

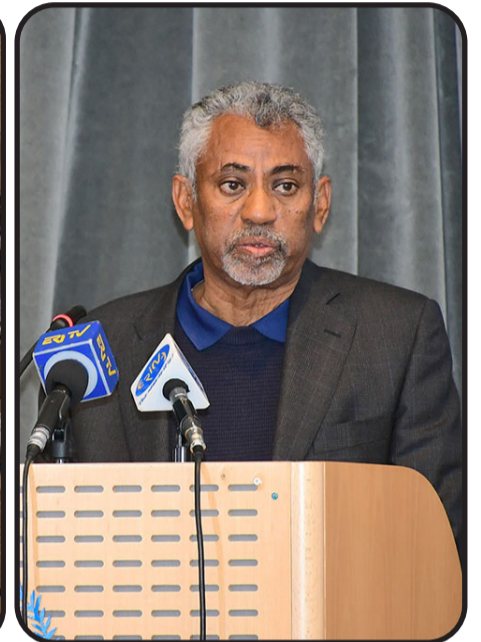
International Conference on Eritrea Studies that opened on 4 January at Asmara Palace Hotel under the theme “International and Regional Cooperation for Sustainable Development”, successfully concluded on January 6.

The opening ceremony was attended by Ministers, senior Government and PFDJ officials, Ambassadors, members of the diplomatic community, heads of UN offices in Eritrea, scholars, professionals, and invited guests.

Dr. Halima Mohammed, chairperson of the conference’s coordinating committee, noted the growing interest among scholars and practitioners in researching and publishing on Eritrea. She emphasized that investment in research and education is fundamental to all development efforts. The conference aims to facilitate academic exchange, foster collaboration, and promote a deeper understanding of Eritrea’s role in regional peace and stability, as well as its contributions to global sustainable development.

In his keynote address, Mr. Yemane Gebremeskel, Minister of Information, said that the research papers, on a broad spectrum of

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ERITREA STUDIES CONCLUDES IN ASMARA



themes, slated for discussion during the three days will immensely enrich development oriented academic research in the country. Furthermore, Minister Yemane emphasized that another invaluable spinoff of this conference will be its impact and contribution in debunking and rectifying the stifling, negative narrative, on Eritrea that has been pursued, for almost two decades now without let-up, by major legacy media outlets and

associated think tanks.

The conference was concluded successfully in the evening hours of Monday, 6 January. At the closing event, Mr. Osman Saleh, Minister of Foreign Affairs, said that the gathering has not merely been an academic exercise; rather, it has epitomized the convergence of scholarly rigor, policy-oriented discourse, and the unassailable ethos on intellectual pursuit that underscores Eritrea’s resolute

commitment to knowledge-driven development. (Full text of the speech by Minister Yemane and Minister Osman are on page 2 and page 4 respectively)

At the conference 154 research papers were presented including on natural and social science, agriculture and natural resources, archeology and national heritage, Diaspora opportunities and challenges, economic development, environment

and climate change, language and linguistics, law, politics and regional and global issues, science and technology as well as folklores and music.

Academicians, experts and researchers from Eritrea, Germany, Italy, the UK, People’s Republic of China, Russian Federation, Hungary, India, Egypt, Uganda, Somalia, the US, Canada and others attended the conference.

## HIS HOLINESS ABUNE PETROS GIVES BENEDICTION



His Holiness Abune Petros, Archbishop of the Eritrean Tewahdo Orthodox Church, gave benediction in connection with Christmas.

During his address, His Holiness Abune Petros provided a comprehensive explanation of the spiritual significance of the holiday. He extended his

warm Christmas greetings to the Eritrean people, both within the country and abroad, as well as to the Defense Forces.

Furthermore, Abune Petros urged the faithful to offer their support to the families of martyrs and to lend a helping hand to disadvantaged fellow nationals.

## MONETARY CONTRIBUTION SUPPORTS KEREN SCHOOL FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED

Members of the Eritrean Development Foundation in the United States have donated 500,000 Nakfa to support the Keren School for the Hearing Impaired.

During the handover ceremony on Jan. 3, Dr. Fikak Hibtes commended the Government and public for their ongoing efforts to empower hearing-

impaired citizens and enable them to become self-supporting and productive members of society. He described the donation as part of the foundation’s commitment to fulfilling its national obligations.

Dr. Aida Abraha on her part encouraged hearing-impaired individuals to continue striving for self-improvement and better

livelihoods, describing the initiative as a modest but meaningful gesture to support their progress.

Mr. Tesfabrhan Mehansho, director of the school, expressed gratitude to the Eritrean Development Foundation, noting that the contribution would significantly enhance the teaching and learning process.





# Keynote Address by Minister Yemane Gebremeskel at the International Conference on Eritrean Studies

**Madame Chairperson, Dr. Halima Mohammed**  
**Honourable Government and Senior PFDJ Officials**  
**Excellencies Ambassadors, Members of the Diplomatic Corps and UN International Organizations**

**Distinguished Participants, Invited Guests**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen**  
**Good morning,**

Let me first congratulate all the Members of the Organizing Committee – both from the academic and relevant government institutions here at home as well as from our Communities in the Diaspora – for their commendable work in making this event a reality.

The research papers – on a broad spectrum of themes – slated for discussion during the next three days will, needless to emphasize, immensely enrich development-oriented academic research in the country.

They will also spur and crystallize vital networking among key national as well as foreign experts and stakeholders in all domains of vital national interest in the period ahead.

Furthermore, another invaluable spinoff of this Conference will be its impact and contribution in debunking and rectifying the stifling, negative narrative, on Eritrea. This has been pursued, for almost two decades now without let-up, by major legacy media outlets and associated think tanks.

The optimism must of course be tempered with a dose of realism.

As we all know, the defamatory campaigns against Eritrea never stemmed from paucity of information or from good-faith media misperception.

I do not wish to waste your time here to delve into anecdotal incidents. But there are so many instances in which reports and documentaries by visiting journalists were suppressed, or willfully altered, by senior editors presumably because, or under the implausible ruse, that they were “too good to be true”.

The fact is the negative media campaigns – the dogged portrayal of Eritrea in the most pejorative terms – were and remain, closely intertwined with the agendas of extraneous powers, who have long opted to pursue policies of regime-change for their own geopolitical interests and calculus.

**Madame Chairperson**  
**Distinguished participants,**

Let me now revert to highlight, in very broad terms, Eritrea’s perspectives on current and unfolding international and regional trends as well as its domestic development policies and priorities.

As we all agree, these are very turbulent and trying times; by all historical metrics. The global security structure is literally under unprecedented and dangerous stress.

The spiral of inexorable escalation in Ukraine; mushrooming wars in Gaza and the greater Middle East; are fraught, perhaps for the first time after the Second World War, with precipitating a nuclear Armageddon; irrational and improbable as this doomsday scenario may have seemed in the past decades; or even a few years ago.



The world has of course seen calamities of monstrous proportions in earlier times. Due to the sheer magnitude of the destruction and human losses that they inculcated, the First and Second World Wars may represent the nadir or lowest point of humanity’s inexcusable failures. But slavery, colonialism and the multiple proxy wars that have, and continue to rage, especially in the Global South were, and are no less tolerable in terms of humane and ethical considerations.

Indeed, if our so-called civilized, technologically-advanced, post-industrial world has been spared from another global conflagration in the past eighty years, this was not due to some higher moral calling, statesmanship, or wisdom. It was not based on a judicious architecture of global governance. Sadly, the fragile peace was, and remains predicated, on a raw and crude balance of terror. Due to what is termed as Mutually Assured Destruction or MAD as the acronym cynically suggests.

The nuclear powers did not enjoy the privilege of success in annihilating their adversaries through pre-emptive first strikes.

It was this binary balance of terror that constituted – for the last eighty years – the sole and primary basis of deterrence and fragile peace.

Tactical and political brinkmanship and posturing aside, there are worrying signs now that this paradigm might shift for the worst. Some, worst-case analysts are even invoking what is known as the Thucydides Trap to emphasize historical precedents for the high probability of the outbreak of war in this period of global transition of hegemony.

Innate and systemic aberrations of the so-called rules-based international order are not limited, unfortunately, to the architecture of global security. Degrees of magnitude and intensity aside, the global legal and economic architectures are also dithering from similar and profound anomalies.

sheer exercises in futile, Public Relations, stints.

Similarly, the UN Security Council, which has exclusive purview on grave matters of regional and international security, seems to have forfeited its legal authority on various instances due to structural and systemic anomalies and loopholes.

The latest and most appalling instance was not only its failure to impose a ceasefire on Gaza. What is more astounding is its attempts to rationalize non-adherence to this resolution – which elicits punitive action in accordance with Chapter VII of the UN Charter – as optional and dependent on the discretionary political will of the culpable party.

And in general, structural unfairness embedded in the veto power; routine political



In legal terms, the UN remains emasculated and marginalized in global affairs of vital impact and substance. As amplified in the tragic situation in Gaza, the six-decades-old unilateral sanctions on Cuba, and other similar cases, the Resolutions of the UN General Assembly remain, invariably, toothless. As it happens, the moral voice of the global community that should have reinforced our ethical compass has been routinely rendered irrelevant and reduced to

horse-trading in the adoption of resolutions; bloc politics and overriding interests of the major powers have always rendered the UNSC as a partisan and politicized entity; not the legally flawless and morally authoritative body cherished by the vast majority of humanity.

The architecture of global economic governance – which is a vast subject and beyond the scope of this brief presentation – has been equally rendered dysfunctional in the duplicitous, rules-based international order on account of various parameters.

The modus operandi of the Bretton Woods Institutions, heavily influenced as they are by value-laden ideological biases and political conditionalities, have vastly reduced their efficacy in providing transformative and effective development support – through concessional loans and grants – to countries in the Global South.



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**Editor-In-Chief**  
**Amanuel Mesfun**

**Asst. Editor-In-Chief**  
**Sirak Habtemichael**

P.O.Box: 247  
 Tel: 11-41-14  
 Fax: 12-77-49  
 E-mail:  
 eritreaprofilemoi@gmail.com  
 Advertisement: 12-50-13

**Layout**  
**Azmera Berhane**  
**Betelhiem Tadesse**

**C**ontinued on page 5



# SpotLight

Dr. Fikrejesus Amahazion

## Fundamental Virtues Essential for the well-being of Society and the Nation

Last week, local media outlets reported that more than 2,600,000 NAKFA worth of lost cash and property that was found by individuals in the Southern Region last year was turned in to authorities to be returned to owners. Beyond being a simple news story, the report is highly intriguing in that it helps to reinforce how central and deeply embedded trust, honesty, generosity, and solidarity are within Eritrean society.

considerable work has shown that that people give to others, demonstrate generosity, and extend support for a wide variety of reasons. Moreover, not only are the factors that drive people to be generous and demonstrate solidarity with others extremely diverse, individuals who give and extend solidarity can be driven by

Furthermore, Eritrea's various ethno-linguistic groups (there are 9 in total) assign considerable value and significance upon the concepts of group and community. The latter are regarded as the basic units and fundamental building blocks of society. From early on, Eritrean children come to learn and understand that while communities and groups are comprised of individuals, there can be no individuals without the broader support, backing, and platform of groups and communities.

Notably, an array of social traditions and popular proverbs attest to the great value and significance Eritrean society places upon honesty, trust, generosity, and supporting others. When Eritreans sit for a meal, for example, they will often say, "nkedem" in the presence of others, thus inviting them to share in the meal. Other common sayings include, "beyneka belae, beyneka moh'ut" (roughly translated as those who eat alone, die alone), "enqae nzeyfelt, haba men almedo" (those who do not know how to give, cannot know how to receive), and "habtam bezey deka neykeber" (the wealthy cannot have respect without the poor).

Moreover, every single day, in villages and communities across the length and breadth of the country, individuals and groups readily demonstrate their honesty, trust, solidarity, generosity. For instance, there are many anecdotes of how bikes, cars, and even homes have been mistakenly left unlocked by owners, only

for the latter to return hours or even days later to find them in place and untouched. Recall, too, how during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic several years ago, representatives from the United Nations Development Program in Eritrea explained that the strong sense and value of community in the country, coupled with generosity and solidarity, played an important role in national fight against the pandemic.

Alongside the above, there are numerous other examples. For instance, during the independence struggle, Eritreans - both in country and across the world - backed the freedom movement with not insignificant amounts of money and other resources. As well, when they come together to support each other in the grieving and mourning of someone who has passed away, Eritreans will offer not only sympathy and condolences, but also food, financial support, and other resources to families who have lost a loved one. Friends, relatives, and neighbors of those grieving will remain by their side for an extended period to ensure they are supported and do not feel alone.

In a similar vein, during the celebration of a marriage, graduation, birth, or baptism, neighbors, colleagues, and coworkers will offer financial support or give their time and energy to cook food, arrange tents, and prepare areas for celebrations. There is also a popular tradition in many Eritrean communities where groups of women regularly

contribute savings, with the distribution of collections being regularly rotated among group members. In urban areas, young people regularly go shopping and deliver groceries for the sick, elderly, or otherwise physically immobile, while in rural areas, where farms predominate, people work cooperatively to meet the needs of everyone in the community: collectively working the fields, planting seeds, and harvesting crops. Neighbors and community members also devote their time and pool their resources and efforts to construct homes or develop community projects.

Adding to the motivations outlined above, another one of the key drivers of generosity, giving, and support in Eritrea is the strong sense of duty and obligation. On one level, as humans and neighbors, many regard it as a basic duty and obligation to support one another and help the less fortunate: it is only right and appropriate. However, the sense of duty and obligation also applies to and is particularly evident in the support extended to veterans, contributions to families of those who have fallen, and contributions to the country from nationals living abroad.

Over the years, many Eritreans shed blood and gave life or limb, making great sacrifices in order to bring independence, protect sovereignty, and defend the territorial integrity of the nation. Thus, it is regarded as a special duty and basic obligation to demonstrate our appreciation, preserve their legacy, and support them or their families in any way.



*The general and broad importance of trust, honesty, generosity, and solidarity*

Trust, honesty, generosity, and solidarity are essential for the well-being of both individuals and societies. According to an increasingly large body of empirical research, they can be fundamental for national progress and development, as well as the cultivation of a just, equitable society. Furthermore, they are frequently associated with an array of key indicators, such as economic growth, social cohesion, life satisfaction, and overall well-being.

A lot of different factors come into play when explaining trends or variations in levels of trust, honesty, generosity, and solidarity, at the individual, group, and national level. For instance, a long series of global values surveys have identified how some countries regularly rank among the highest for trust, while

more than one single reason at a time.

### *Defining characteristics of society and deeply rooted in Eritrea*

As demonstrated by the recent report of significant sums of money and property being turned in by citizens, in Eritrea trust, honesty, generosity, and solidarity are defining characteristics of society and deeply rooted. In fact, they reflect some of its most beautiful features. One prominent factor is faith and religion. Eritrea is a highly religious country and the nation's major faiths, Christianity and Islam, have been practiced for centuries. The faiths call upon their followers to be honest, trustworthy, generous, and give help to the less fortunate. (The Christian tradition has considered giving a key religious practice, while for Muslims, giving ["Zakat"] is one of the five pillars of Islam.)





## CLOSING REMARKS BY F.M. OSMAN SALEH AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ERITREAN STUDIES

*Distinguished Participants,  
Invited Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

First and foremost, allow me to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the organizing committee, whose unparalleled dedication and meticulous planning have made this event possible. Their collaborative efforts, bridging academic institutions, government bodies, and the Eritrean diaspora, and the seamless orchestration of this event, are, without doubt, an exemplar of what can be achieved when diverse stakeholders align their aspirations towards a common goal.

As we draw the curtains on this august International Conference on Eritrean Studies, it becomes our solemn obligation to reflect, synthesize, and duly articulate the profound significance of the deliberations we have collectively engaged in over these past three days. This gathering has not merely been an academic exercise; rather, it has epitomized the convergence of scholarly rigor, policy-oriented discourse, and the unassailable ethos of intellectual pursuit that underscores Eritrea's resolute commitment to knowledge-driven development.

In line with the conference theme – Regional and International Cooperation for Sustainable Development – this dialogue has underscored the importance of collaboration, extending beyond Eritrea's borders into the realms of regional and global partnerships aimed at achieving lasting, inclusive, and equitable growth.

The past three days have provided us with an extraordinary platform to engage with a diverse range of research papers and discourses that span themes integral to Eritrea's developmental trajectory, historical narrative, and global positioning. These contributions have illuminated critical pathways to fostering a deeper understanding of Eritrea's unique narrative and exploring solutions to the complex challenges that define our time. The depth and breadth of the discourse presented are further proof of the vibrant intellectual community that Eritrea proudly sustains, both within its borders and across the globe. But more importantly, these discussions have also highlighted the power of international collaboration in tackling shared challenges, emphasizing the role of cross-border cooperation in ensuring that progress is sustainable and equitable for all.

The corpus of research papers presented during this conference, traversing a wide array of themes, have illuminated critical issues, fostered rigorous debate, and, most importantly, laid the groundwork for future inquiries that will undoubtedly enrich the corpus of knowledge on Eritrea and its multifaceted realities. The contributions have not only expanded the horizons of academic discourse but have also provided

actionable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders invested in Eritrea's development trajectory. And, as we have seen, the impact of these discussions extends far beyond academic spaces. It serves as a call to action for the strengthening of regional and international cooperation, encouraging the alignment of policies and strategies that catalyze meaningful transformation.

*Madame Chair,  
Distinguished Guests,*

This event has been instrumental in challenging and deconstructing the reductive narratives that have hitherto obfuscated Eritrea's agency, aspirations, and achievements. For too long, certain sectors of the global discourse have promulgated superficial caricatures that belie the rich socio-political complexities of this nation. Through the empirically grounded research and nuanced debates presented herein, we have laid the cornerstone for a more balanced and equitable understanding of Eritrea – one that accords due recognition to its developmental philosophy, its resilient people, and its strategic aspirations.

While it is unrealistic to expect that these efforts will immediately alter deeply entrenched positions, their incremental impact in broadening awareness and fostering informed discourse cannot be overstated. The dissemination of the proceedings from this conference will undoubtedly serve as a valuable resource for academics, policymakers, and the general public alike, amplifying its reach and resonance.

It is equally important to underscore the catalytic role this conference has played in fostering networks of collaboration among scholars, experts, and institutions. Such synergies are indispensable in addressing the complex and interconnected challenges of our time. By facilitating dialogue across disciplines, geographies, and perspectives, this forum has contributed to the cultivation of a robust intellectual ecosystem that will continue to yield dividends long after the conclusion of this event.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Our deliberations have not unfolded in isolation; rather, as highlighted in the opening statement by Minister Yemane, have occurred against the backdrop of an increasingly fractious global landscape marked by escalating conflicts, economic inequities, and the erosion of multilateral frameworks. These dynamics have rendered the principles of cooperation and sustainable development more pertinent than ever.

As underscored in the conference, Eritrea's developmental philosophy is firmly rooted in the principles of self-reliance, social justice, and sustainable growth. This approach far from being a mere reaction to external exigencies is reflective of the nation's historical experiences and collective

aspirations. Eritrea's emphasis on human capital development, exemplified by investments in education and healthcare, attest to its recognition that its greatest resource lies in its people. By prioritizing inclusivity and equity, Eritrea is building a society that is not only resilient in the face of adversity but is also capable of harnessing its potential for transformative change, where no one is left behind.

Similarly significant, the presentations and discussions have also illuminated the immense opportunities that Eritrea possesses, from its strategic geographic position to its untapped resources in the blue economy, agriculture, and extractive industries. However, realizing this potential requires a conducive regional and international conditions. Peace, stability, and mutual respect must form the foundation of meaningful partnerships within the Horn of Africa and beyond.

It is equally pertinent to acknowledge that the African continent continues to grapple with the malignant effects of tribal and ethnic conflicts and external interference, which exacerbate socio-political fractures. The legacy of colonialism, coupled with the entrenchment of structural dependencies, has deepened these challenges, undermining the continent's ability to forge unified progress. Additionally, external meddling often inflames local disputes, perpetuating cycles of instability and division.

These realities underscore the necessity for African nations to assert greater agency in addressing internal dynamics while resisting external forces that seek to exploit vulnerabilities.

Concurrently, the broader Global South remains marginalized in the global governance architecture, facing systemic poverty, inequities, and the exploitative paradigms of an imbalanced economic order. The inequitable distribution of resources and the perpetuation of debt traps hinder developmental strides. This confluence of challenges underscores the urgency of fostering solidarity and advocating for transformative change that dismantles these entrenched inequities and builds an inclusive global order rooted in fairness and mutual respect.

The challenges confronting Eritrea, the African continent, and the wider Global South are, as we have repeatedly observed, deeply intertwined with the broader anomalies of the global governance architecture. The marginalization of African voices in international decision-making processes, the inequitable distribution and opportunities, and the perpetuation of exploitative economic paradigms are but a few manifestations of these systemic injustices. Yet, amidst these challenges, there is also a growing

recognition of Africa's potential and agency.

In this regard, Eritrea's advocacy for modular regional integration, as articulated in its longstanding policy perspectives, offers a pragmatic framework for fostering cooperation and addressing shared challenges. By prioritizing functional and incremental approaches to integration, grounded in the principles of sovereignty and mutual benefit, Eritrea seeks to contribute to the establishment of a stable and prosperous regional order. This vision, however, necessitates a collective commitment to addressing the root causes of conflict and underdevelopment, including the pernicious legacies of colonialism, dependency, and external interferences.

The dialogues during this conference have reinforced the imperative for Africa to assert its rightful place in the global order. This entails not only addressing the structural impediments to development but also leveraging the continent's immense resources, both human and natural, to drive transformative change. The pursuit of these objectives must be guided by a clear and unified vision, underpinned by a commitment to self-determination, solidarity, and innovative policymaking.

In this context, Eritrea's experiences and perspectives offer valuable insights for the broader African and Global South community. Its emphasis on resilience, self-reliance, and people-centered development serves as a powerful reminder that meaningful progress is achievable even in the face of formidable challenges. Moreover, Eritrea's principled stance on issues of sovereignty and non-alignment underscores the importance of maintaining an independent and constructive approach to international engagement.

*Ladies and Gentlemen*

As we reflect on the myriad discussions held over these past three days, it is evident that this conference has not only served as a platform for intellectual exchange but has also ignited a renewed sense of purpose among its participants. The diverse range of topics addressed—from governance and socio-economic development to environmental sustainability and cultural heritage—reflects the multidimensionality of Eritrea's reality and complexity of the challenges it confronts. Equally, these discussions have highlighted the resilience of the Eritrean people, whose unwavering commitment to progress continues to defy adversity.

The importance of collaboration cannot be overstated in this endeavor. As the conference has demonstrated, the collective expertise of academics, practitioners, and policymakers is indispensable in addressing the intricate and multifaceted issues of our time. The networks forged and strengthened during this event will



undoubtedly serve as a foundation for future initiatives aimed at advancing Eritrea's development and enhancing its global engagement.

Moreover, this conference has underscored the necessity of bridging the gap between academic research and policy execution. The insights generated through rigorous scholarship must inform decision-making processes at all levels, ensuring that policies are grounded in evidence and attuned to the needs of the people. This iterative process of learning and adaptation is crucial for achieving sustainable and inclusive development.

As we bring this conference to its conclusion, it is essential to recognize that our discussions represent not an end but a beginning. The onus lies upon each of us to ensure that the knowledge and insights gained here are translated into tangible actions that benefit not only Eritrea but also the broader global community.

This enquires ongoing collaboration among all stakeholders, including academics, policymakers, practitioners, and national organizations. It will also necessitate a commitment to continuous learning, critical reflection, and the pursuit of excellence in all endeavors.

Let us continue to challenge misconceptions, advocate for justice and fairness, and contribute to the development of a more equitable and sustainable world.

*Madame Chair  
Excellencies*

In closing, let me reiterate my profound gratitude to all those who have contributed to the success of this conference. To our esteemed researchers and academics, I encourage you to persist in pushing the boundaries of inquiry and contributing to the eclectic array of Eritrean studies.

To our policymakers and practitioners, I urge you to draw upon the wealth of knowledge generated here to inform decisions that will shape the future of our nation and region. And to all participants, I extend my deepest gratitude for your engagement, insights, and commitment to advancing the goals of this conference.

To the organizers and support staff, your tireless efforts behind the scenes have ensured that this conference has been both seamless and impactful.

Thank you and I wish you all safe travels and continued success in your respective endeavors.



## ... Minister Yemane Gebremeskel at the International Conference on Eritrean Studies

**C**ontinued from page 2

Gross and widening gaps of wealth between the rich North and underdeveloped countries in the Global South as well as the huge chasm of income within these countries – especially in the post-industrial North in which less than 0.1% of the population own 90% of the national wealth – are not only morally repugnant but also recipes and fertile grounds for breeding intractable instability and chaos. And these days, the inherent absurdity in the global economic governance architecture seems to have scaled another height. Sovereign wealth and other assets of an adversarial country are considered as legitimate ransom. They can indeed be arbitrarily weaponized for imposing political solutions in flagrant breach of all accepted economic orthodoxies and the nominal rules of the game.

All these aberrations – in the security, legal and economic global architectures of governance – are occurring at a time when technological advancement has achieved unprecedented progress in all its dimensions.

The disconnect between reality and what is possible and desirable, remains immensely and absurdly huge.

Humanity can indeed work out a viable and sustainable global system that can advance human dignity under a common Global Social Contract of compassion, fairness, and solidarity.

This is simple common sense. It is what is arguably cherished by the vast majority of the peoples of the world.

Let us be more clear: the choice is not necessarily between antagonistic, dogmatic, conventional ideologies. Nor is it between a uni-polar, bi-polar or multi-polar systems of embedded and inevitable confrontation.

The choice is for a compassionate and humane architecture of global governance under transparent, fair, and equitable rules of the game.

These precepts were succinctly articulated in President Isaias's remarks at the 15th BRICS Summit, held in South Africa in August 2023, when he argued for concerted action to rectify the flaws and deficits of the prevailing global governance architecture whose defining features were and remain, dysfunctional, non-inclusive and unfair, rules and regulations. The President went on to say", and I quote, "...the lofty aspirations of humanity as a whole is for a

just and fair global order where justice and the rule of law prevail; where nations and peoples forge meaningful and symmetric ties of cooperation and partnership on the basis of respect for national independence and sovereignty; for societies anchored on compassion and social justice".

These are some of the challenges – and the list is far longer than what has been presented above in skeletal format – that true and dispassionate academic research has to grapple with. Hopefully, some of these challenges will be broached in the papers that will be presented in the Conference to constitute topics of intense and vibrant discussion.

### *Madame Chairperson Distinguished Participants,*

Let me now revert to the African continent and our region in particular.

The developmental and security challenges and trends in the African continent as a whole and the wider Horn of Africa, Nile Basin and Red Sea neighborhoods in particular, can only be gauged against the backdrop, and within the constraints and parameters of, the fragile global governance architecture outlined above.

Africa's daunting challenges are too evident to merit much elaboration. Indeed, as the grim statistics amplify – Africa's share of world trade stands at a paltry 2%, while extreme poverty affects over 460 million of its population. Few exception notwithstanding, Africa continues to export raw-materials to the global market at lowest prices; it remains overburdened and paralyzed by debt; and, it continues to be bedeviled by perennial internal conflicts.

These malaises are counter-balanced by substantial positive attributes that can propel Africa on the path of rapid and sustainable development once the underlying problems are fully addressed and resolved.

Africa is reportedly endowed with 60% of global natural resources, especially significant reserves of critical minerals vital for global green transition. It is blessed with a young, dynamic and educated population as well as large Diaspora whose expertise can be tapped. Africa has also bright prospects in reducing – at a fast pace – the knowledge gap with the developed North if it pursues the right mix of policies on its human capital.

But its options and policy choices for domestic development cannot be

seen in isolation from the collective and purposeful measures that it has to pursue to assert its rightful place in the global power pecking order.

Indeed, as Eritrea has consistently advocated in the various Summits of Partnership between Africa and its prospective interlocutors, Africa needs to accomplish, first and foremost, its homework with full diligence to ensure that the rules of engagement ultimately become symmetric and mutually beneficial. This will require sober and meticulous work and consensus building that transcends nominal and cosmetic results such as inconsequential membership at the G20 or allocation of permanent seats for a couple of African countries at the UN Security Council.

Closer to home, the situation in our immediate neighborhood is not different, in substantive terms, from the continental reality.

Naturally, and for reasons of history, geographic proximity, pragmatic calculus, and other cogent considerations, Eritrea's policy perspectives on continental African cooperation and partnership are primarily predicated on a modular approach. This policy perspective was first articulated at the OAU Summit held in Tunis in 1994.

In Eritrea's views, while the aspirations for fostering continent-wide institution of African effective cooperation is laudable in terms of broad abstract principles, realism dictates that this is implemented – over a long span of decades – through the establishment and consolidation of regional building blocks.

In the Horn of Africa, IGAD was revitalized in 1995 to include broader scope of economic cooperation and integration as well as Inter-State conflict resolutions through the expansion of its original mandate that was confined to combating drought.

But all these ideals remain – to date – mere aspirations that could not crystallize into visible and tangible programmes of action.

Furthermore, institutionalized ethnic and religious exclusivity and polarization continue to remain the Achilles heel in the region accounting for cyclical internal conflicts that have, and continue to inculcate, huge loss of life and physical destruction.

Debilitating dependency on, and entrenched tendencies and proclivities to act as surrogates of global and regional hegemony, have also encumbered independent and home-grown development policies

and options. Ill-advised ambitions of territorial aggrandizement and expansion, often induced by overriding external agendas, have and continue to constitute avoidable factors of additional regional destabilization; thereby compromising the national and regional interests of the nations and peoples of the Horn of Africa.

In a nutshell, and without sounding in any way prescriptive, there are compelling arguments for the region to revisit and map-out appropriate and functional National Social Contracts that foster and bolster internal unity and cohesion. Within this framework, regional cooperation can be seriously pursued with purposeful and incremental programmes and timelines on the basis of respect of each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

### *Madame Chairperson Distinguished Participants,*

Let me now revert to GOE's domestic development approaches and policy perspectives within the broad global and regional ecosystems outlined above.

Eritrea's endowments are substantial by all standards. The blue economy consisting of considerable marine resources; locational advantages; ports as well as pristine beaches and islands can be leveraged to catalyze and expedite rapid economic growth under conditions of congenial regional peace and stability.

The extractive industry; agriculture; revived manufacturing geared on educated human capital and knowledge-intensive subsectors enmeshed in global networks and value-chains; are other prospective sectors that have huge potential.

And above all, Eritrea's fundamental policy precepts that imbue highest priority to investment in human capital will concretely guarantee qualitative dividends for the longer term. This sober approach is underpinned by the profound conviction that singular focus and dependence on finite resources – which have to be exploited judiciously for reasons of sustainability and to preserve what must be preserved for posterity – has limited viability and is ultimately fraught with irreparable distortions.

The policy precept is also closely intertwined with Eritrea's overarching commitment to Social Justice in all its manifestations and dimensions.

Free education from Kindergarten to the tertiary level, and provision of highly subsidized health services – including waiver of all payments for those without any means when necessary – so as to ascertain equal

opportunities and a level-playing field; greater focus on deprived areas; narrowing the urban-rural gap in terms of allocation of budgetary resources for physical and social infrastructure; are pursued rigorously to advance this policy commitment.

It must be emphasized here that Eritrea's Social Contract, hinged as it is on comprehensive Social Justice, does not stem from a humanistic philosophical and political convictions alone.

Embedded in the philosophy is the keen and implicit tribute to, and recognition of, Stakeholder rights; the additional acknowledgement that Eritrea is a nation whose citizens have all paid heavy and almost unparalleled sacrifices to assert and defend their inalienable human and national rights. As such, they deserve their proper share in the national pie.

But in spite of these purposeful policy perspectives, Eritrea's post-independence developmental achievements have not been commensurate with its relentless efforts in the past three decades or in terms of its aspirations and latent potentialities.

Imposed wars, unwarranted sanctions, and related adversities have compounded the generic global and regional hurdles described above. Let me also emphasize that instead of making reparations for the damage incurred for almost ten years until 2018 by the unwarranted UNSC sanctions, the US and the EU have slammed new and unilateral sanctions against Eritrea's defense and security institutions in the past three years. The raft of sanctions imposed by the Biden Administration target the Eritrean Defense Forces; the PFDJ; and their respective Institutions including the Army Chief of Staff and the Head of PFDJ Economic Affairs while the EU's coordinated measures are focused at Eritrea's National Security Office. These deplorable acts, essentially concocted to weaken and downgrade Eritrea's economic and defense capabilities, only expose their entrenched policies of hostility.

All these cogent realities amplify the interlinked and symbiotic global and regional challenges that Eritrea will continue to grapple with in its focused and full-fledged pursuit of national development and growth.

In this context, it is gratifying to note that the Conference will address all these interrelated themes in greater depth in its proceedings in the next three days.

Let me conclude by wishing you the best of success in all your proceedings

*I thank you  
Asmara, 4 January 2025*



# REPORTAGE

## Fostering Sustainable Development through International Collaboration: Highlights of the 2025 ICES

*Habtom Tesfamichael*

International Conference on Eritrean Studies was held at the Asmara Palace Hotel from January 4th to 6th under the theme “International and Regional Cooperation for Sustainable Development.” The event, which was attended by around 500 participants, brought together a diverse assembly of academics, experts, and researchers Eritreans both from within the country and abroad, as well as foreign nationals.

The conference provided a vital platform where both emerging and established scholars exchanged insights on national, regional, and international issues in social and natural sciences and humanities. Dr. Halima Mohammed, chairperson of the conference’s coordinating committee, emphasized the necessity of investing in research and education to drive development. The primary aim of the conference is to facilitate exchange among scholars and policy makers, foster collaboration, and enhance understanding of Eritrea’s role in promoting regional peace and stability, as well as its contributions to global sustainable development.

sparked engaging discussions. Seventy papers were presented by Eritrean experts from within and outside the country.

Elaborating on the rigorous selection process of the papers, Dr. Halima said they had received over 300 abstracts, and selected papers based on their relevance to the conference’s theme, budget and the availability of time. She said their plan is to publish the proceedings of the conference in two volumes and make sure they reach the public and policy makers, who can use them as reference for their actions. She added that they will also make the materials available digitally on a website, benefiting not only policymakers but also young scholars eager to study and learn.

Expressing her wishes to see the conference held regularly, Dr. Halima said she agreed with participants’ comment about the large number of areas of study that were entertained at the conference, which made it difficult for participants to attend all the sessions they were interested in. In future, Dr. Halima said, they would focus on fewer areas of study at a time, allowing participants to attend most,

presented their research findings as part of their academic work for their post-graduate studies.

Dr. Tedros Sium, a member of the organizing committee, expressed appreciation for the commitment of participants and the leadership that made the event possible. He said the conference was successful by all measures and will have lasting impacts. “We believe the research papers will provide insightful knowledge and experience for development planners and relevant institutions in Eritrea,” he said.

Research papers in fields such as history, politics, and law explored both past and contemporary socio-economic and political dynamics of Eritrea and its neighboring countries. Addressing important issues in the shifting global political landscape from legal, political, and economic perspectives, the research illuminated Eritrea’s policies, practices, values, vision, and perspectives.

The discovery of archaeological knowledge was a key focus in the archaeology and heritage sessions, where discussions centered on untapped heritage sites in Eritrea. Presentations on archiving addressed the process of locating and salvaging Eritrean heritage documents from various regions of the country, revealing commendable progress.

In health and medicine, presentations examined medication safety, maternal and child health services, and emerging health challenges. These evidence-based research findings will inform policy and practice within the country’s health service system.

The conference also served as a vital platform for oral poetry, ethno-musicology, and publishing experiences in Eritrea. Discussions presented in various Eritrean languages allowed participants to express their ideas in the languages they master,

adding vibrancy to the event.

Conversations on climate and environmental issues, utilizing advanced biotechnology and local knowledge, dominated discussions in the natural sciences. Presentations highlighted the need for smart utilization of natural resources and climate-adaptive techniques in agriculture to ensure sustainable development.

Dr. Tedros said that the organizing committee has noted the importance of establishing a roadmap and mechanisms to implement the insights gained from the conference. This includes publishing the proceedings of the conference, organizing symposiums and workshops on different fields, establishing networks of experts, and institutionalizing Eritrean studies.

In his address at the closing ceremony, Mr. Osman Saleh, Minister of Foreign Affairs, commended the organizing committee for their dedication in ensuring the event’s success. He praised the collaborative efforts that united academic institutions, government bodies, and the Eritrean diaspora, emphasizing how these partnerships exemplify what can be accomplished when diverse stakeholders work together toward a common goal.

Mr. Osman underlined the importance of reflecting on the significant discussions that transpired during the three-day event, noting that the conference represented more than just an academic exercise. He said the conference was a convergence of scholarly rigor, policy-oriented dialogue, and Eritrea’s commitment to knowledge-driven development.

Reiterating the conference’s theme, Mr. Osman stressed the necessity of extending collaboration beyond Eritrea’s borders into regional and global partnerships aimed at achieving lasting,



*Dr. Tedros Sium*



*Dr. Halima Mohammed*

inclusive, and equitable growth. He acknowledged that the past days provided an extraordinary platform for engaging with a wide array of research papers and discussions critical to Eritrea’s development trajectory, historical narrative, and global positioning. These contributions illuminated pathways for fostering a deeper understanding of Eritrea’s unique narrative while addressing the complex challenges it faces.

Mr. Osman called for strengthening regional and international cooperation, urging the alignment of policies and strategies that catalyze meaningful transformation. He also highlighted the need to challenge reductive narratives that have historically obscured Eritrea’s agency and aspirations, advocating for a more nuanced understanding of the nation.

He concluded his speech by emphasizing on the vast opportunities that Eritrea possesses -- from its strategic geographic location to untapped resources in the blue economy, agriculture, and extractive industries – and the crucial need for peace, stability, and mutual respect in regional and international relations for the potential to be realized. Through its advocacy for modular regional integration, Eritrea seeks to foster cooperation and tackle shared challenges, contributing to the establishment of a stable and prosperous regional order.



The goal of the conference is to encourage Eritreans, both within the country and abroad, and international researchers, to pursue relevant scientific inquiry on Eritrea, identify the country’s needs for sustainable development, analyze them, and provide actionable solutions and recommendations. The conference also serves as a valuable networking platform for scholars to share ideas and experiences.

A total of 154 research papers in 19 fields of study were presented. The three-day conference featured a wide range of topics in natural and social sciences, agriculture, archaeology, economic development, the environment, language, law, politics, regional and global issues, science and technology, folklore, artificial intelligence, including the application of science and digital tools in fields such as energy. The papers were very informative and

if not all, of the sessions they like.

The conference provided an excellent opportunity to engage a broad audience, including government officials and young academics from various institutions. It fostered lively interactions that enriched the exchange of ideas and perspectives. Dr. Halima emphasized that in line with its theme, the conference is meant to contribute to regional peace and cooperation that is sought after, while addressing pertinent regional issues that affect Eritrea.

In her concluding remarks, Dr. Halima said, “I believe we have achieved the conference’s aims. We brought together scholars from 20 countries, including regional participants. Many Eritreans from around the world also participated, marking a significant milestone for us. Eritreans pursuing their careers







**ASMARA MINING SHARE COMPANY**

Abo Street, No. 178, House No. 16

Gejeret, P.O. Box 10688

Tel. ++291-1-153986

Asmara, Eritrea

**VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

Asmara Mining Share Company is inviting applicants for the following position;

**Electrical & Instrumentation Maintenance Superintendent-Process Plant**

**Number required – (01)**

**Type of contract – definite (2 years)**

**Major Duties and responsibilities**

- Assist the Maintenance Manager to recruit, train and mentor a Electrical & Instrumentation Maintenance team who will deliver quality maintenance services to the fixed plant. In doing so, ensuring KPI's that facilitate sustained and productive operations are delivered.
- The Superintendent is responsible for planning, coordinating and directing of all Electrical & Instrumentation related daily activities to maintain the electrical, and Instrument/PLC integrity of the Plant. This person will report to the Maintenance Manager and assist with various administrative and management functions.

**TASK DESCRIPTION Expanded TO CORE PERFORMANCE AREAS**

- Ensure compliance with quality, health and safety rules, guidelines, and regulations.
- Planning, prioritizing, assigning, supervising, reviewing, and participating in all tasks related to maintenance.
- Development and implementation of preventative maintenance programs for all site-based Fixed Plant equipment and facilities to ensure high levels of equipment availability.
- Recruitment and coordinating training sessions in maintenance, safety procedures, and methods.
- Manage budget and track maintenance expenditures.
- Assist with the implementation of capital projects.
- Implementing maintenance strategy including monthly reporting and KPI validation.
- Manage, motivate, develop, and provide direct leadership to maintenance staff.
- Ability to interface with other departments, particularly Production Operations.
- Ability to build and motivate a team comprising of expatriates and national employees.
- Understanding computer driven maintenance management programs,
- Able to compile reports, update/compile Job Description etc.
- Develop the Operation Readiness for the Electrical & Instrumentation section

**General Information and other requirements:**

- Place of Work:** AMSC Sites
- Type of contract:** definite Period (2 years)
- Salary:** As per the Company salary scale

**Additional requirements for Nationals:**

- Having fulfilled his/her National Service obligation and provide evidence of release paper from the Ministry of Defense.
- Present clearance paper from current/last employer.
- Testimonial documents to be attached (CV, work experience credentials, a copy of your National Identity Card, etc.).
- Only shortlisted applicants would be considered as potential candidates for an interview.
- Application documents will not be returned to the sender.
- All applications should be sent through the post office.
- Deadline for application: 7 days from the day of publication in the Newspaper.

- Address: Please mail your applications to;**  
Asmara Mining Share Company,  
P. O. Box 10688 Asmara, Eritrea
- Applicants shall be required to send a copy to:**  
Mineral Resources Management  
P.O. Box – 272  
Asmara
- Note to Non-Eritrean applicants:**  
Please send a copy of your application to  
Aliens Employment Permit Affairs,  
P. O. Box 7940 Asmara, Eritrea

**Profile: Qualifications and Experience**

<p>Formal Education, Certifications or Equivalents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trade Qualifications as an Electrician/Instrumentation Technician or equivalent or,</li> <li>• A qualified Electrical Engineer with experience in overseas operational position</li> <li>• Previous experience in supervising a maintenance team consisting of Supervisors and tradesmen</li> </ul>
<p>Working Experience – Nature &amp; Length</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 years' experience in large scale open-pit mines in the areas of Fixed Plant Equipment Maintenance – Electrical Installations,</li> <li>• 5 years' experience as Electrical or Instrumentation Plant Maintenance Supervisor and Superintendent.</li> <li>• In-depth knowledge of the electrical components for Fixed Plant Equipment I.e. Crusher, Mills, Conveyor belt, Pumps etc. preferable Copper Floatation Plants</li> <li>• Operation Readiness exposure</li> <li>• Excellent leadership qualities.</li> <li>• Sound knowledge of preventive maintenance programs</li> <li>• Functional communication in English is mandatory.</li> <li>• Computer literacy including planning systems</li> </ul>
<p>Technical Skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instrumentation &amp; PLC as well as SCADA knowledge</li> <li>• Electrical Equipment knowledge, including HV &amp; LV systems switchgear</li> <li>• Analytical skills</li> <li>• Report Writing skills</li> <li>• Plan, organize and execution skills.</li> <li>• Valid Driver's License</li> </ul>
<p>Behavioral Skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety leadership by example</li> <li>• Ability to work in developing country</li> <li>• Ability to work under pressure with challenging targets</li> <li>• High level of initiative</li> <li>• Demonstrated training and people development skills.</li> <li>• Strong interpersonal relationship-building skills and adaptability to work with people of different cultures.</li> </ul>





Q and A

## “It is challenging to organize such meetings, but an excellent job has been done here, and I am thrilled to be a part of these diverse experiences,” Professor Girma Bitsuamlak

Sabrina Solomon

*Please introduce yourself to our readers.*

I am a professor of civil engineering and director of the WindEEE research institution, which represents wind engineering, energy, and environment research. It is one of the world's leading wind engineering centers. It has been a critical facility for testing some of the most essential building structures in the world, starting from the World Trade Center to many extraordinary buildings around the world, including New York and, most recently, Dubai Tower. So, the tallest buildings on three or four continents were tested in our laboratory. And I, at the moment, direct this laboratory.

I studied at Addis Ababa University, then went to India to further my education, and briefly worked in Asmara in 1998. I then left Asmara for Canada to continue my PhD and have been a professor of civil engineering ever since.

*You attended the conference for three days and presented a research paper. Tell us about the conference.*

The conference was inspiring for me. You rarely get a chance to come back to your homeland to contribute one way or another. I have been coming to Eritrea to visit my family and have a seminar or two at Mai-Nefhi College of Science and Technology. This conference will be a crucial networking experience and will create great collaboration in the future. Another exquisite experience that one might experience here is the chance to inspire the younger generation. It's a way of showing such young people that it is possible and connecting them to their role models in different fields and work. It can give hope to those on their way that anyone can excel in education, research, industrial contribution, and more. It is great coming back home to share the experiences and knowledge and open the imagination of young people. A country's future depends on how we inspire our young generation. I was inspired and excited that this conference wasn't just about engineering but

From the 4th of January till the 6th of 2025, the International Conference on Eritrean Studies (ICES) was held with a theme, “Regional and International Cooperation for Sustainable Development.” The conference was convened by scholars, researchers, and practitioners from around the world, featuring over 150 selected papers. One of the presenters, professor Girma Bitsuamlak from the Western University of London, Canada, is our guest today.

extended to many different fields. It is challenging to organize such meetings, but an excellent job has been done here, and I am thrilled to be a part of these diverse experiences. I was also amazed by the service and the hospitality.

*Professor, you were amongst the first to give presentations at the conference. Can you tell us what your paper was about and what the aim behind it was?*

My paper was on how to build in a climate-resilient and sustainable way. We now have a chance to rebuild our country. Thus, the central message of my presentation is that as we embark on this sustainable development aspect, we don't need to make the same mistakes other cities did to develop. We learn from that, and we do the right thing. By the right thing, I mean sustainable design and sustainable construction. For instance, buildings in Eritrean cities like Asmara, Massawa, Keren, and Dekemhare are built in a way that fits the local climate. Even if you look at Hidmo construction, it is marvelous in very hot weather without any air conditioner but just through thermal mass design, green roof, etc. This green roof, by the way, is becoming a new norm in Northern America. Can you imagine how our forefathers have been doing that forever, and now the rest of the world is trying to do it? So we don't have to go through

many trials and errors to perfect the green roof buildings. So, with just the help of technology, we can achieve such a building quickly.

Most importantly, I emphasized a couple of things, like the energy demand in Eritrea and the means of having sustainable and reliable energy resources from solar energy, as we have 12 months of sunshine in our country, which is about 1300 watts of energy. We can harvest that and utilize it for many things apart from energy. We can now do it all with just computer simulation and the advancement of hardware, and we can catch up with the rest of the world in no time. I also emphasized that the country should focus on computing and have some central computer that every university can share. I was so happy to hear other presentations with similar focuses about continuing the tradition of having a well-planned and sustainable city like Asmara with vernacular architecture and buildings that respond to the climate properly. The good thing is that it's not expensive but a matter of thoughtfully doing it.

*How do you think such conferences are significant, and what can they contribute to the nation's development?*

As a professor, I usually get my inspiration from my students. One unique thing about this conference was that almost all the country's

high ranking officials were there. It is fantastic as the young people can inspire the leaders, and the leaders can inspire the young ones. Many things, like the country's security, have occupied their minds, which is understandable. So, to have such a unique interaction where the ones at the top and the younger ones exchange ideas and opinions is undeniably crucial. We all are creatures of God, and everybody is a capable human being. The only difference is the inspiration, meaning they are inspired enough to utilize their capabilities. These types of conferences inspire you to keep going, especially seeing the achievements of others and their well-organized presentations. This is the first aspect of the significance of the conference. The other aspect is the networking part. Establishing such networking would not be possible in just a couple of days without such conferences. One of the primary purposes of a conference like this is to connect people.

Every development action requires a multidisciplinary effort. Knowing who is what and what they do is crucial moving forward. I hope this also happens more often, even though it can be challenging budget-wise. However, since this is very valuable, such challenges can be minimized, and more conferences can be held. This helps people flourish and eliminate self-doubt as it is a mirror where you see yourself in others who have



gone further. It gives you hope and makes you believe it is achievable, which is the first step to growth. Our young people need this kind of exposure.

Another aspect for me is the feeling of giving back to my home country. I planned to help people as a means of contributing, and I actually graduated 24 researchers in my career, 13 of whom are black people from Eritrea, Nigeria, or Ethiopia. Likewise, coming back here and contributing, at least in knowledge exchange, makes this unique as well.

*As a distinguished professor, what plans do you have for sharing your knowledge with Eritrea?*

I am an academic person. My impact is inspiring and training young people. I visited the College of Science and Technology, and the students I met there are incredibly brilliant. To excel in that way is fantastic, especially for females with all societal burdens. This inspired me to educate and enable such promising people through further education. Plus, a professor needs researchers, and they, in turn, need a professor. We need each other, so it's not only me helping the students, but they are also doing the same. I want to have such a platform to connect us and grow together, which is one important thing I plan on doing in the future.

*Any final remarks?*

I was so impressed by the Ministry of Information's interest in scientific things. That's how you reach out to too many people. It's crucial to show these kinds of news as well, focusing on development, science, and education, which are all hope for young people.

*Thank you!*

