Somalia and Ethiopia have concluded on 20 June a bilateral trade agreement allowing Somalia to export fish to Ethiopia and Ethiopia to export khat to Somalia. A first consignment of 5,000 tons of fish was shipped from Somalia on the same date to Ethiopia. The trade pact signed between Somalia and Ethiopia is expected to increase exchanges in these commodities and to boost ties between the two Horn of Africa nations.

In March 2020, the government of Somalia banned flights from Kenya transporting khat (where it is commonly known as “miraa”), as part of its efforts to contain coronavirus, with the motivation that khat consumption makes social distancing impossible, due to the recreational and social nature of this shrub, whose leaves are chewed for stimulant and euphoric effects. Khat is part of some social traditions in parts of the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia and Yemen, and in Eastern Africa, such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti, Eritrea and Somalia, where its consumption is legal.

Prior to the ban, Kenya used to export to Somalia daily up to 50 tons of khat, valued at $2.5 million. In August 2020 Somalia imposed to Kenya stringent conditions for the lifting of the ban, namely: 1) to treat Somalia as an equal; 2) to desist from interfering with Somalia’s internal affairs; 3) to apologise for violating Somalia airspace; 4) to allow goods from Somalia including fish (for which a cross-border trade ban has been imposed by Kenya since June 2019), as well as rice, sugar, honey, meat and milk; and 5) to abolish a Directive that obliges flights from Somalia to make a stopover in Wajir, Kenya for mandatory inspection.