup of the two countries is the other most important factor that can positively influence their interaction. Ethiopia is located in the Horn of Africa crossroads to the Red sea, Middle east and Asia; seat of African Union (AU), UNECA (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa) and UNDP (United Nations Development Program). Whereas, Türkiye is member to NATO, bordering Asia and Europe and closer to the Middle East.

Worth to mention is that they have large population. Ethiopia is the second largest market in Africa with a total population of 120 million whereas Türkiye has 86 million populations (Worldometer, 2023). Moreover, Ethiopia is 1.1 million square kilometers wide out of which 52.1 percent is suitable for agriculture (arable) with potentials to grow coffee, oil seeds, leather as the first African concentration for livestock with estimated 75 million heads (Francis Amoako, 2022).

Economic and legal reforms in the recent years in Ethiopia is another major reason to invest in and deal with Ethiopia. Ethiopia as one of the fastest growing economy in the world with 9.5 percent average per year as per World Bank; the government has introduced privatization of sectors which were reserved only for Ethiopian nationals and legal frameworks including the New York Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards and revised commercial code are positive measures taken (EIC, 2023; FDRE, Proclamation No. 1237/2021; Proclamation No. 1242/2021). Its membership to Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) with 400 million populations and African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA) which is very beneficial for investors in terms of trade activities within African continent which will have significant impact in bringing investment to the country (EIC, 2023).

Ethio-Türkiye relationship has been growing from its `beginning though this doesn't mean that there is no room for improvement. Given the potentials and positive achievements of the two countries the relation will emerge high in the near future if they combine their advantages in an innovative manner.



### **Concluding Remarks**

Ethio-Türkiye relation began in the 16<sup>th</sup> century at the time of Ottoman Empire and reached its peak in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The historic relation has multi-faceted dimensions including religion and geopolitics in their respective regions. Given the fact that Türkiye embraced a policy that opened itself to Africa has benefited Ethiopia and Türkiye in return also by drawing so many social and economic interactions in the past twenty and more years. However, the countries relation can further be enhanced as they have so many potentials in multiple spheres of interaction. Hence, given the most suitable policy orientation; economic, social and historic potential of the two and the advantage they have due to their geopolitical setup they can shine as one of the best international relation models in the coming years if they implement and utilize their advantages in an innovative way.

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