

One Belt One Road and Transformations in Horn of Africa: Implications for Green Development

Abstract

The Horn of Africa has been a strategic geopolitical region for many centuries. Its geographic location on the Red Sea trade route, and its status as a gateway for Africa via inland trade routes, make it of strategic importance for Western and Eastern powers, as well as its neighbors. It is also a region that is known for its volatile political history. Since the Ethiopia-Eritrea war of 1998 and the disintegration of the Somali state (among other events), the Horn of Africa has been mostly under hostile conditions until recently. At the same time, several countries have established military bases in Djibouti, and Ethiopia now hosts several important diplomatic missions, including the African Union, and UNECA. Now, following the 2018 political change in Ethiopia, the region is revitalizing its diplomatic relations and integration, and maintaining development ties such as on infrastructure. China is a key partner in to the regional transformation, especially for infrastructure. China's Belt and Road Initiative is expected to have a significant role in Ethiopia's efforts to ensure low carbon economy – though it is unclear whether the impacts will align with Ethiopia's low carbon goals. This paper, using a political-economy perspective, is intended to explore the regional transformation, and what implications the Belt and Road would have to the low carbon economic transition in the region. It would be carried out with data from secondary sources and interviews with regional offices as well as experts. The outcome of the study is expected to add value to the literature on regional political economy of Africa, and of low carbon transitions in developing countries.

Key Words: Horn-Africa; Region; Political Economy; Belt and Road; Green Transition

About the Presenter

Mr Mathias is an Ethiopian PhD student in Public Policy at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong. Before joining HKUST, he served in different career posts including teaching in college in his country from 2008 to 2017. Mathias has master's in public management from Addis Ababa University (2011) and in Development Studies from Erasmus University Rotterdam (2015). Now, he is pursuing a PhD program in public policy with main research focus on green economy policy and transition pathways in Ethiopia.