

8. Harnessing Trade for Peace: Insights from Somalia's WTO accession process

Itonde Kakoma, Ahmed Abdullahi and Hannah Ajelet Eriksen¹

ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the complex relationship between trade and peace by focusing on insights from Somalia's WTO accession process. The chapter argues that this process must not be understood merely as a technical or economic endeavour but as a comprehensive, inclusive process that involves continuous engagement between the government, local communities, and international stakeholders, particularly in the context of trade negotiations. By adopting a peace-responsive approach that prioritizes inclusive economic recovery and strong governance, Somalia can leverage the WTO accession process to ensure that trade reforms and economic policies are designed not only to stimulate economic growth but also to address underlying social and political fragilities so that the process becomes a vehicle for peace and prosperity in the country's post-conflict reconstruction and long-term development.

1. Introduction

The year 2023 witnessed the highest number of conflicts since 1946 and a significant escalation in humanitarian needs (United Nations, 2023a). Conflict deaths surged by 96 per cent from 2022 to 2023, making 2023 the deadliest year since the 1994 Rwandan genocide (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2023). Conflicts in Ukraine, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Sudan, Yemen, and Gaza as well as the transregional ramifications in the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa, are symptomatic of the new complex reality of conflicts intersecting with transversal global challenges (United Nations, 2024).

The “polycrisis” in geopolitics, vulnerability of global supply chains, climate change and environmental degradation, global health crises, reversals in economic growth, the disruption of trade flows and forced migration have had profound implications on national and international economies (WTO, 2023a). Non-state armed groups and fragmented conflict actors continue to proliferate, threatening both the achievement of durable peace agreements and prospects for effective and sustained peacebuilding.

The increase in global conflicts in 2023, coupled with a significant rise in humanitarian needs, has also had a profound impact on international trade flows. For instance, the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo continues to have great humanitarian consequences for communities as well as fuelling illicit trade and disrupting the global supply of essential minerals for new technologies (Kavanagh, 2024). Simultaneously, ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and non-state actor attacks on shipping vessels passing through the Bab al-Mandab Strait have dropped the global maritime trade volume passing through the strait by 50 per cent (Arslanalp et al., 2024). Moreover, civil conflicts in both Myanmar and Sudan have resulted in economic isolation, reduced foreign investment, and disrupted trade and livelihoods (OCHA, 2024; World Bank, 2024a).

Over the past 30 years, global poverty has significantly decreased except in fragile and conflict-affected countries (Cali, 2015). The World Bank has also estimated that by 2030, nearly 60 per cent of the world’s “extremely poor” will be living in countries affected by fragility, conflict, and violence (World Bank, 2024b).

As of August 2024,² the World Trade Organization (WTO) has 166 members, representing 98 per cent of world trade. A total of 128 of these governments joined

the WTO as “original members”, meaning that they had been party to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The remaining ones joined through the formal accession process, which has proven to be a demanding if not arduous process for building up accountable systems (Dadush and Osakwe, 2015). The process requires the acceding government to undertake many economic and trade reforms, including domestic structural reforms that often include establishing new institutions to ensure compliance with WTO standards (Arveladze and Smeets, 2017).

About half of the economies currently seeking membership in the WTO are classified as in “fragile and conflict-affected” situations (FCS) by the World Bank (World Bank, 2024c). One of these countries is Somalia, which applied for WTO accession on 12 December 2015 (WTO, 2017b). Then Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Somalia in Geneva, Faduma Abdulahi Mohamud, said: “Many developing countries, particularly LDCs, such as my own, are keen to join the WTO because, among other things, the WTO promotes lower trade barriers, fair competition, non-discrimination, encourages development and economic reform while providing flexibilities for adjustment” (WTO, 2017b).

In 2017, the WTO launched the “Trade for Peace” Initiative, intending to use the organization’s accession process as a pathway to economic growth and sustainable peace (WTO, 2017a; WTO, 2021). Although the interlinkages between trade and peace were once at the heart of the multilateral trading system, this focus has diminished over time. For instance, the creation of the GATT in 1947 was partly founded on the assumption that countries with strong trade ties would be less likely to engage in conflict with each other (Gowa and Hicks, 2013). The *raison d’être*, for instance, behind the formation of the EU was a desire for peace through “common processes and structures of democratic cooperation” (Anastasiou, 2007).

However, the symbiotic relationship between trade and peace or trade as a preventative measure against conflict by fostering economic interdependence is not always straightforward or guaranteed. This chapter aims to explore this relationship from a peacebuilding angle, arguing that trade, in and of itself, is not inherently positive or detrimental but rather is shaped by the practices and policies that govern trade.

By understanding trade as an opportunity and applying intentional peace-responsive strategies, it is possible to turn trade into an important instrument or mechanism promoting economic growth, fostering cooperation,

and, ultimately, contributing to sustainable peace. To do so, this chapter will be structured in two parts. The first section will explore some of the assumed benefits and challenges of the trade-for-peace relationship. The second part will explore peacebuilding and peace responsiveness as precursors to successful trade policies, including the WTO accession process. The chapter will draw upon concrete examples from Interpeace's³ work in Somalia to illustrate how a peace-responsive accession process can become a positive contribution to sustainable peace.

2. Trade as a peace enhancer or conflict inciter, or both?

There is an insufficient consensus on the effect of trade on conflict dynamics and peace. From a theoretical point of view, this debate has largely been framed in binary terms between liberalism and realism, focusing on whether trade inherently promotes peace or not. While some literature supports the idea that economic interdependence has a pacifying effect on interstate relations (Hegre et al., 2010; Lee and Pyun, 2016; Polachek, 1980; Xiang et al., 2007), other studies indicate that trade could incite conflict, particularly when relationships are asymmetrical or economic ties are used coercively (Barbieri, 1996; Dos Santos, 1970; Sayrs, 1979).

While the aim of this chapter is not to delve into this theoretical debate on trade and peace, understanding this debate is important for comprehending the lenses through which the trade-peace-conflict relationship is often examined. Furthermore, understanding this debate provides a theoretical foundation for a peace-responsive programmatic approach to trade where the potential for trade to promote peace must be carefully balanced against the risk of exacerbating conflict.

2.1 Conceptual benefits of trade

There are several assumptions about the conceptual benefits of trade on peace, with one of the most common ones being the perception that trade serves as a conflict prevention mechanism. This is based on two assumptions; firstly, that economic interdependency reduces the likelihood of conflict, and secondly, that the mutual benefits of trade foster peaceful relations and stability (Copeland, 1996; Tanious, 2019).

The perspective of liberal international political economy (IPE) on trade and peace is rooted in the assumption that interdependence through trade reduces the probability of conflict as the costs of disruption become prohibitively high for all parties

involved (Tanious, 2019). Hence, the economic benefits generated for both parties through trade deter states from conflict with key trade partners (Barbieri, 1999). The impact of trade dependence is thus understood through the question of the opportunity cost linked to the potential loss of trade (Lee and Pyun, 2016).

There is also a common assumption that cooperation in one area, such as trade, will naturally lead to stronger cooperation in other areas, such as peacebuilding, rooted in a Kantian doctrine of "perpetual peace" whereby economic interdependence fosters understanding rather than conflict (Tanious, 2019). This argument is rooted in the assumption that the taproot of interstate peace is interstate interaction, such as through free trade and the flow of ideas (Blainey, 1973). This view was central to post-war international cooperation structures, including the establishment of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the GATT post-World War II. During this recovery period, economic interdependence was seen as a preventative mechanism against a "recurrence of the parlous state of the international economy during the 1930s" (IMF, 2001).

This view on trade is also intrinsically linked to a rather positive perspective on globalization as both are essentially seen as instruments for promoting economic growth (Lee and Pyun, 2016). For instance, according to the results of an empirical analysis including 243,225 country-pair observations from 1950 to 2000, globalization fosters peace in two ways: firstly, through bilateral trade and its advantageous impact on peace because of strong economic ties and mutual dependency; and secondly, independent of trade volume, a country's integration into the global market will encourage more peaceful behaviour (Lee and Pyun, 2016). In other words, this view perceives increased market integration and economic interdependence resulting from globalization as fostering conditions conducive to peace. At the same time, it has also been argued that this argument is only partly true, and a more nuanced understanding of this relationship is required. The following section will look at how trade activities and policies can inadvertently exacerbate existing conflicts or create new tensions in conflict-affected regions.

2.2 Trade as a potential source of tension and conflict?

On the other side of this debate, one can find the realist view arguing that trade can actually exacerbate tensions and lead to conflict (Barbieri, 1996). For instance, it has been argued that trade can become a source of influence when relations are asymmetrical as an interdependent trade relationship is very rarely

in equilibrium (Gasiorowski and Polachek, 1982; IMF, 2001; Wagner, 2000). Therefore, this dependency asymmetry might very well become an opportunity for one side to wield power and influence over another and thus ignite new tensions or further reignite existing ones. This, in turn, may lead to both exploitation and conflict (Barbieri, 1996; Barbieri, 2002; Dos Santos, 1970; Oneal et al., 1996).

Asymmetrical trade benefits powerful governments or corporations at the expense of destroying traditional political, economic, and social structures (Hiller, 2015). As Patrick Hiller (2015), Director of the War Prevention Initiative, argues, “this destruction leads to increased inequality between and within countries, as well as dependence on trading partners”. This power imbalance may foster resentment and potential conflict among groups that do not benefit from trade or feel exploited (Hiller, 2015).

While the IMF defines trade interdependence as “the economic well-being of any one country is affected by the actions and policies of other countries”, other perspectives further this by showing that the positive effect of economic interdependence is contingent upon the broader context in which it operates (IMF, 2001). In other words, it is not merely the presence of trade ties that determines peace (Barbieri, 1996). Rather, its effectiveness depends on whether such agreements consider the context, power relations, geographical proximity, and how well they are integrated into broader political and diplomatic frameworks.

As referenced earlier, about half of the governments currently seeking membership in the WTO are classified as in “fragile and conflict-affected” situations by the World Bank. Trade flows in fragile settings exhibit distinct characteristics that heighten their sensitivity to trade shocks, potentially affecting political stability and conflict dynamics.

A 2015 study conducted by the World Bank Group demonstrates that the trade flows in fragile countries are larger and more volatile than other sources of foreign exchange, such as official development assistance, remittances, and foreign direct investment (FDI) (Cali, 2015). These flows are subject to sharp fluctuations, which can substantially impact employment, income, and investment, contributing to domestic instability.

As shown in the World Bank report, fragile countries often rely heavily on primary commodity exports making them vulnerable to price volatility (Cali, 2015). This reliance on commodities, combined with high levels of food imports, exacerbates their susceptibility

to international price variability, which can be destabilizing and trigger conflict in fragile countries. For instance, a steep decline in global coffee prices in Colombia – the largest labour-intensive commodity exported by the country – during the 1990s led to reduced wages and heightened violence more significantly in coffee-growing regions compared to other municipalities (Dube and Vargas, 2013).

Moreover, poor trade facilitation and concentrated export markets further complicate efforts to achieve export growth and diversification, increasing reliance on imported goods and amplifying instability during trade shocks (Dube and Vargas, 2013). The World Bank Group findings show that these factors can exacerbate conflict where there are deep-rooted, historical grievances among groups, where economic inequality is high, and where government institutions are weak or corrupt (Cali, 2015).

Trade policies and activities, particularly those involving trade liberalization of highly protected industries, can inadvertently exacerbate existing conflicts or create new tensions in conflict-affected settings. For instance, following two protracted civil wars, Liberia was left with a shattered economy, widespread poverty, and damaged infrastructure, with over 300,000 people killed and over 3 million displaced (Klay Kieh, 2016).

Moreover, the Ebola epidemic plunged the country's GDP growth rate in 2014 from the projected 5.9 per cent to 2.2 per cent (World Bank, 2014). This was primarily due to the disruption of economic activities in the informal, trade-driven sector, forcing many businesses to cease operations as the movement of goods and people was severely restricted. The epidemic not only stunted economic recovery but also highlighted the precariousness of Liberia's trade-dependent economy in the face of crises.

The fragility of Liberia's post-conflict economy and its reliance on the export of a few primary products and few destination markets has also made the country vulnerable to external market forces and uneven distribution of economic benefits from trade liberalization (Liberia Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 2014).

As Liberia pursued its accession process to the WTO,⁴ it became apparent that the country's “peripheral economic system” – characterized by its reliance on raw material exports like rubber and iron while importing most manufactured goods – made it susceptible to global market fluctuations and external shocks (Klay Kieh, 2016).

Although trade liberalization can bring opportunities for foreign investment, it can also exacerbate tensions around resource distribution, environmental degradation, and land ownership, while potentially leading to the exclusion of local communities from decision-making and economic benefits (Nwanko and Ajibo, 2020). For example, the main agricultural export commodity and an important source of income for many rural communities in Liberia is natural rubber (Mulbah et al., 2020). The industry is also the main provider of formal employment in agriculture.⁵ However, post-conflict reforms aimed at liberalizing the rubber industry have been criticized as primarily geared toward attracting international companies and investors, rather than focused on smallholder farmers who make up most of the industry (Cheng, 2018; Pailey, 2024).

Despite this dominance by small and medium farms, more than half of the rural smallholder farmers live below the poverty line of US\$ 1.90 per day (World Bank, 2018). Trade liberalization policies designed to spur economic growth risk exacerbating tensions by disproportionately benefiting large investors while leaving smallholder farmers struggling to meet new standards imposed by the liberalization process.

This issue of uneven benefit distribution is equally relevant to Somalia as it navigates its WTO accession process. Like Liberia, Somalia is emerging from decades of conflict and instability, leaving its economy fragile. Moreover, Somalia's economy is similarly dependent on exporting raw materials, making it vulnerable to global market fluctuations and external shocks, which could be exacerbated by poorly managed trade liberalization policies. If the accession process is not managed with careful consideration of national dynamics, as well as ensuring inclusivity, Somalia could face similar challenges, where the benefits of trade policies are unevenly distributed, exacerbating existing socio-political tensions. On 14 July 2016, Liberia joined the WTO as its 163rd member (Johnson and Addy, 2017).

In the above-mentioned context, Liberia's WTO accession process represented more than just an economic milestone; it was an opportunity to reshape the nation's economic policies in a way that promoted peace and reconstruction. This required a careful balancing act – designing trade reforms that supported growth and integration while also being peace-responsive, ensuring that the benefits of liberalization were equitably distributed, and particularly to those who had borne the brunt of conflict and economic instability. Liberia's accession

experience offers valuable lessons for Somalia, which is similarly attempting to rebuild its economy while navigating complex social and political challenges. Notably, the former Chief Negotiator for Liberia's WTO accession, Axel M. Addy, is now supporting Somalia's WTO accession process.

Similar to Liberia, Somalia's path to WTO accession must be approached with a strong emphasis on peacebuilding. It is essential to ensure that the benefits of trade liberalization do not exacerbate existing inequalities but instead foster an inclusive economic environment that supports stability and prosperity for all segments of society. The process should be carefully designed to promote equitable growth, where the gains from increased trade contribute to reducing disparities, empowering marginalized communities, and building a foundation for lasting peace and development across the country.

Overall, the literature is inconclusive regarding the causal pattern between trade and peace. It is perhaps more helpful to think of the relationship in a complex, bidirectional way. Trade interdependence operates within broader, historical, economic, and political frameworks. In this framework, decisions and impacts related to trade and peace are a cause and consequence of each other and can have both positive and detrimental effects. Exploring these complexities can provide valuable insights into the conditions needed for trade to effectively contribute to peace and stability.

The next section will explore how the WTO accession process can have a positive impact on peace when designed and implemented with a peace-responsive approach. This involves taking into consideration the unique context of economies in fragile and conflict-affected situations, using the accession process and the integration into the multilateral trade market as a tool for joint creation between trade and peacebuilding actors.

3. “Peace responsiveness” as an approach to integrate peacebuilding into WTO accession processes

Since around half of the governments currently seeking membership in the WTO are classified as in “fragile and conflict-affected” situations by the World Bank, it would be key for the accession process to consider the specific contextual challenges they face, including institutional capacity, weak governance structures and political instability.

These conditions can both impede the ability of the acceding state to fully participate in and benefit from the integration into the global market and promote peace or exacerbate conflict. Therefore, it should be clear that the accession process cannot remain a parallel process to peacebuilding efforts but complementary if not a direct contribution to the consolidation of peace.

The 2019 OECD-DAC (Development Assistance Committee) Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus emphasizes the need for improved coherence and cooperation among development, humanitarian, and peace efforts in conflict-affected settings (OECD, 2024).

Moreover, the preamble of the International Labour Organization's Constitution states that "whereas universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice" (United Nations, 2023b:1), and the World Health Organization's Constitution states that "the health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security and is dependent upon the fullest co-operation of individuals and States" (WHO, 1946:1).

Similarly, the preamble of the Marrakesh Agreement, which established the WTO, states: "Recognizing that their relations in the field of trade and economic endeavour should be conducted with a view to raising standards of living, ensuring full employment and a large and steadily growing volume of real income and effective demand, and expanding the production of and trade in goods and services, while allowing for the optimal use of the world's resources in accordance with the objective of sustainable development, seeking both to protect and preserve the environment and to enhance the means for doing so in a manner consistent with their respective needs and concerns at different levels of economic development" (WTO, 1994:1).

Although these actors do not have peacebuilding at the core of their mandates, they recognize the interconnection between their work and the role of cooperative efforts in fostering sustainable peace. Similarly, the WTO's Trade for Peace Programme can strengthen the collaboration between trade actors and peacebuilders to ensure that the accession process and peacebuilding efforts are undertaken in tandem.

3.1 An introduction to peace responsiveness

Understanding conflict sensitivity⁶ as a technical matter has not successfully led to greater sensitivity in practice. What was initially understood as a problem of insufficient knowledge or training now appears to

be a more complex and systemic issue that cannot be "addressed by applying tools or ticking boxes" (Ernstorfer et al., 2023). This more comprehensive system and operational approach, which aims to create a fundamental shift in how international organizations operate in conflict-affected settings, has come to be known as "peace responsiveness" (Ernstorfer et al., 2023).

Peace responsiveness implies "transforming the capacity of actors operating in conflict-affected or fragile contexts to be conflict-sensitive and to contribute to peace outcomes through their technical programming" (Interpeace, 2022:1). This approach aims to strengthen the collective peace-positive impact of a collective of actors, including those who do not have peacebuilding at the core of their mandate.

The very essence of peace responsiveness is the recognition that peacebuilders cannot build peace alone, and actors across various sectors – whether in development, humanitarian aid, or trade – must integrate peacebuilding principles into their technical interventions (Interpeace, 2022). The aim of peace responsiveness is not to change the core mandate of non-peacebuilding actors, such as those in trade. Instead, the approach seeks to raise awareness of the context in which they operate and to highlight how their actions can have either positive or detrimental impacts depending on the process and the intentionality behind them.

In many ways, peace responsiveness can be understood as an approach that moves beyond conflict sensitivity and "do no harm" towards a whole-of-system approach that promotes change at all operational levels in a conflict-affected context (Ernstorfer et al., 2023). For example, in Somalia, years of drought had contributed to recurring community conflicts due to the scarcity of resources. As a result, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) partnered with Interpeace's Somalia team to improve irrigation and water management in a peace-responsive way by strengthening inter-community relations, promoting livelihoods, and enhancing local ownership of the design and implementation of the programme (Interpeace, 2023). This was intended not only to minimize the risk of any negative impacts but also to maximize the peace-positive⁷ contributions of FAO's programme.

While peace-positive contributions can take many forms, they share a common feature: the force multiplier effect they have in strengthening and consolidating conditions for sustainable peace.

3.2 The impact of charcoal trade on Somalia's economy and conflict dynamics

Somalia has a narrow economic base, and the main source of export earnings is primary commodities. This remains a real structural bottleneck for the state as it makes it highly vulnerable to various market vagaries, including environmental shocks and price fluctuations (Kimani, 2018).

One of the country's main export goods is charcoal. In Somalia, the increase in demand for charcoal has resulted in the charcoal trade becoming a lucrative income source for armed groups, including Al-Shabaab (Dahir, 2023). For instance, a substantial share of Al-Shabaab's source of income derives from collecting "road tax" on trucks with charcoal passing through their controlled territory (Dahir, 2023). The thriving charcoal trade is also a major cause of deforestation, leading to a rise in tensions between rural inhabitants whose livelihoods have been affected by deforestation and woodcutters (Kimani, 2018).

At the same time, it is also important to mention that the trading of charcoal continues to provide many rural parts of the population with stable incomes (Connolly-Boutin and Smit, 2016). The state currently lacks a specific and robust legal framework regulating the charcoal trade (Dahir, 2023). The lack of regulatory mechanisms has arguably not only exacerbated the illegal charcoal trade volume but also fuelled tensions, further compounding the issue.

As many neighbouring economies depend on Somali charcoal as a source of energy, they often turn a blind eye to it being a significant revenue stream for Al-Shabaab. However, as the charcoal trade has a detrimental impact on the environment, the formalization of this industry is an unsustainable choice as the continued deforestation of the country would leave it increasingly vulnerable to flooding, drought, and famine, thereby increasing the risk of conflict in the future (Burke et al., 2015). In the case of Somalia, a study by Maystadt and Ecker (2014) found that an increase in drought intensity and duration increases the likelihood of conflict by 62 per cent.

Therefore, the accession process must take into consideration the potential impact of unsustainable trade practices on resource depletion, environmental degradation, and increased competition for scarce resources as well as the potential tensions that could arise as people are losing jobs and need to find new ways to earn a living as a result of a shrinking charcoal industry.

If conducted in a peace-responsive manner, Somalia's WTO accession process presents an important

opportunity to develop a robust legal framework. This framework should address and mitigate these factors, requiring trade actors to consider the impact of their activities, stabilize rural economies that depend on the charcoal trade, and curb illicit revenue streams.

Furthermore, the WTO should work closely with the Somalia Federal Government along with the Federal Member States to address the socio-economic impacts of reducing the charcoal trade to avoid exacerbating vulnerabilities and tensions. This collaboration should include the development and implementation of programmes that provide alternative livelihoods for those affected by the decline in the charcoal trade.

Governance structures should also be strengthened to ensure natural resource management practices are both socially equitable and environmentally sound. Accountable and transparent governance structures will be essential to restoring trust and fostering cooperation among stakeholders, including local communities heavily dependent on the informal economy.

Collaboration with peacebuilding actors would provide the technical expertise needed to assist the WTO and the Somali government in navigating societal dynamics, restoring trust among various stakeholders, and ensuring that the accession process remains inclusive and locally led (Interpeace, 2023). By integrating peacebuilding practices, such as a peace-responsive approach, the accession process can contribute not only to economic growth but also to the broader goal of long-term peace and stability in Somalia.

3.3 A multi-stakeholder accession process

Particularly in FCS, politics and business are strongly intertwined as private sector actors use politics to push their economic interests while economic assets are used by political actors to consolidate their influence (Sguaitamatti et al., 2010). The overlap of economics and politics is commonly linked to the informal economy in conflict regions (Sguaitamatti et al., 2010).

While the informal economy typically serves as a critical source of livelihood for many people, it is also often intertwined with conflict economies and political power dynamics. Somalia offers an example of the informal economy's dual role as both a challenge and a critical resource. For instance, the economy in Somalia is largely dominated by the informal sector, with the majority of the population engaging in small-scale businesses (Kimani, 2018). Due to its long civil war, the informal sector in Somalia has largely filled

the void of government institutions, including services such as basic utilities, security, health, and education (Abdinoor, 2022).

In her statement addressing Somalia's WTO membership application, then Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Somalia in Geneva, Faduma Abdulahi Mohamud, highlighted that the private sector has become the "main driver of the country's economy" (WTO, 2017c). Somalia's entrepreneurial private sector community should be understood as one of the country's greatest assets and an important partner for both the government and the WTO. For instance, through the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) for Trade-Related Assistance for the Least Developed Countries, the Somalia Ministry of Commerce and Industry, together with partners, has established a National Trade Facilitation Committee to address issues such as standardization, with the aim "that in another five years, small businesses will increase their regional and international markets. It will go a long way to moving out of insecurity" (EIF, 2023).

Another important actor is the Somali diaspora. Eighty per cent of the start-up capital for small and medium enterprises is provided by the Somali diaspora, and the community has helped rebuild the capacity of some of Somalia's key national institutions (Kimani, 2018; WTO, 2017c). Work conducted by Interpeace (then the War-torn Societies Project) shows that there is a tendency to overlook "the significance of economic ties with nationals that emigrated abroad" (Carbonnier, 1998:26).

As these two communities are familiar with both the economic and political elites, they can help bridge the gap between economic and political actors. They can also contribute their vital expertise and insight, helping to integrate economic reforms with political realities. In tandem, peacebuilders can engage with these actors to better comprehend and respond to the complex challenges of post-conflict rebuilding (War-torn Societies Project, 1998). In this regard, a peace-responsive approach deliberately builds on and strengthens local capacities and places these needs at the core of programme design and implementation (Interpeace, 2021).

As a result of weak public institutions that regulate the economy, the Somali informal sector has largely been outside government control (Carbonnier, 1998:26). In some cases, this has created economic opportunities for certain actors, giving them a vested interest in maintaining and sustaining this situation, at the expense of the majority of the population (Carbonnier, 1998). Therefore, it is important that the accession process

takes into consideration the various actors present in a given conflict setting and their motivation and interests in supporting a potential accession process.

Contextual analysis here is vital to an understanding of the pre-war and war economy and local and international actors' interests and vulnerabilities in the conflict zone (Sguaitamatti et al., 2010). However, as the economic advantages of WTO membership are not immediate, the process of engaging all stakeholders from the outset might be challenging. In the case of Somalia, securing the necessary buy-in from domestic lawmakers and convincing them to accept short-term costs such as a loss of competitiveness and jobs might become a challenge. Therefore, briefing and sensitizing stakeholders on the different stages of the process and building their technical knowledge and expertise is vital to ensure timely buy-in, support, and understanding of the process.

Furthermore, the establishment of an inter-ministerial task force to ensure coherent approaches across all ministries and departments, and with the private sector, could play an important role in providing feedback on concessions and flagging potential red lines. Hence, economic policies must be integrated with on-the-ground realities to ensure an inclusive and people-centred approach, and to familiarize the different stakeholders with the potential long-term benefits of WTO membership.

3.4 A bankable investment in peace

As Somalia is rebuilding its economy, the WTO accession process offers an invaluable opportunity to develop and implement comprehensive economic policies that can significantly contribute to the nation's stability and growth (World Bank, 2024c). Aligning its economic frameworks with WTO international standards can foster an environment conducive to investment and trade. Interpeace's Finance for Peace (F4P) initiative provides a valuable model in this context. F4P "seeks to systemically change how private and public investment supports peace in developing and fragile contexts. It aims to create networked approaches that can co-develop market frameworks, standards, political support networks, partnerships and knowledge required to scale up 'peace finance' – investments that intentionally seek to improve conditions for peace."⁸

Conflict often disrupts both trade and capital flows, but F4P's study in northern Kenya highlights that "peace-responsive investments can help to address drivers of conflict, reduce underlying causes, and strengthen social cohesion, which ultimately will help

to reduce risk, make the investments more sustainable and increase the bankability,⁹ even if it slightly increases costs in early stages" (Interpeace, 2024:3). Key lessons from F4P's work demonstrate that for investments to be profitable and sustainable, they must address conflict drivers, engage key conflict actors, and adopt a participatory approach to investment activities that tailors investment to the unique needs and realities of each community (Interpeace, 2024). F4P adopts a peace-responsive approach to ensure that investments are intentionally designed to improve conditions for peace.

Public-private investments and partnerships can create a cycle of stability, supporting self-reliance, and building sustainable peace. For instance, Somalia's private sector can work together with the WTO and the Somali government to develop investment opportunities that promote stability, self-reliance, and sustainable peace. This can involve modernizing key sectors such as agriculture and fisheries, where livestock is a significant export commodity, as modernized farming and meat exports are highly bankable and can reduce resource-based conflicts over livestock while strengthening inter-communal relations (Interpeace, 2024).

Furthermore, Somalia's heavy reliance on primary commodity exports makes the country especially vulnerable to price volatility (Cali, 2015). The accession process could explore how to diversify the economy beyond primary commodity exports. This reliance on commodities, combined with high levels of food imports, exacerbates the country's susceptibility to international price variability, which can be destabilizing and trigger conflict in fragile countries.

Policies that buffer or slow down the transmission of international price changes can help mitigate the impact on domestic markets (Cali, 2015). This is particularly important in the case of essential commodities like food, fertilizers, and fuel. For example, during periods of global price volatility, mechanisms such as price controls or subsidies could protect vulnerable populations from sudden price hikes, reducing the potential for social unrest and conflict. These conditions underscore the importance of understanding the local context when assessing the potential impact of trade shocks in fragile settings.

Moreover, effective governance – characterized by transparency and accountability – is important in helping to mitigate the adverse effects of trade shocks. Beyond agriculture, the process should look at how peace-responsive investments can foster economic diversification, help to address drivers of conflict,

reduce underlying causes, and strengthen social cohesion.

Lastly, and as pointed out by the Chair of the Working Party on the Accession of Somalia, Ambassador Nina Tornberg of Sweden, "the start of the WTO accession process can further enhance confidence, especially from businesses".¹⁰ In this regard, Somalia's accession process, underpinned by WTO principles such as non-discrimination, transparency, and fair competition, can signal a commitment to both economic reform and adherence to international standards, which can significantly help attract foreign direct investment (FDI).

4. Conclusion

In a post-conflict environment, rebuilding approaches tend to be reactive and *ad hoc* "as people become entangled in the many urgent problems and tend to lose sight of the longer-term issues" (Dadush and Osakwe, 2015; Farah et al., 1998:13). The challenge is to understand the complex linkages between the political, economic, and social spheres and the interrelationships between different actors at different levels of society and their policies (Farah et al., 1998).

Such analysis is crucial to make sound, timely decisions and to take advantage of these actors' different comparative advantages and complementarities. In turn, this approach can foster a more peace-responsive, inclusive, and people-centred accession process, ensuring that the policies crafted are more attuned to the needs and realities of the government and its communities. The world trading system does not operate in a vacuum. Similarly, the WTO accession process is a "360-degree process, one that cannot be neatly compartmentalized into economic or legal aspects on the one hand and international relations on the other" (Farah et al., 1998:13).

Effective integration of trade and peacebuilding requires strong cooperation between peacebuilders and trade actors. While this collaboration might be at times challenging due to different mandates, operational approaches, and priorities, a peace-responsive approach can help bridge these gaps by providing invaluable insights into how trade can support broader peacebuilding efforts.

The WTO accession process is a transformative one and the way this process is undertaken will be critical for ongoing national peace efforts. The accession process should not be viewed solely as a technical procedure; rather, it must be an inclusive socio-economic and political dialogue. This dialogue should involve continuous engagement between the population

and the government, fostering a robust interaction that supports the accession efforts. By doing so, the process can effectively strengthen state-society relations and enhance international relations, ensuring a comprehensive and integrated approach to accession will provide the infrastructure for lasting peace.

The accession process presents an opportunity to reinforce and strengthen governance and institutional capacities, thereby ensuring that economic activities are undertaken within a regulated, accountable, and transparent framework. This is particularly important in Somalia, where the informal economy has had a dual role. By formalizing and regulating the country's economic activities, accession efforts can help mitigate risks associated with unregulated markets, such as exploitation and the financing of armed groups.

Lastly, and most importantly, the peace-responsive accession process will provide a platform for inclusive dialogue and collaboration between local communities, the entrepreneurial private sector, the WTO, and the acceding government. Adopting a multi-stakeholder approach ensures that people feel a greater sense of ownership and participation in the country's economic recovery and its accession efforts, thereby proactively contributing to strengthening trust in a country that is emerging from decades of conflict. This involves ensuring that the design and implementation of the process engages in a people-centred approach in the design of trade systems within and among states. Communities are also the ones who should be benefitting the most from the improved governance and economic opportunities that a peace-responsive accession process can bring.

By understanding trade as an opportunity and applying intentional peace-responsive strategies, it is possible to turn the accession process into an important instrument or mechanism promoting economic growth, fostering cooperation, and ultimately, contributing to sustainable peace. This is especially evident in Somalia, where the accession efforts must be closely aligned with peacebuilding priorities.

WTO accession represents a significant step towards consolidating peace in Somalia, as the country can use the process as a lever for developing a more reliable, stable, and responsive governance system, facilitating its entry into global markets. In this regard, the WTO's Trade for Peace Programme can provide a structured approach to ensuring that the accession efforts contribute positively to peacebuilding.

In a similar vein, the g7+ group, a coalition of countries affected by conflict and fragility along with the g7+ WTO Accessions Group offer valuable lessons and recommendations from the perspective of their shared experiences in navigating post-conflict recovery, the integration of post-conflict and fragile economies into the multilateral trading system, and ensuring that their accession processes reflect their specific needs and aspirations for peace (WTO, 2017c).

However, not only governments but also their communities are at the heart of this transformative journey. That must be at the forefront in both designing and implementing a trade for peace agenda. Their involvement is not just a matter of principle or procedural necessity but a foundational element for ensuring that the accession process is peace-responsive, inclusive, and supportive of a sustainable path to peace.

Bibliography

- Abdinoor, H.S. (2022), "The Booming Informal Economy in Somalia", Laasfort Consulting. Available at <https://laasfort.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Booming-economy-1.pdf>.
- Anastasiou, H. (2007), "The EU as a Peace Building System: Deconstructing Nationalism in an Era of Globalization", *International Journal of Peace Studies*, 12(2): 32. Available at <https://web.pdx.edu/~harrya/Publications/Journal%20Articles/HA%20EU%20as%20Peace%20System%20IIPS.pdf>.
- Arslanalp, S. et al. (2024), "Red Sea Attacks Disrupt Global Trade," *IMF Blog*, 7 March. Available at <https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2024/03/07/Red-Sea-Attacks-Disrupt-Global-Trade>.
- Arveladze, G. and Smeets, M. (2017), "Georgia's Post-Accession Structural Reform Challenges", *WTO Staff Working Paper* No. ERSD-2017-10, Geneva: World Trade Organization. Available at <https://www.wto-ilibrary.org/content/papers/25189808/213/read>.
- Barbieri, K. (1996), "Economic Interdependence: A Path to Peace or a Source of Interstate Conflict?", *Journal of Peace Research*, 33(1): 29-49.
- Barbieri, K. and Levy, J. S. (1999), "Sleeping with the Enemy: The Impact of War on Trade," *Journal of Peace Research*, 36(4): 464.
- Barbieri, K. (2002), "The Liberal Illusion: Does Trade Promote Peace?" Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Blainey, G. (1973), "The Causes of War", New York: Free Press, Chapter 2.
- Bourke, J. (1942), "Kant's Doctrine of 'Perpetual Peace'", *Philosophy*, 17(68): 324-333. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 333.
- Burke, M., Hsiang, S.M. and Miguel, E. (2015), "Global Non-linear Effect of Temperature on Economic Production", *Nature*, 527: 235-239.
- Cali, M. (2015), "Trading Away from Conflict: Using Trade to Increase Resilience in Fragile States", June. Washington, DC: World Bank. Available at <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/8729b1bf-42a0-568b-a4f0-f70d154a6710/content>.
- Carbonnier, G. (1998), "Conflict, Postwar Rebuilding and the Economy: A Critical Review of the Literature", *WSP Occasional Paper* No. 2, March, p. 26. Available at <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/38682/WS-OP%2002.pdf>.
- Cheng, C. (2018), "Rubber", in Cheng, C., "Extralegal Groups in Post-Conflict Liberia: How Trade Makes the State", Oxford: Oxford Academic.

- Connolly-Boutin, L. and Smit, B. (2016), "Climate Change, Food Security, and Livelihoods in Sub-Saharan Africa", *Regional Environmental Change*, 1(1): 385–399.
- Copeland, D.C. (1996), "Economic Interdependence and War: A Theory of Trade Expectations", *International Security*, 20(4): 5–41.
- Dadush, U. and Osakwe, C. (2015), "WTO Accessions and Trade Multilateralism: Case Studies and Lessons for the WTO at Twenty", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 13.
- Dahir, I.M.S. (2023), "Fueling the Flames: How Armed Conflicts and Climate Change Shape the Charcoal Trade in Somalia", Policy Brief, School of Public Policy, Chiang Mai University. Available at <https://spp.cmu.ac.th/fueling-the-flames-how-armed-conflicts-and-climate-change-shape-the-charcoal-trade-in-somalia/>.
- Dos Santos, T. (1970), "The Structure of Dependence," *The American Economic Review*, 60(2): 231–236.
- Dube, O. and Vargas, J.F. (2013), "Commodity Price Shocks and Civil Conflict: Evidence from Colombia," *Review of Economic Studies*, 80(4): 1385–1421. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) (2023), *A conflict zone's tentative steps towards recovery through trade for peace*. Trade4Dev News. Available at <https://enhancedif.org/en/impact-story/conflict-zones-tentative-steps-towards-recovery-through-trade-peace>.
- Ernstorfer, A., Stockman, A.-S., and de Weijer, F. (2023), "Peace Responsiveness: A Paradigm Shift to Deliver on Conflict Sensitivity and Sustaining Peace," *Development in Practice*, 33(5): 3.
- Farah, A.Y., Bihi, A.J., Ahmed, A.A., Abdulle, A.H.M. and Farah, A.A. (1998), *Rebuilding Somalia: Issues and Possibilities for Puntland*, War-torn Societies Project, February.
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (2015), *Smallholders and Family Farms in Georgia: Country Study Report 2019*, Budapest: FAO.
- Gasiorowski, M. and Polachek, S.W. (1982), "Conflict and Interdependence: East-West Trade and Linkages in the Era of Detente", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 26(4): 709–729.
- Gowa, J. and Hicks, R. (2013), "Politics, Institutions, and Trade: Lessons of the Interwar Era," *International Organization*, 67(3): 462.
- Hegre, H. et al. (2010), "Trade Does Promote Peace: New Simultaneous Estimates of the Reciprocal Effects of Trade and Conflict," *Journal of Peace Research*, 47(6): 763–774.
- Hiller, P. (2015), "Re-examining the Connection Between Peace, Conflict and Trade: An Assessment Through the Lens of Peace and Conflict Science," *War Prevention Initiative*.
- Institute for Economics & Peace (2023), *Global Peace Index 2023: Measuring Peace in a Complex World*, June, p. 3. Sydney: Institute for Economics & Peace. Available at <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/GPI-2023-Web.pdf>.
- International Monetary Fund, External Relations Dept. (2001), "The Realities of Economic Interdependence: Its Benefits and Frustrations," *IMF Economic Review*, 21(1). Available at <https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/journals/022/0021/001/article-A009-en.xml>.
- Interpeace (2021), *Peace Responsiveness: Delivering on the Promise of Sustaining Peace and the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus*, Interpeace. Available at <https://www.interpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/2021-PR-Briefing-Note-Sep-v7-FINAL-1.pdf>.
- Interpeace (2022), *Peace Responsiveness: Delivering on the Promise of Sustaining Peace and the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus – Briefing Note*, Geneva: Interpeace, January, p. 1.
- Interpeace (2023), *Peace Responsiveness in Practice: FAO Irrigation & Water Management Projects Contributing to Peace in Somalia*, May. Available at <https://www.interpeace.org/resource/peace-responsiveness-in-practice-fao-irrigation-water-management-projects-contributing-to-peace-in-somalia/>.
- Interpeace (2024), *Entry-Points for Peace-Positive Investments in Northern Kenya's Frontier Markets: Summary of Findings and Recommendations*, Finance for Peace, July, p. 3. Available at https://www.financeforpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Kenya-summary-document_FINAL.pdf.
- Johnson, E. and Addy, A. (2017), "Accession of Liberia: An Agenda for Transformation", *Trade Multilateralism in the 21st Century*, World Trade Organization. Available at <https://www.wto-ilibrary.org/content/books/9789287046789s009-c001>.
- Kavanagh, M. (2024), "Congo Rebels Block Trade Routes Threatening Supply of Key Metal", *Bloomberg*, 15 March. Available at <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-03-15/congo-rebels-block-trade-routes-threatening-supply-of-key-metal>.
- Kimani, S. (2018), *2018 African Economic Outlook, Somalia Country Note*, African Development Bank. Available at https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Generic-Documents/country_notes/Somalia_country_note.pdf.
- Klay Kieh, G. (2016), "Civilians and Civil Wars in Africa: The Cases of Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire", *Peace Research*, 48(1/2), p. 223.
- Lee, J.-W. and Pyun, J.H. (2016), "Does Trade Integration Contribute to Peace?" *Review of Development Economics*, 20: 327–344.
- Liberia Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Public Affairs (2014), *Liberia National Trade Policy 2014–2019*, Monrovia: Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
- Maystadt, J.-F. and Ecker, O. (2014), "Extreme Weather and Civil War: Does Drought Fuel Conflict in Somalia through Livestock Price Shocks?", *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 96(4): 1157–1182. Available at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1093/ajae/aau010>.
- Mulbah, F.F.B., Ritho, C. and Mburu, J. (2020), "Do transaction costs influence smallholder rubber farmers' choice of selling outlets? Evidence from Liberia", *Development in Practice*, 31(1):69–80. Available at <https://doi-org.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/10.1080/09614524.2020.1789068>.
- Nwankwo C.M., Ajibo C.C. (2020), Liberalizing Regional Trade Regimes Through AfCFTA: Challenges and Opportunities. *Journal of African Law*, 64(3):297–318, doi:10.1017/S0021855320000194. Available at <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-african-law/article/abs/liberalizing-regional-trade-regimes-through-afcfta-challenges-and-opportunities/C55D4835A9E0B367DEB46776E8DAB6DC>.
- Oneal, J.R., Oneal, F.H., Maoz, Z. and Russett, B. (1996), "The Liberal Peace: Interdependence, Democracy, and International Conflict, 1950–85", *Journal of Peace Research*, 33(1): 11–28, Sage Publications, p. 13.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2024), *DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus*, OECD/LEGAL/5019.
- Pailey, R. (2024), "Stopping Firestone and Starting a Citizen 'Revolution from Below': Reflections on the Enduring Exploitation of Liberian Land and Labour", *Third World Quarterly* (45): 61–78, 10.1080/01436597.2023.2240729.
- Polachek, S.W. (1980), "Conflict and Trade," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 24(1): 55–78.
- Sayrs, L. (1979), "Trade and Conflict Revisited: Do Politics Matter?", *International Interactions*, 15: 155–175.
- Sguaitamatti, D., Iff, A., Alluri, R.M. and Mason, S.J.A. (2010), *Peace Mediation Essentials: Business Actors in Mediation Processes, Mediation Support Project*, swisspeace / Center for Security Studies, ETH Zurich. Available at <https://css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-security-studies/pdfs/Peace-Mediation-Essentials-Business-Actors.pdf>.
- Tanious, M.E. (2019), "The Impact of Economic Interdependence on the Probability of Conflict Between States", *Review of Economics and Political Science*, 4(1): 38–53.
- United Nations (2023a), *Security Council Debates on Investing in People to Enhance Resilience Against Complex Challenges*, New York: UN Press. Available at <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15184.doc.htm>.
- United Nations (2023b), The ILO and the UN Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace, p. 1.
- United Nations (2024), *Wars in Gaza, Ukraine Dominate Security Council's 2023 Agenda, as Use of Veto Proliferates, Organ's Ability to Act Hampered*, New York: United Nations. Available at <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15558.doc.htm>.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2024), "Sudan One Year of Conflict: Key Facts and Figures," 15 April. Available at <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/sudan/sudan-one-year-conflict-key-facts-and-figures-15-april-2024>.

Wagner, R.H. (2000), "Economic Interdependence, Bargaining Power, and Political Influence," *International Organization*, 54(4): 713-732. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

War-torn Societies Project (1998), *Northeast Somalia National Report: North Mudug Region*, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, Programme for Strategic and International Security Studies, February. Available at <https://www.ircwash.org/sites/default/files/814-SO98-14772.pdf>.

World Bank (2014), *Update on the economic impact of the 2014 Ebola epidemic on Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea*, December. Available at <https://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/Economic%20Impact%20Ebola%20Update%202%20Dec%202014.pdf>.

World Bank (2018), *From Growth to Development: Priorities for Sustainably Reducing Poverty and Achieving Middle-Income Status by 2030*, Washington, DC: World Bank.

World Bank (2024a), "List of Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations," 28 June, Washington, DC: World Bank. Available at <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/harmonized-list-of-fragile-situations>.

World Bank (2024b), "Overview of Fragility, Conflict, and Violence," 24 May, Washington, DC: World Bank. Available at <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/overview#1>.

World Bank (2024c), *Livelihoods Under Threat: Myanmar Economic Monitor*, June, p. 17. Available at <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/4a3168f50b0e4e216993c9aa6ab3fe25-0070012024/original/MEM-JUNE-2024-Livelihoods-under-Threat.pdf>.

World Health Organization (1946), *Constitution of the World Health Organization*, p. 1. Available at <https://apps.who.int/gb/bd/PDF/bd47/EN/constitution-en.pdf?ua=1>.

World Trade Organization (WTO) (1994), *Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization*, Marrakesh: WTO. Available at https://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/04-wto_e.htm.

World Trade Organization (2017a), "Launch of the g7+ WTO Accessions Group", WTO Press Release. Available at https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/mc11g7group_e.htm.

World Trade Organization (WTO) (2017b), *Annual Report 2017: Chapter 3*, Geneva: WTO, pp. 25-26. Available at https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/anrep_e/anrep17_chap3_e.pdf.

World Trade Organization (WTO) (2017c), *Minutes of the General Council Meeting*, WT/GC/M165, p. 5. Available at <https://docs.wto.org/dol2fe/Pages/SS/directdoc.aspx?filename=q:/WT/GC/M165.pdf&Open=True>.

World Trade Organization (WTO) (2021), "DDG Zhang Stresses Role of Trade in Advancing Development and Facilitating Peace," *WTO News*, 10 November. Geneva: WTO. Available at https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news21_e/ddgz_10nov21_e.htm.

World Trade Organization (WTO) (2023a), *World Trade Report 2023: Re-Globalization for a Secure, Inclusive and Sustainable Future*, Geneva: WTO.

World Trade Organization (WTO) (2024a), "Comoros and Timor-Leste Submit WTO Accession Instruments, Accept Fisheries Subsidies Agreement," *WTO News*, 22 July. Available at https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news24_e/acc_22jul24_e.htm.

World Trade Organization (WTO) (2024b), "Working Party Chair Meets Somalia President to Discuss WTO Accession, Trade for Peace," *WTO News*, 14 June. Available at https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news24_e/acc_14jun24_e.htm.

World Trade Organization (WTO) (2023b), "Trade Policy Review, Liberia," *WTO Official document no. WT/TPR/S/441*. Available at https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tptr_e/s441_e.pdf.

Xiang, J., Xu, X., and Keteku, G. (2007), "Power: The Missing Link in the Trade Conflict Relationship," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 51(4): 646-663.

Endnotes

- 1 Itonde Kakoma is President and CEO of Interpeace in Geneva (Kakoma@interpeace.org), Ahmed Abdullahi is Country Representative of Somalia and Liaison to the African Union at Interpeace in Mogadishu (Abdullahi@interpeace.org), and Hannah Ajelet Eriksen is Policy Support Officer at Interpeace in Geneva (Eriksen@interpeace.org).
- 2 Following the successful accession of Afghanistan on 29 July 2016 as WTO's 164th member state, Comoros and Timor-Leste acceded in August 2024, bringing the total WTO membership up to 166.
- 3 Interpeace is an international peacebuilding organization with 30 years of experience working in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Europe, and Latin America.
- 4 See, in particular, the chapter in this volume on Liberia by Addy.
- 5 WTO document WT/TPR/S/441. Available at https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tptr_e/s441_e.pdf.
- 6 Conflict sensitivity refers to the ability of an organization to: Understand the context in which it is operating, particularly

intergroup relations; Understand the interactions between its interventions and the context/group relations; and Act upon the understanding of these interactions, to avoid negative impacts and maximize positive impacts. For more information, see Koenraad Van Brabant, "What is Peacebuilding? Do No Harm, Conflict-Sensitivity and Peacebuilding", Interpeace, 2010.

- 7 As explored earlier, positive peace can be defined in several ways. To take just one example, the Institute for Economics and Peace defines it as creating "an optimal environment for human potential to flourish" as well as "the attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies". See Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), *Positive Peace Report 2022*, IEP, Sydney, January 2022, p.2 and p.4.
- 8 See <https://www.interpeace.org/finance-for-peace/>.
- 9 Bankability refers to the likelihood that an investment will be profitable.
- 10 See "Working Party Chair meets Somalia President to discuss WTO accession, Trade for Peace", *WTO News*, 14 June 2024. Available at https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news24_e/acc_14jun24_e.htm.