

ERITREAN DELEGATION PARTICIPATES AT AU SUMMIT

An Eritrean delegation headed by Ambassador Araya Desta, Eritrea's Permanent Representative to the African Union (AU) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), has participated at the 30th AU Summit that was held from 15 to 29 January in Addis Ababa under the theme "Winning the Fight Against Corruption: Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation".

The delegation delivered a speech highlighting Eritrea's stance on a number of issues. On the sidelines

of the summit, the delegation also met with representatives of different countries and exchanged views on issues of mutual interest and strengthening bilateral relations.

The Eritrean delegation submitted a proposal noting that the Union be free from dependence on external financial assistance that exposes it to unwarranted interference, and the budget to be fully funded by the contribution of member states.

The report of the African



Commission on Human and People's Rights pointed out that Eritrea has submitted a report on the implementation of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. The delegation also reaffirmed that Eritrea considers the promotion and protection of human rights as a priority of priorities, and that the Government of Eritrea

is committed to strengthening constructive engagement with the Commission.

The Summit adopted a resolution on the establishment of a common African Air Transport Market, the launching of an African Continental Free Trade Area, free movement of people within Africa, election of a

10-member states to serve a two-year term as members of the Peace and Security Council of the Union, and the holding of an AU Summit once a year and others.

The Summit elected Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi as Chairman of the African Union for 2019.

COMMENDABLE PROGRESS IN SUSTAINABLE DEV'T GOALS

The Northern Red Sea region Health Ministry branch disclosed that commendable progress has been registered in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals.

According to reports, the Government is making huge investment to ensure equitable expansion of health facilities and healthcare services and that praiseworthy achievements have been registered in preventing and controlling diseases and ensuring the health of citizens.

Noting that awareness campaigns and seminars are significantly contributing in bringing behavioral change among the society, the Head of the Ministry of Health branch in the region, Dr. Yohannes Tekeste, called for integrated and future oriented effort by identifying the weaknesses and strengths.

Pointing out that the construction of the health center in Ela Babu, Adobha sub zone, is being finalized, Dr. Yohannes stated that new

ambulances are allocated to health centers in Bada and Nakfa sub zones and that effort is being made to meet the lack of health practitioners in the region.

The Minister of Health, Ms. Amina Nur-Husien, also underlined that commendable achievements have been registered in the health sector through the active participation of the society and stakeholders. She added that seminars and workshops aimed at increasing the awareness of the society, construction of infrastructure, human resource development and supply of adequate medicine are the priority tasks for 2018.

The participants conducted extensive discussion on the reports presented on pre and natal maternity services, range of vaccination programs, community based environmental sanitation, prevention and controlling of communicable and non-communicable diseases, prevention of contagious diseases and others.

LAND ALLOTMENT IN LAGUEN ADMINISTRATIVE AREA

Land allotment for the construction of residential houses has been distributed to 583 nationals including 211 females in Laguen Administrative area, Gala Nefhi sub-zone in the Central region.

The Administrator of the sub-zone, Mr. Mehari Yohannes, said that there are a number of residents eligible for land distribution for the construction of residential houses.

The local inhabitants of the Administrative area expressed appreciation for the launching of the program.

It is to be recalled that land distribution for the construction of residential houses took effect in Embeito and Adomzemat villages, Gala Nefhi sub-zone.

DEVELOPMENT OF FRESH WATER FISH FARMING



A workshop with a view to assessing the progress registered in fresh water fish farming at big and small dams in Gash Barka region has been conducted in Barentu.

Stating that fresh water fish farming and harvest in the region began with the construction of dams, Mr. Abubeker Osman, Director General of Agriculture and Land, explained that with substantial

amount of water accumulated there is the possibility of harvesting bountiful fish and play due role in efforts to ensure food security.

Mr. Makonnen Girmai, Head of the Marine Resources Ministry branch, said that improved fish farming was initiated as pilot project in the dams of Gerset, Fanco-Rawi, Fanco-Tsimu'e, Bademit, Kerkebet and Megel respectively.

Experts from the branch office of the Ministry of Marine Resources presented research papers on the significance of developing fresh water fish farming in the country as well as the management of fish resources.

The Governor of Gash Barka region, Mr. Fissehaye Haile, called for concerted effort to develop fresh water fish farming in all the major and small dams in the region.



Development

The Ministry of Agriculture – Annual Meeting

Makda Solomon

The Ministry of Agriculture has held its annual meeting on 25th and 26th January at its Head Quarter in Asmara, where reports of the six regions and the divisions and departments of the ministry were presented.

The reports of the six regions included topics on rainfall, protection of wild life and how they are progressing, crop production, vegetable and fruit production, irrigation, water and soil conservation, fertility of oil seed, livestock raising and production, dairy, poultry, and honey production as well as the impact of pesticides on crops production. The presentations were evaluated in comparison with the previous year's registered outcomes.

The Southern region, one of the most fertile land in Eritrea, reported low harvest in 2017 due to the low amount of rain. Around 154, 976 hectares of land was cultivated and a total of 770,340 quintal of crops (658, 481 quintal cereals and 98,833 oil seeds) was harvested in 2017. However, the productivity was lowered by 52% from that of 2016. In cooperation with the African Development Bank the Ministry of Agriculture works on the construction of terraces, dams and reservoir as well as improving production of crops and on increasing milk

production.

The Central region reported that it annually conducts several activity involving students and institutions. The presentations were particularly on irrigation, terracing (increased by 654 % in 2017) and reservoirs making. The Central region won the Duma Award for the best performance on Sustainable Land Management (SLM). The region also increased vaccination services by 188.7% and increased milk production by 6.8 % from that of 2016. However, land cultivation decreased by 9.2% as crop and cereal production declined by 41.4% due to low amount of rain.

The Annual report of MoA continued with one of the two hottest regions with lowest rainfall. In this region the biggest achievements were on fruit and vegetable production. In 2017, 6,006 quintal of vegetables were harvested from 55 hectares and a 601.4 % increase of fruit production was registered helped



Northern Red Sea did register encouraging results. Despite the warm climate and with low rainfall in the previous year, a total of 26,181 hectares of land was cultivated registering a 60% increase of sorghum harvest. In 2017 alone honey production

achievements of the region include, good productivity of honey and the construction of 17,147 m3 terrace and check dams in Geleb, Elabered and Hamelmalo improve drip irrigation and water and soil conservation.

The region was also working towards the "Minimum Integrated Household Agriculture" which was being tested on a quarter of a hectare with a dairy cattle, 25 chicks, two beehives, vegetables, fruits and cereals which are believed assumed to give to farmers nutritional food.

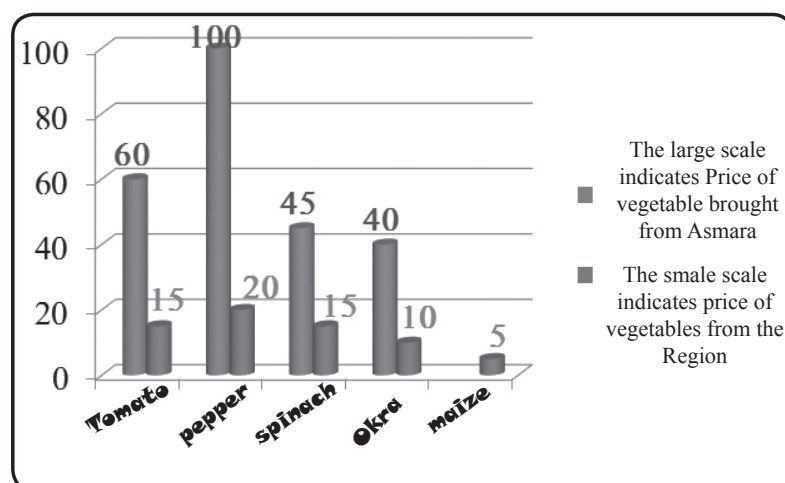
The annual reports of MoA continued with the topographically largest and demographically densest region, Gash Barka. The region suffered a little from low rainfall and pest attack over 4,151 hectares of cultivated land in Shambqo, Mensura and Logo-Anseba. But its production of 140,185 quintal of crops, 51 quintals of cereals and 7,548 quintal of oilseed stabilized the region significantly.

Minimum Integrated Household Agriculture was one of the activities the Gash Barka region was working on. The leveling of 1,389 hectares of land as well as improving drip irrigation and preserving wild life and afforestation was the hardest task of the region in 2017.

On the second session of the annual meeting, the Agricultural Extension Department gave

reports on irrigation, natural resources management as well as soil and water conservation in 2017. According to reports, the construction of soil bund terrace in northern red sea, hill side terrace in Debub region, check dam construction in Debub and Anseba regions were the big triumphs in 2017. The department was working to transform traditional farming to modern farming, increase organic farming for sustainable development and increase proper utilization of agronomic measures of soil and water conservation which will be done on 470,000 hectare of land, with a view to increase productivity by 40 to 50 % in the five year strategic plan, 2017-2021.

The presentation of Agriculture Regulatory Services Department was by and large about animal, plant, crop, milk product, quarantine and monitoring illegal killing of wild animals as well as taking care of illegally imported drugs. As for National Animal and Plant Health Laboratory Department the key function of the department is to establish vaccine production laboratory and produce certain vet and to identify disease which can be transmitted to humans. As NAPHIL presentation indicated, in 2017, 16,840 samples were processed of which 16,396 samples were tested for animal



stabilize the market.

As shown in the graph above, the prices of vegetables in the region were almost half the prices in Asmara markets.

Giving training to farmers is part of the Ministry's production enhancement program. Training that focused on cultivating palm and wild dates was given to farmers of the region and showed promising results in the Danakil. Contrary to that, Milk production and vaccination services were not as satisfactory.

Despite stream damage in five hectares of crops, 25 wheel, 21 water motors and 50.75 hectares of vegetables and crops, the

increased by 14975 kilograms and vegetables by 2.45 %. Other endeavors include the construction of a 136,640 meter cube reservoir in a bid to prevent soil erosion and enhance water conservation. The cultivation of palm trees in Hamelmalo College of Agriculture adds to the list of remarkable achievements in 2017.

The Anseba region is one of the largest regions in Eritrea, most of its inhabitants live through farming, herding and livestock raising. Lower rainfall in 2017 and pest attack over 912.3 hectares of land led to the reduction of productivity by 78% and the reduction of vegetable and fruits by 51%. Some notable

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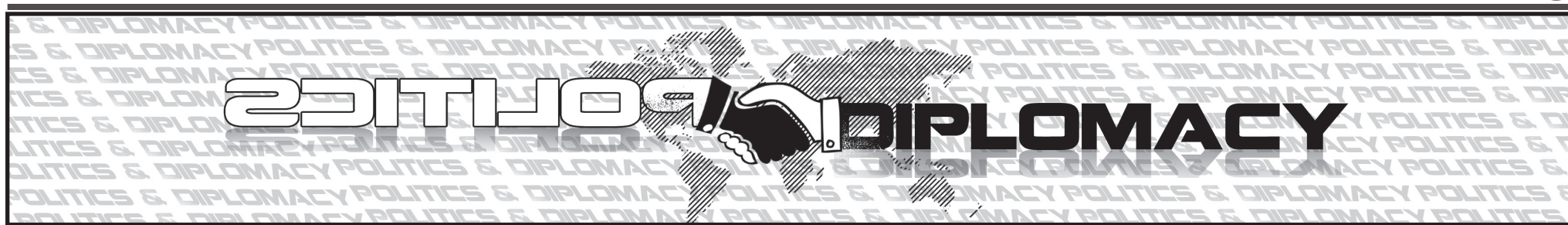
Acting Editor
Amanuel Mesfun
amme@zena.gov.er

P.O.Box: 247
Tel: 11-41-14
Fax: 12-77-49
E-mail:
profile@zena.gov.er
Advertisement: 12-50-13

Layout

Azmera Berhane
Sara Alem

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Eritrea - Politically Motivated Indices Misrepresent Reality

Sophia Tesfamariam

It is that time of year and we should expect several indices to be released by the UN, government agencies and renowned academic think tanks in Europe and the United States. These indices cover a whole range of issues such as corruption, human rights, religious freedom, economic freedom etc. etc. Countries will be ranked, with the top 10 making the news, as well as the bottom 10. The most recently released Index of Economic Freedom, an annual index and ranking to measure the degree of economic freedom in the world's nations, is a creation of the Heritage Foundation and the Wall Street Journal. Heritage Foundation says:

"...The Index covers 12 freedoms – from property rights to financial freedom – in 186 countries...Economic freedom is the fundamental right of every human to control his or her own labor and property. In an economically free society, individuals are free to work, produce, consume, and invest in any way they please. In economically free societies, governments allow labor, capital, and goods to move freely, and refrain from coercion or constraint of liberty beyond the extent necessary to protect and maintain liberty itself...Economic freedom brings greater prosperity. The Index of Economic Freedom documents the positive relationship between economic freedom and a variety of positive social and economic goals. The ideals of economic freedom are strongly associated with healthier societies, cleaner environments, greater per capita wealth, human development, democracy, and poverty elimination..."

Sounds great, but what exactly is it measuring? Before I get into that, allow me to briefly visit another widely quoted and used index-the Freedom House index.

Washington releases several indices every year and the Foreign Service establishment

relies on these indices to make its policy decisions. Like the IEF, the annual index produced by the NGO Freedom House, whose founders also established the United Nations, is often quoted and its scores used to rank countries. According to Freedom House, its survey:

"...attempts to judge all countries and territories by a single standard and that Freedom House does not maintain a culture-bound view of democracy...leading Democrats, Republicans, and independents; business and labor leaders; former senior government officials; scholars; writers; and journalists all are united in the view that American leadership in international affairs is essential to the cause of human rights and freedom..."

So in 1993, at a time when Eritreans having voted for a referendum conducted in Eritrea and in cities and towns across the United State and Europe, as well as in Ethiopia, in their ratings, Freedom House rated Eritrea "Not Free". Ever since then, this author has taken with a grain of salt what the various indices said about Eritrea as their measurements obviously did not reflect the reality on the ground. With this in mind, allow me to discuss another such index-the Index of Economic Freedom IEF, which also uses a single standard to score countries.

The Index of Economic Freedom (IEF) was first published by the Heritage Foundation in 1995. In 1997 it became a joint effort between the Heritage Foundation and the Wall Street Journal. It promoted US aid to countries committed to "free markets". Analysts in the Heritage Foundation, Wall Street and Brookings Institute believe that if corporations were allowed to freely do business around the world without having to contend with tariffs, regulations and other "trade barriers", it would naturally result in an equal playing field and prosperity for all. The pitfalls of free trade cannot be lost on

African states, victims of the Bretton Wood institutions and the various "structural adjustment programs" imposed as conditions for receiving development aid. Eritrea as a new nation learning from the mistakes of others cannot be swayed by an index that does not take into account a state's objective reality.

How does one compare 186 very different countries, at different economic development levels, with varying human and natural resources, with varying population demographics, with varying cultures etc. etc. and expect that the outcomes will be fair or accurate? As I read this year's report on Eritrea and compared it to the other nations in our world, I found this index to be no different than all the other politically motivated indices that sprung up in the early 1990s and the end of the Cold War. No matter the indices-they all repeated the tired and distorted narratives on Eritrea.

The Heritage Foundation decided that Eritrea's economic status in 2017 is "repressed", but offered no information on how it came to that conclusion - my bet is that the conclusion was made and the scores fit the desired conclusion. The Heritage Foundation relied on the same sources in putting together its report on Eritrea. The report said:

"...the U.N. Human Rights Council determined in 2016 that the government was guilty of crimes against humanity, a finding that the Eritrean government rejects. Eritrea is also subject to U.N. military and economic sanctions for allegedly supporting armed groups in the Horn of Africa. Copper and gold are important exports, but military spending drains resources from the development of public infrastructure..."

Clearly, the technocrats producing these government-funded "studies" and "research" are not immune to the political environments under which they operate.

Inserting a blatantly false statement undermines the credibility of the IEF report from the get go. The UN Human Rights Council DID NOT determine in 2016, or at any other time, that the government of Eritrea was guilty of crimes against humanity. There was a report, based on a collection of laundered information produced by anti-Eritrea groups, financed by some western institutions, that Sheila Keetharuth, the Special Rapporteur compiled and presented to the UN Human Rights Council, along with her recommendations. The Council did not accept her recommendations nor did they endorse her report. She failed to impress the UN General Assembly's 3rd Committee which also did not adopt her report and recommendations. The Heritage Foundation, by using discredited information to base its analysis on Eritrea undermines the integrity of its report. GIGO...garbage in garbage out.

Heritage makes no mention of Eritrea's liberal investment laws, its principled stand to privatize state run-enterprises, competitive and attractive exchange rate, and responsible fiscal policies. Despite what Heritage falsely claims, private investment (local & foreign) can participate in all sectors of the economy with no restrictions and discrimination. Today, there are several foreign private companies working in Eritrea's thriving mining sector, despite attempts by its enemies to strangle Eritrea's economy through sanctions and economic blockades. The usual excuse given by these NGOs when confronted is that they were not able to enter Eritrea. But there are Eritrean Embassies and hundreds of Eritrean Diaspora Communities that can provide them more accurate information, so why rely on unsubstantiated information; "cut and paste" from dubious sources? Injustice to the readers and mostly to the countries, the implications of which are too numerous to present here.

John M. Broder in his 1997 New York Times article, "Big

Social Changes Revive the False God of Numbers" wrote about Washington's growing use of indices in discerning economic and political issues. He wrote:

"...Although Washington places power in numbers as it tries to judge the good or bad of such changes, statistics have often proved a false god... In the national obsession with market statistics, quarterly profits and the won-loss column, government and private experts find themselves trying to measure the largely unmeasurable. They attempt to apply the scientific method to questions that do not lend themselves to simple quantification. In the name of accuracy or advocacy, they fashion a veneer of seeming numerical certainty over what are fundamentally questions of belief..."

These indices which blame and shame Eritrea at every turn cannot be taken seriously, as they do not account for the many issues that affect Eritrea's economy, including the very hostile international environment under which it operates. These indices do not address or reflect Eritrea's economic priorities or principled policies. Free trade, in a million years, is not going to allow Eritrea "to build an economy that meets the needs of our people". Free trade requires erosion of Eritrea's sovereign rights-including the right to choose her development priorities.

These indices are meant to shame and blame targeted nations such Eritrea who insist on political and economic independence. Robert Reischauer, quoted in the same NY Times article above put it succinctly when he said:

"...We live in a society where policy evaluations have to fit into a sound bite, so there is a tendency to focus on quantitative measures even when they may not

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January - the Crazy Month

In Eritrea, especially in the highlands, January is nicknamed *Tiri ebdi*, January the crazy month. I think January got this fitting nickname due to the numerous weddings that take place in the month in the highlands.

In January weddings are common sights in the highlands. If you are a resident of one of the towns, it is impossible for you not to come across a wedding hall in January. In fact, if you are a resident of Asmara, chances are that you will come across too many weddings to count.

But, how are January's 'madness' and the many weddings related? To explain this, I have to define, the Tigrigna word, '*ebdi*'. In Tigrigna, *ebdi* is a word we use to denote a crazy woman. The male equivalent is *ebud*, a mentally ill man. That is the literal translation of the word. However, as can be guessed from the phrase under discussion, it won't be right to take the phrase in its literal sense. As we are not talking about human beings, but about a non-human, a non-person.

You can't call a month, mad or crazy, as you can't call January smart, wise or lazy. In speaking about 'mad or crazy January', the Tigrigna are using a common literary device called personification. In literature, people use personification when they give human qualities to non-humans such as land, rivers, mountains, and other non-living things. Poets use personification to convey some of their thoughts and express their feelings, which they find it to express otherwise. For example, poets use personification to express such abstract concepts as pride, wisdom, arrogance etc.

In Eritrea, many think that people should not engage in wild dancing. Songs such as, *awaldeye kida ibeda*, which encourages people, especially girls, to go crazy over life and have fun, are very rare. In fact, this is the only Tigrigna song I know with such a message. Our society encourages



moderation in different aspects of life. A Tigrigna proverb puts this so well. "Saese emo hadarka aytresie," (You go and dance, and have fun, but make sure you do not forget your life.) *Tiri ebdi* (it appears) violates the Tigrigna's sense of moderation when it comes to music and dancing.

The music in our weddings are not by any standard loud and wild. I have heard blaring music from cars and university dormitories elsewhere ten times louder than our loudest wedding songs. In fact, our customs are so sociable that people are conditioned to take their surroundings into account when adjusting the volume of wedding songs. They take into account that there could be sick people around. If there is a family mourning its dead, wedding songs are often turned to their lowest or even not turned on.

The Eritrean peasant farmer in the highland villages works hard. In the summer, he has to wake up before sunrise and work until sundown, ploughing his fields and sowing crops. Back breaking work, in which the entire family is busy weeding, keeps him busy for weeks. Such hard work continues through autumn as he and his family work hard to harvest and collect crops. Needless to say, his and his family's life are very tough.

In such a hard life, there is little entertainment for him. Of course, he enjoys the *suwa* that is brewed in honor of the different

saints by fellow villagers, and to whose houses he and his wife are invited. Once a year, his family celebrates the village *negdet*, a festive time in honor of the village patron saint, to which people from far and near come. Even strangers are welcome, and no one is turned back. Apart from these, the highland farmer has no chance of entertaining himself or his family. For entertainment and for his share of joy in this life, he has to wait until January.

To wed his child, the farmer has to wait until January. He completes harvesting in December, and in January the pace of life slows down for him and his family. By December end, he finishes collecting his harvest. He will not work on his plots until some months later. Naturally, the season puts them in a perfect state of mind for entertainment. Now, he can turn his attention to a happy time, his child's wedding.

The season prepares him financially for one of his happiest days. Now, he doesn't need to worry how he would finance his child's wedding. Of course, he will need money for the groom's clothes and his bride's jewelry and clothes. But, that is not an issue for much concern. He has secured some money for this purpose. *Suwa* will be brewed for the wedding guests. That too will be taken care of. For relatives far and near will do their best to help him financially.

January brings a scene from a Tigrigna novel to my mind. Aptly titled, the novel, *Tiri Ebdi*, by Berhe Araya at one point describes this scene. I am describing the highlight of the scene, and not quoting the novel, which I read more than thirty years ago. As a drum beat was heard, the novelist says, a woman carried her baby upside down.

She carried her baby upside down because she was absent minded and could not realize she was not carrying the baby properly. Her heart beat like the drum. Her ears heard only the drumbeats, and not the cries of the baby. She didn't want to miss the dance, which she had waited for months. If she missed this she would not come across another until months later. It was the cries of her baby and the cries of the other people in the dance which brought her to her senses, and made her see her 'folly'.

In the highlands, the farmer, in his desire to see his son wed, often pushes his child to get married. And, luckily, if his son consented, that day becomes one of his happiest days, for nothing can make an Eritrean father or mother happier than his or her child's wedding.

Such a joy makes him sing and dance with abandon. His wife, as one of the Eritrean women known for their skills to compose songs on the spot, takes the drum, and sings in the weeks before and on the wedding day.

Addressing the wedding day, she sings, "embaba nghoye kixbeyeki endye xeniheye". (Literally, the song is translated as: Flower of the morning, for you I have been waiting and waiting.)

The man's joy is no lesser. Overcome by joy, he joins in the singing: *abti hagozey habni shashey kiemo*. "Pass my *netsela*, my white shawl. Let me gird it round my waist and dance in my day of happiness."

In a society that preaches moderation, the man and his wife come to the dance floor and dance happily. Other men and women join them, giving over themselves to loud singing and unrestrained dancing, crowding the dance floor. The singing and dancing become so engrossing that some people have to be asked to leave the floor so that others may have a turn. People want to have a turn with the drum too. In other words, not only the dance floor but the drum also has to be shared. People should be allowed their share of joy. Such dancing often continues into the early hours of the morning.

No wonder the Tigrigna call January, the crazy Month. In January they forget and give themselves over to boundless joy, and go crazy over the dance. Now, if you happen to pass by a makeshift wedding tent, remember why it is so loud and very noisy.

Abrahaey Habte

The Eritrean Cultural Heritage: Facts and Projects

Dr. Saleh Mohamud Idris

From 12 to 13 December 2017, the University of Naples "L'Orientale" in Italy organized a two-day workshop that brought Eritrean and Italian scholars together to share research findings on various areas of Eritrean studies within the framework of a bilateral exchange and collaboration agreement signed in 2008 between the Research and Documentation Center (RDC), Eritrea, and the University of Naples "L'Orientale", Italy. The workshop gave scholars from both countries an opportunity to exchange experiences, share research findings, and propose and refine research projects about the preservation of Eritrean cultural heritage. The workshop entitled *The Eritrean Cultural Heritage: Facts and Projects*, aimed at actualizing the scope and the purpose of the exchange and collaboration agreement between the RDC and the University of Naples "L'Orientale".

Ms. Azeb Tewolde, director of RDC, Prof. Giorgio Banti, Vice President of the Università di Napoli "L'Orientale", and Prof. Michele Bernardini, director of the Dipartimento Asia, Africa e Mediterraneo (DAAM) attended the workshop representing authorities from both institutions and contributed to the scientific event.

The event drew the attention of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, particularly Ambassador Raffaele De Lutio, former Direttore Centrale per i Paesi dell'Africa sub-sahariana, who addressed the workshop through a recorded video speech due to his engagement outside Italy at the time of the workshop. This institution is engaged in finding measures for effective cooperation between the two countries, based on the belief that the cultural heritage is not only an identity-building factor, but a real occasion for co-developing the two countries' scholarship, and public awareness about the importance of their great cultural heritage. The cultural cooperation is an essential factor in reaching higher levels of mutual understanding.

Since last summer, when UNESCO added the Modernist Asmara in the World Heritage List, international community became deeply interested in the cultural heritage of the Eritrean capital city. Undoubtedly this is of great importance. But, this positive circumstance shouldn't overshadow the fact that Eritrean cultural heritage is not confined to the beautiful buildings of the Modernist Asmara.

Other essential facts that contributed over time to the forging of the contemporary Eritrean collective identity, deserve to be considered in order to reconstruct the multifaceted history of the East African country, where cultures of different origins live together.

Twelve papers were dedicated by Eritrean and Italian scholars, ranging from history to archiving, from archaeology to linguistics and from philology to arts. In her introductory speech, Ms. Azeb Tewolde, the RDC Director, spoke about the *Nature and accessibility of the archives of Eritrea as a primary source of information*. She briefed the audience of the workshop about the RDC and its archival and library collections. She emphasized that some of the RDC's collections are the only primary sources of information for researchers to study Eritrean cultural heritage. The paper also argued that these rare archives are not yet well explored and analysed by researchers.

The paper by Professor Gianfrancesco Lusini from the University of Naples, entitled *Asmara in ancient and medieval times: The hidden story of a capital city* presented a documentation, both archaeological and philological, about the most remote phases of Asmara's history, well before the 19th century. The paper argued that the Eritrean capital city the Italians built in its modern shape and embellished with urban and architectural creations of high aesthetic level (but still inspired by the political projects of a foreign occupant) developed on a stratified territory, rich in historical records, subjected to the human settlement and to the human building activity for three thousand years. Furthermore, the paper argues that at the moment we know little about all that because these aspects of the history of Asmara have been little studied although they are part of the same sequence of events which led to the Modernist Asmara.

The paper by Professor Andrea Manzo, *The Archaeology of the Eritrean Western Lowlands: a view from across the border*, summarized the results of an ongoing research project conducted by the Italian Archaeological Expedition in the Kassala region, just across the Eritrean-Sudanese border. The data collected by this research project in the last few years, has considerably enriched our knowledge of the ancient economy of the lowlands and the style life and of the social

organization of their inhabitants from the 6th millennium BC to the 1st millennium AD. In particular, it was shown that the region had been engaged in the long-distance exchanges at least from the 3rd millennium BC. In light of the recent research in the Eastern Desert, in the Fourth Nile Cataract region and on the Red Sea coast, the Eritrean-Sudanese lowlands can be considered crucial in the processes of interaction between the Mediterranean and Africa taking place via the Nile Valley and the Red Sea. These results can shed some light also on the Eritrean side of the lowlands, certainly a very rich area in terms of archaeological heritage, as shown by some preliminary explorations and rescue archaeology conducted in the Bisha region by Eritrean researchers in the last few years.

After discussing the different names of the Nara and their first occurrences in written sources, the paper by Professor Giorgio Banti - Vice President of the Università di Napoli "L'Orientale", *The linguistic history of the Nara in their regional context*, highlighted the current opinions about the genetic position of the Nara language within the Nilo-Saharan phylum, and the phonological, grammatical, and lexical evidence that have been recently published by Claude Rilly and others about the relationships between the different subgroups of the Northern East Sudanic (NES) language family. Subsequently, the paper compared data between the pronominal and numeral systems of Nara and Nubian, the two best-known subgroups, concluding that while the morphological similarities within the Nubian languages are considerable, Nara shows strong differences. If it indeed belongs to NES, there must have been a very long time of independent development. Its pronominal system is organized quite differently, and Rilly's idea that Nara has been strongly innovative here is not necessarily the proper explanation. In addition, the big differences in the cardinal numbers are striking in "closely" related languages.

Dr. Gilda Ferrandino presented a paper on the link between Meroitic and Nara and how the knowledge of the Nara language may have contributed to the long-awaited translation of Meroitic. Dr. Graziano Savà also summarized the findings and progress of a research project on the documentation of Nara grammar, lexicon and texts.

Dr. Tesfay Tewolde, an Eritrean



The Eritrean Cultural Heritage: Facts and Projects

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Room 4.1

scholar from the University of Florence, compared 250 Proto-Semitic basic lexical items with that of Tigre, Tigrinya and Amharic languages. His study shows no common innovations among these Semitic languages of Eritrea and Ethiopia. Moreover, in many cases, the findings show each of these languages is closer to the Proto-Semitic than to one another. The study concludes that it is difficult to claim a Proto-Ethio-Eritrean Semitic stage in the absence of common innovations.

In his paper entitled *Revisiting the description of the Tigre basic verb stems*, Dr. Saleh Mahmud from the National Commission for Higher Education, Eritrea, presented a critical review of the literature pertaining to the description of the Tigre verb, and suggested a new modified classification of the Tigre verb based on his new field data. His field findings show a fifth verb stem type that has never been described before. This type, which semantically denotes the notion of pretentiousness, is morphologically characterized by a penultimate *e* vowel in the stem and a repetition of the medial radical. Hitherto, it is not attested in any other Ethio-Eritrean Semitic language.

Dr. Gianni Dore and Dr. Moreno Vergari, in their paper entitled *Housing and dwelling among the Saho: History and linguistic anthropology*, summarized research done by an Italian team of linguists and historians/anthropologists on housing and dwelling systems among the Saho people. The research, conducted in Eritrea between the 2008 and 2011, was done within the framework of *Atlas of the traditional material culture of the Saho and linguistic and cultural area of transition in Africa* project, and it will soon be published in a book. The book will contain detailed historical and anthropological introduction, an encyclopedic lexicon and analysis of some texts (proverbs, songs, poems, etc.) related to the topic of the research.

Other papers presented in the workshop include: *Colonial archives, memory and political culture in Italy: The Italo-Eritrean historical heritage*, by Dr. Silvana Palma; *The cultural heritage of the Eritrean coast*, by Dr. Chiara Zazzaro; *Manuscript collections from Christian Eritrea: From cataloguing to text editing*, by Dr. Massimo Villa; and *The artistic heritage of Christian Eritrea: The illustrated manuscripts*, by Dr. Lorenza Mazzei. *From Adulis to Mātāra: A road to the highlands*, by Dr. Luisa Sernicola, was not presented because the researcher was not able to come to Naples due to bad weather.

This was the third academic meeting to be held between scholars of the two countries following the signing of the bilateral exchange agreement between RDC of Eritrea and the University of Naples "L'Orientale" in Italy. The first, meeting took place in February 7-8, 2008 under the theme *History and Language of the Tigre Speaking Peoples*, and its proceedings were published in 2010 in Naples. The second, under the theme *Giornata Internazionale di Studi sull'Eritrea*, took place in May 13, 2010 and its proceedings appeared on a special issue of the journal *Annali* 70 (2010), under the title *Current Trends in Eritrean Studies*. In addition, researchers working both in the RDC (Asmara) and in the DAAM (Naples) are cooperating within the framework of an exchange and collaboration agreement between the two institutions. Furthermore, besides numerous research papers on Eritrean culture and history, scholars from the University of Naples "L'Orientale" have prepared and published the dictionary and grammar of the Saho language, and they are working on the dictionary and grammar of the Nara language.



VEHICLES DISPOSAL THROUGH SEALED BIDS

The **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Representation Office in Eritrea** is planning to dispose four vehicles to the public through sealed bids.

The vehicles listed below will be disposed voot stools, (as they are).

Year of first use	Make & Model	Reg. Number	Bar Code	Condition
2016	Toyota, Land Cruiser,HZJ76L-RKMRS, Double Cab	ER 0208 UN	970498	Excellent
2016	Toyota, Land Cruiser,HZJ76L-RKMRS, Double Cab	ER 0199 UN	970408	Excellent
2008	Toyota Prado 4X4 Wagon 3000CC Wagon GX 8, Automatic transmission,	ER 0280 UN	427969	Good
2010	Toyota RAV4 - 2.4L Petrol, 4X4, Manual Transmission, Model ACA33L-ANMGKV,	ER 0110 UN	563502	Good

Bids submission

Interested bidders can submit their bids in sealed envelopes to UNHCR Tender Box at UNHCR Offices located at Meteten St. 1A754 House 35, Asmara, Eritrea.

Sealed Bids must be addressed to:-
The Representative
UNHCR, Meteten St. 1A754 House 35, Asmara, Eritrea

Bids that are not sealed will be disqualified, and will be disregarded.
Bid amount does not include tax. The purchaser is responsible for paying all taxes as levied by relevant Tax Authorities in Eritrea.

Deadline for bids submission is 19 February 2018 at 1600hours.
All bids will be opened by the bids opening committee on 20 February 2018. Bids tabulation will be done and submitted to UNHCR Headquarters on 20February 2018.

Bids must include working contact telephone number so that winning bidders can be notified.

Viewing

Vehicles can be viewed on 10, 11 and 12 February 2018, from 0800hrs to 1600hrs at UNHCR offices at the above mentioned address.

Sale

Each vehicle will be sold to the highest bidder per that

vehicle. The bidder should specify the amount bided per vehicle. The highest bidder must make all payments due within four working days from date of notification. If the highest bidder fails to pay the bid amount and taxes in four working day, the vehicle **MAY BE** offered to the second highest bidder. In all cases the bid amount should be equal or greater than the minimum selling prices before any tax.

Payments

- Vehicles can only be collected after:-
1. Full payment of amount bided and payments are cleared by UNHCR bank.
 2. Full payment of all taxes due on purchased vehicles, and presentation of clearance of tax authority.

All payments of bid amounts will be made to UNHCR Bank Account **ONLY**, details of which will be send to the winning bidders.

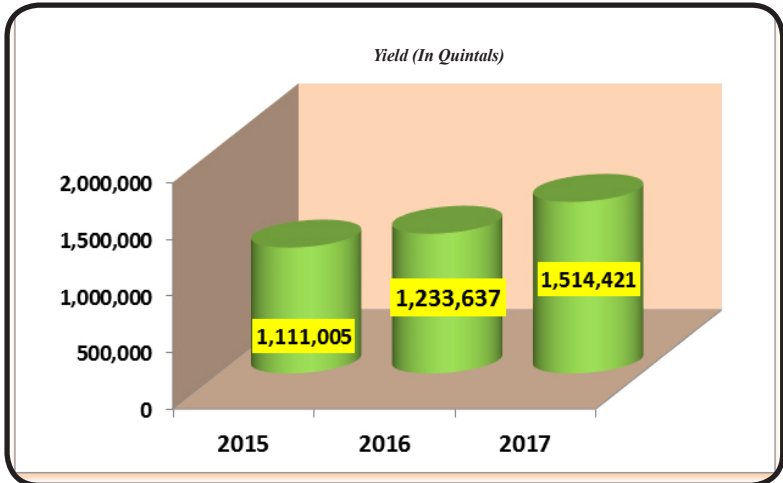
Registration of the purchased vehicle is the responsibility of the purchaser. Vehicles must be removed from UNHCR premises within two days from submission of proof of payment of bid amount and taxes.

The Ministry of . . .

Continued from page 2

disease diagnosis, 236 samples were processed for food quality and safety and 208 samples were tested for plant disease or pest diagnosis. The agreement between Sudan and Eritrea, referred to as “technical executive agreement” aimed at the joint collaboration of the two states regarding agriculture was also explained at the presentation.

Mr. Arefiene Berhe Minister of Agriculture underlined in his clothing that, as soil and water conservation and land labelling are the major components of

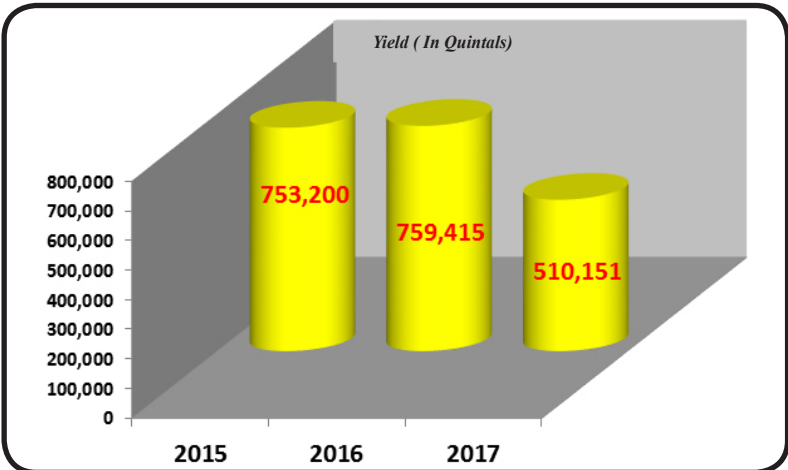


Vegetables Production in 2015, 2016 and 2017

farming, the farmers and the departments of agriculture have

to work to level their lands before the rain starts and they also need to know their land so that they can cultivate suitable seeds. Furthermore, he said, the minimum integrated house hold agriculture project is assumed to insure nutritional food security all over the country.

Mr. Arefiene finally recommended that though the MoA, regional administrations and the population have been working on water and soil conservation activities, increasing fertility and constructing dams, terrace, and water reservoirs, there is a need to continue working hard.



The up and down of fruit fertility in 2017, 2016 and 2015

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Eritrea - Politically ..

*C*ontinued from page 3

be measuring the most important dimensions...A full evaluation of most policies would be multidimensional and include both quantitative indicators and more subjective measures of success and failure..."

There will always be things these indices can't measure. The EFI cannot measure the impact of the many dams constructed, or the many roads built that are connecting villages and providing trade and other links within the country. The EFI does not take into account Eritrea's investment in its people's education and healthcare. The EFI does not take into account the investment climate in Eritrea that welcomes partnership and rejects aid. A single score by an index, such as the EFI, cannot define Eritrea or its economic principles or goals and it certainly can't measure the impact of Eritrea's development policies on the standard of living of the people.

Allow me to end with this quote by Bruce Levin, a statistician at Columbia University who once said:

"...This is the glory and the curse of the one-number summary...You take a hundred-dimensional problem like welfare reform and reduce it to one number...While numbers have long been used to deceive and to manipulate public opinion ... the more frequent problem is that they tell only part of the story. Statistics can sometimes describe the "what"; they seldom illuminate the "why." Of course, the alternative -- reliance on anecdote or the unsupported testimony of "experts" -- is even less useful... politicians labor in vain to apply the discipline of the hard sciences to matters of conjecture and opinion... In scientific inquiry, a statistician can locate sources of bias and error and try to correct for them... Statistics are tools of the scientist... But when numbers are crunched in politics, axes are usually grinding, too..."

Politicized reports do not advance freedom... and undermine the credibility of the authors and the institutions they represent. They do not present an accurate portrayal of the countries that are being ranked and serve as tools for subjugation. Eritrea seeks economic independence. It will never out-source its economic policies and will insist on remaining in control of Eritrea's vast mineral and other resources, the means of production and utilization of available natural wealth, to improve the lives of the Eritrean people.



Sharing the World of Art

Asmait Futsumbrhan

Today, we have invited a lady of multi talents- a painter, a designer and an art teacher. Helen Ghebru, born and raised in Ethiopia, grew up to be more interested in art at a young age. With a passion that was growing ever strong, she decided to get hold of it by going to an Art school, and that is when she turned her hobby to a lifetime profession. For Helen, being an artist was not going to be enough. She went to a designing school where she ended up working as a teacher for almost two years.

"I love teaching.....in a way, I also teach my self"...she adds besides the great time she has in class with her students.

In today's issue, Q&A presents Helen Ghebru, an artist who enjoys the world of art by working to share her knowledge with her students.



Welcome to our page, would you please introduce yourself to our readers?

I loved the idea of drawing something on a piece of paper when I was a child. I think I followed in my big brother's steps although he never had any specific courses regarding art, he enjoyed drawing things. I wanted to do as he did, and that is when I developed a hobby of drawing. I never knew that hobby was going to turn to my life time profession. Nonetheless, I am glad it did. Having a profession you enjoy doing is a blessing, honestly.

In 2005, I wanted to make

something out of my interest and I enrolled at Mirara Art School. It was four years of hectic courses. I was fortunate to have very talented and inspirational art teachers of all times. They did their best to teach us everything there is to know in art. I learned everything I know in that school. Not only have I learned in that school, but I have gained work experience as well. I worked as a secretary after I graduated.

Was there a specific course you took at the school?

You just don't pick one specific subject and take it. Well, actually, the best part is that you get to learn the more than four parts of art, which are the important ones. We took *Anatomy* which deals with the human structure. Another one was *still life* which talks about identifying the light and shadows. *Perspective* is another part of art we studied which is all about the depth of the drawings. We also learned the landscape. We used to stay almost all day at the school to practice and

paint, it was the time where I enjoyed the most. Even though we got to learn different kinds of art styles, one would find a favorite style to stick to. I favored anatomy which led me to take designing course as well. After I finished designing I stayed at the designing school as a teacher for two years.

You are a sketch teacher in a fashion school...

Yes, in 2013, I took a job at Ayni Fashion School. That school is a university for me. It has a great place in my heart. It is a place where I met numerous people who came from various backgrounds. Also, when I am teaching my students, I am constantly practicing my drawings, which makes my skills even better. I always try to have fun in my classes, I want my students to enjoy doing the sketches just like I do.

Again, for a designer to be a good one, one must be a good sketcher. That is when one understands what one wants to work on and have an idea on how one is going to manage it perfectly.

How about painting?

It is something I love doing. I like to paint when I am alone. That isn't a problem for me since I live alone. I mostly do impressionist type of art since I have been influenced by my art teachers. Also, I have started doing some solder type of art. Solder is a type of art which is done using fire. It doesn't need special course. However, the impressionist art

style requires much more skills such as great brush techniques which makes it much more interesting.

Have you ever had any exhibitions?

I had an art exhibition with my colleagues after I graduated from the art school, which I am proud to say went well. Hopefully I will do a solo very soon. It is hard to do exhibitions these days as it requires a huge budget. Also there is lack of materials. Art does require huge sacrifices, but as artists, we should continue to work hard in creating a working environment which allows us to present our works of art. Speaking of it, I have a collection and I plan to present them soon.



Before we say our goodbyes?

Yes, before we say our good byes, I would like to remind people that a girl can be an artist too, a girl can paint too. I want to remind my fellow Eritrean ladies that we have to prove that we can do anything we put our minds to. To be a designer, to be a teacher or a painter, let's just have a dream that would accompany us in our lives. Thank you for having me.



Helen and her students in class