

## PRESIDENT ISAIAS HOLDS TALKS WITH SUDANESE ENVOY



President Isaias Afwerki, in the evening hours of 08 July, met and held talks at Denden Hall with General Malik Agar, Vice President of the Transitional Sovereign Council of Sudan.

Speaking to national media outlets, General Malik said that the meeting with President Isaias focused on the objective situation in Sudan, the prospects of stopping the conflict, as well

as the role of Eritrea in resolving the conflict.

General Malik also said that Sudan gives great consideration to the assurance he receives from President Isaias that Eritrea's border is open for Sudanese refugees that are fleeing the conflict in their country.

The meeting was attended by Mr. Osman Saleh, Minister of

Foreign Affairs; Presidential Adviser Mr. Yemane Gebreab; and Mr. Isa Ahmed Isa, Eritrea's Ambassador to Sudan.

## ERITREAN COMMUNITY FESTIVAL IN GERMANY

The Eritrean Community Festival colorfully commenced on 8 July in the German city of Giessen.

The festival, in which a number of nationals from various cities in Germany and neighboring countries took part, was graced

by the Governors of the six regions of Eritrea.

The festival is highlighted by cultural and artistic performances, a children's program, as well as programs depicting the unity in diversity of the Eritrean people.



## HAMELMALO COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE GRADUATES 410 STUDENTS

In its 16th commencement, Hamelmalo College of Agriculture graduated 410 students, including 216 females, in degree and Diploma programs on 08 July.

At the graduation ceremony in which Mr. Arefaine Berhe, Minister of Agriculture, and Government and PFDJ officials, as well as representatives of the UN offices in Eritrea, took part, Dr. Haile Mihtsun, Executive Director of Higher Education Institutions and Research, congratulated the graduates, parents, and teachers.

Prof. Woldeamlak Araya, Dean

of the College, on his part, noting that agriculture is the backbone of the economy of the country and the means of living for the vast majority of the citizens, said the graduates from the College are contributing their part to the agricultural development of the country.

Speaking at the occasion, Minister Arefaine, congratulating the graduates, called on them to develop their knowledge practically on the ground and play their due part in the effort to develop the agricultural sector.

Minister Arefaine pointed out that a strong effort is being

exerted to produce agricultural products free of chemicals, and that the Ministry of Agriculture is producing and distributing organic fertilizers and pesticides to farmers with a view to ensuring food security and animal fodder.

The graduates, on their part, commended the educational opportunity provided and expressed their conviction to live up to the expectations of the people and Government that provided them the opportunity.

Since its establishment, Hamelmalo College of Agriculture has graduated 5 thousand 883 students.



## SEMINAR ON THE PROPER USE OF PESTICIDES



A seminar on the proper use of pesticides was organized for farmers and agricultural experts in the sub-zones of Haikota and Forto Sawa sub-zones, Gash Barka Region.

At the seminar, Mr. Abrhaley Hailemichael, head of seeds resources control, said that as a result of improper use of pesticides, big damage is being inflicted on humans and livestock, as well as on the environment and agriculture, and called for proper use in order to avoid the consequences as a result.

Mr. Seare Abraham, head of livestock resources control, called on farmers to seek advice from agricultural experts prior to applying pesticides for the safety of themselves, their livestock, and their

crops.

Mr. Hagos Gebremariam, head of the Ministry of Agriculture in the region, said that the Ministry, alongside its formal activities, is making efforts to ensure the supply of improved crop seeds to farmers with a view to providing nutritious food to the public.

Mr. Hagos also called on the farmers to apply organic pesticides and keep their environment clean.

The participants conducted an extensive discussion of the issues raised at the seminar and adopted various recommendations, including for the sustainability of the seminar and for strong relations between farmers and agricultural experts.



# Press release of the German-Eritrean Society (DEG)

The ERITREA-FESTIVAL 2023, organized by the “Central Council of Eritreans in Germany”, successfully took place in Giessen

annually all over the world in all countries where Eritreans living abroad – almost one-sixth of the total Eritrean population due to the

## DEG

German-Eritrean Society



at the weekend with several thousand participants – despite all attempts to prevent it.

The event is a gathering of Eritreans living in the diaspora to celebrate their cultural identity, the meeting of families, friends, old acquaintances, as well as with German and foreign guests. The festival is a celebration of peace, exchange and international understanding. Since 2011, it has already taken place in Giessen ten times, with the exception of the Corona years 2020 and 2021, peacefully and without any incident.

The cultural festival has a long tradition and was already held in Bologna/Italy during the Eritrean struggle for independence (1961 – 1991); since then, it has been held

flow of refugees from the long war of liberation – are distributed. It is obvious that Eritreans of the older as well as younger generations living in the diaspora have a great need to live their own culture communally, to enjoy the food, music, and traditions of their homeland.

As peaceful, exuberant, and joyful as the festival was on the inside, there were strong attempts from the outside to prevent it from taking place. Firstly, the city of Giessen's public order office banned the festival, which was legally untenable and was overturned by several chambers of the administrative court in two instances. Secondly, by groups of thugs around the violent Tigray cell “Brigade N'Hamedu”, who followed up their threats on the net with deeds, so that on Saturday civil war-like conditions prevailed at the festival site and in the city centre with numerous injured civilians and police officers.

The DEG condemns these excesses in the strongest possible terms! We are outraged that those responsible in the city of Giessen left no stone unturned to ban the event and thus undermine the constitutional right of peaceful assembly (Article 8 of the Basic Law). We are shocked that by stigmatizing the event as “support for a dictatorship”, an atmosphere was created which was used by the perpetrators of violence as a carte blanche and tailwind for their nefarious plan, as was evident from numerous interviews.

The continuous Eritrean “bashing” by city officials, especially in the Green parliamentary group, and part of the media, which has nothing to do with the realities in Eritrea and is essentially based on an aversion to the country's strict course towards independence, has contributed

significantly to heating up the atmosphere and emotionalizing it. We would like to point out once again that this is not an “internal Eritrean” conflict (friends of the government against opponents of the government).

The reasons lie deeper and are to be sought in the recent dynamics in the Horn of Africa, which the West perceives as damaging to its interests, and which found expression in the Tigray conflict and its ending. The TPLF regime, which had a stranglehold on

The attack by its thugs abroad on an Eritrean cultural event in August 2022, also in Giessen, and also the current attacks are an act of revenge because the Eritrea Festival 2022 could already not be prevented. The same thing has now been tried again. Ultimately just as unsuccessful, but on the backs of bystanders and the police.

The DEG calls on all those involved – whether on the governmental, administrative, media or other side – to thoroughly reconsider the policy of

international understanding and exchange!

The terrible events of the weekend in Giessen (which will be dealt with elsewhere) have shown one thing above all:

Restrictions and repression instead of prevention only make things worse – the objectively existing problems, which no one can deny, can subjectively only be solved through understanding, dialogue and the will to recognise connections and backgrounds. It is high time to take collective action



Ethiopia for 27 years and is now at an end, is trying to externalise the conflict and take it to Europe to attract international attention.

discrediting Eritrea and its people and to replace it with a willingness to engage in dialogue, cooperation and joint action in the spirit of

in this direction!

**Board of the German-Eritrean Society (DEG)**

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## From Social Media



← Tweet



**Yemane G. Meskel** ✓  
@hawelti

To respond to & dignify abject lies of this corrupt TPLF lobbyist who turns history on its head for few bucks is pointless indeed. True, Eritrean cities (remember Massawa) were targets of multiple enemy cluster bombings. Still, Eritrea has never possessed, & used cluster bombs



**vittorio silvestri** @vitsil64 · Jul 9

Cluster bomb by #Eritrea??

Hopefully someone will take action against you for spreading fake news and baseless accusations.

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# Development

## Eritrea Marching Toward the Elimination Phase of Trachoma

*Luwam Kahsay*

Trachoma, like glaucoma and cataract, is one of the most common eye illnesses especially in developing countries. It is a neglected tropical disease that remains the world's leading infectious cause of blindness.

Overall, trachoma, which is caused by the obligate intracellular bacterium *C. trachomatis*, is the eighth most common blinding disease. Recurrent episodes of conjunctiva infection and the associated chronic inflammation it causes initiate a scarring process that ultimately leads to irreversible blindness. Blinding trachoma is prevalent in many of the poorest and developing countries. Overall, Africa is the most badly affected continent, with 18.2 million cases of active trachoma (which makes up 85.3% of all cases globally) and 3.2 million cases of Trichiasis (which accounts for 44.1% of all cases globally).

Although trachoma can be cured if detected soon, its high prevalence rate has led researchers to conclude that applying prevention procedures is a lot better than making endeavors to cure it. For a better appreciation of the magnitude of the effects of trachoma, it has to be measured not just in terms of trachoma's prevalence and the prevalence of blindness it causes but also its effects on the socio-economic conditions of millions of people in Africa.

Based on the current understanding of the epidemiology of trachoma and its risk factors, the WHO has endorsed what is known as the SAFE (Surgery, Antibiotics, Facial hygiene, Environmental sanitation) strategy for countries implementing trachoma control programs. The SAFE Strategy is an innovative public health approach designed to treat and prevent trachoma. A lot has been achieved in the African region over the past several years in mapping (Global Trachoma Mapping Project), planning (Trachoma Action Plan), and implementation of interventions (SAFE), advancing knowledge of trachoma through operations research and clinical trials.

Trachoma is strongly associated



with poverty and low personal hygiene. According to the data of the national blindness prevention and Control Program of the Ministry of Health (MoH), trachoma is a gradually developing disease that can be dangerous to the eye for an extended period. The occurrence of trachoma in a patient can be detected in five stage before it reaches its most severe stage. During the first stage of the disease, small acnes are detected in the eyelid. Then in the next stage, the eye sustains some infection. In the third stage the scarring of the



eyelid occurs, and this leads to the fourth stage, trichiasis, where the ingrown eyelash keeps pricking the center of the eye. The last stage is characterized by severe corneal opacity that can grow into blindness. In the absence of personal hygiene, trachoma can be easily transmitted from person to person through flies and by sharing the same towel or the same bed, and from an infected mother to a child.

Trachoma is endemic in Eritrea, and the MoH has been conducting baseline surveys and interventions since 2006 to detect its prevalence

in all six regions and 58 sub-zones (districts). Although nationally trachoma accounts for only 1% of all the causes of blindness in Eritrea, national surveys have shown that in the past in eight out of the 35 sub-regions of Debub, Gash Barka, and Northern Red Sea regions, it had been a major health problem that called for intervention.

In 2011, the second round of survey was conducted by the MoH in the remaining three regions -- Anseba, Maekel, and Southern

Red Sea -- to determine the prevalence of trachoma across the three regions. The prevalence was less than 5% for children aged 1-9 across the regions and less than 1% for adults in both Maekel and Southern Red Sea regions; the prevalence in Anseba region was 3.8%.

In 2014, the MoH did a survey to assess Eritrea's progress towards the elimination of trachoma as a public health problem. As part of the survey, current knowledge on the spread and magnitude of the effects of trachoma in Eritrea was reviewed and compiled.

According to the survey, medicine was given out in three rounds of drug distribution campaigns in all the infected sub-regions, and the results were positive. According to the six-year impact assessment, the sub-regions of Adi Kuala, Nakfa, and Senafe have made remarkable progress in the reduction of children's trachoma prevalence rate. And Anseba region has shown a slight increase in the prevalence rate of trachoma, and a regular impact assessment was executed to keep the figure at its minimum rate.

Similar ongoing efforts have been made across the country to

over the past four years. The first measure taken by the MoH has been to continue to progressively reduce the prevalence of trachoma to less than 5% and then aim for the total elimination of the disease.

Moreover, the MoH has worked to bring about behavioral change in the society by raising awareness about the methods of prevention, including personal and environmental hygiene. Efforts have also been made to ensure fair distribution of drugs in the regions and to conduct continuous assessments in the regions that are prone to high incidences of trachoma infections. The existence



reduce the prevalence rate to less than 5%. In 2018, the national blindness prevention and control program was initiated to make a national impact assessment, and in 2019, a surveillance program was scheduled to declare Eritrea trachoma free by 2020.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there have been some challenges, but the MoH has made progress towards the elimination of trachoma

and fair distribution of healthcare facilities all over the country, including remote areas, have made treatments using antibiotics and surgery for Trichiasis possible.

Eritrea is one of the African countries that have approached the phase of total elimination of trachoma, and the MoH is working hard to get Eritrea certified by the WHO, officially declaring it trachoma free.





## SpotLight

# Eritrea's Agricultural Progress in Different Sub-Sectors

*Mr. Semere; let's begin with the background of the Agricultural Extension Department.*

The Department of Agricultural Extension has been undergoing numerous structural reforms since the wake of independence. It was established as Land Resources and Crops Development Department in 1994 until it was reformed anew in 2003 as the Department of Agricultural Development in line with the overall structural reform of the Ministry of Agriculture. Its mandates were also restructured as per the new changes encompassing animal resources and animal health-related tasks. It was finally revised in 2011 to have the current structure which includes comprehensive Agricultural Commodities. In addition to the three technical divisions, the department has supportive units like Planning and Statistics; and Agricultural Input Supply (the latter was moved to Administration and Finance in 2023). Each division has its own units; Natural Resources and Irrigation Development as well as Animal and Plant Health Divisions respectively have three units while the Crops and Livestock Development Division has 11 units.

*What is the overall size of arable farmland in the country, before proceeding to the progress of Agricultural Development?*

Eritrea has a total of about 2.1 million hectares of cultivable farmland. The 1.2 million hectares are conducive for rain-fed agriculture and the 600 thousand hectares are favorable for irrigation. Also, there has been variation in figures due to various conditions, statistical data since 2021 indicated that around 500,000 hectares, which constitutes 24% of the potential farm areas, have annually been cultivated. 93% of the total figure are farmlands that have been cultivated alongside soil and water conservation activities while the 7% has been cultivated through irrigation systems. There has been an increase of 54% when the total area cultivated in 1992 is compared to that of farmland cultivated in 2021.

*Let's have a look at the activities of the Divisions starting with the Natural Resources and Irrigation Development?*

As its name indicates, the mandate of NRIDD, is the conservation and development of land resources. Based on the policy and strategy of the Ministry of Agriculture,

*The Agricultural Extension Department (AED) which is the major technical department at the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), surveys the implementation of Agricultural projects across the country in collaboration with all regional administrations. This department underwent numerous structural reforms since the establishment of the Ministry of Agriculture and currently carries out extensive activities in three divisions namely; Natural Resources and Irrigation Development Division (NRIDD), Crop and Livestock Development Division (CLDD) as well as Animal and Plants Health Division (APHD). The following is an interview with Mr. Semere Amlesom, Director General of the Department.*

this division works in redressing farmlands and water catchment areas that were depreciated due to various reasons and thereby advancing the agriculture sector through a modern and mechanized irrigation system that is anchored on soil and water conservation activities. It is in line with this vision that the government and people of Eritrea have been carrying out soil and water conservation activities since independence.

*What are the advancements in the construction of water reservoirs?*

A: The country has registered visible achievements in the construction of water reservoirs. The total number of big and small dams which was 138 in the wake of independence rose to 785 in 2021. The total amount of water impounded in water reservoir structures is now about 300 million cubic meters. This is an indication that concerted efforts are being made by the government.

*What about the developments in the introduction and usage of irrigation systems and new*



*agricultural technologies?*

65,000 hectares of the 600,000 hectares of the potential farmland have been cultivated through modern and traditional irrigation systems in the last 31 years. The 37 thousand hectares are through surface irrigation, 23,000 hectares through canal irrigation systems, 1,500 through drip irrigation, and 2,800 hectares through sprinkler irrigation systems. Concerted actions

have been taken to promote and increase irrigation systems in the post-independence period. Hence, irrigation through canal systems has been raised to 23,000 hectares which resulted in an increase in the supply of fruits and vegetables to markets throughout the year. The introduction



of drip and sprinkler irrigation systems to conserve water and boost agricultural produce has been quite encouraging. Significant experiences have been gained in the introduction of renewable energy for irrigation activities which were aimed at

we have gained valuable experiences from machinery and technology-assisted irrigation activities, we are making effective preparations to revive it to the best level.

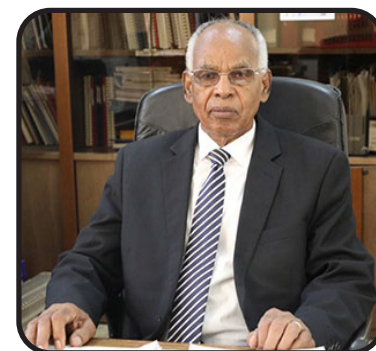
*Let's move to crop development and the ratio of distribution of*

*pulses, cereal, and oil crops that have been cultivated?*

The five years strategic plan we have aims at reaching 50% of cereal crops 25% of pulses and 25% of oil crops by 2024. At this time, until the rainy season of 2022, the ratio is cereal 83% and 8% pulses while oil crop is 9% of the total. There is much to be done to achieve the set-out goal.

*Distribution of improved crop seeds and fruits has been among the priorities of the department; could you please tell us about the achievement gained in this area?*

The introduction and promotion of select seeds is the mandate of the National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI). Among the varieties of seeds that have been developed in the institution, 14 improved seeds of cereal crops such as six varieties of wheat, three varieties of barley, one variety of maize and sorghum, and three varieties of millet have been distributed through AED to farmers. In the rain-fed farms, the improved varieties have now boosted produce of Sorghum from 8 quintals in a hectare to 20 quintals, Millet from 6 to 15 quintals per hectare, wheat from 12 to 25 quintals, and barley from 8 to 17 quintals per hectare as compared to the production of such crops with that of the pre-independence period.



*How is the progress in fruits and vegetable farms in the early independence period compared with that of the current status? What are the priority areas of AEDs in the promotion of these commodities?*

The total farm area for vegetable farms in 1991 covered 4,731 hectares and that of fruits was 192 hectares. This figure has increased by four folds to 18,000 hectares in vegetables and that of fruits increased to 5,000 hectares showing a total growth of 26 folds. In the period between 1992 and 2022 vegetable production has increased by six-fold while fruits increased by 71-fold.

In line with the efforts to boost the production of fruits, around 423,000 seedlings of three types of temperate fruits such as apple, peach, and olive trees have been imported and distributed to farmers in temperate areas. Mushroom production started in a smaller amount as of 2015 in collaboration with the Eritrean Women Agribusiness Association. This association has distributed 25 quintals of mushrooms to markets. We are now working to further expand the production of mushrooms.

*Cultivation of potatoes is at the top in vegetables farm and what are the gains registered so far?*

Cultivation of potatoes is, indeed, among the top achievements gained in the vegetable farm. Potato used to be cultivated in the highland areas of the country only. As per the data from the National Potato Conference conducted in 2022, the production of potatoes has reached an average of 160 quintals per hectare while there have been farmers who registered higher production. Production has increased by 50% compared to 1991.

The Ministry of Agriculture conducted successful pilot projects of potato cultivation in 2021 in the Gash-Barka and Northern Red Sea region in the cold season from November to February in a bid to ensure the supply of ware potatoes throughout the year.

**C**ontinued on page 6



# OPINION

## Students' Knowledge of History Crucial for Nation Building

Simon Weldemichael

Nations that do not have a grip on their history are like individuals who suffer from dementia. In other

than [their] own." Somewhere between early childhood and late adolescence, every Eritrean student is expected to learn the skills and values that prepare him/her to be a

simultaneously develop the ability to be rational, thoughtful, and independent citizens.

A good citizen is also one who abides by the laws and is socialized into the values of the country. The citizenship education textbook for grade six includes chapters that discuss the values of respecting others, caring about other people, obeying the law, caring about the environment, becoming a responsible, honest, and hardworking citizen.

By taking lessons in citizenship education students are expected to build attitudes and values needed to be a responsible and hardworking citizen; to demonstrate an understanding of the ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural diversity of the Eritrean



words, a nation of citizens that do not have good knowledge of their history is a nation that has lost its identity. One means of ensuring that young Eritreans are aware of their history and identity is through the teaching of history and citizenship education.

I worked as a teacher for five years teaching students from elementary to post secondary level. The young students' knowledge of their country's history is impressive. This is demonstrated clearly during students' festivals and the celebration of national holidays. The poetry, drama, songs, and other genres of art performed by students during Independence Day and Martyrs Day show the young generation's level of awareness of Eritrea's history. Their active participation in national celebrations is a sign of their strong emotional tie with and a sense of belonging to the nation.

Citizenship education is included in the Eritrean curriculum and is offered to students starting from grade four. It focuses on the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that have great contribution toward the development of young students to exercise their full potential. As stated in the introduction of the textbook, the purpose of citizenship education is "to help [students] develop [their] critical thinking skills, consider a wide range of political, social, ethical and moral issues, and explore opinions and ideas other

responsible and an active citizen.

The school is Eritrea's primary institution for socializing its citizens, and citizenship education helps students to connect what they have learnt in class with issues out there in the society. Indeed, through its curriculum, it is the school that is entrusted with the mission of defining what it means to be an active and responsible citizen and ensuring that there is a common understanding of the rights and obligations of citizenship.

Education must serve as a means of transmitting core values of the society to the young generation of students. In Eritrea, as in many countries, formal schooling is the primary instrument for citizenship education. Eritrean schools have taken the responsibility of preparing young people to be active citizens. The introduction of citizenship education in Eritrean elementary, junior, and high schools must be seen in the context of preparing the young generation for the higher task of nation building. It's aimed at developing the young citizens' knowledge about the community's values and the nation's history.

People who study history develop the ability to compare the differences among cultures and social systems. Through citizenship education, Eritrea inducts young students into its customs, values, and behaviors. Children are thus taught to fit into the existing social order and



society; to identify some of the major causes of revolutions in general and the Eritrean revolution in particular; to have understanding of the formation of the State of Eritrea, and to acquire the desired characteristics of an Eritrean patriot.

Knowledge of history is very

important for nation building, and young Eritrean students should continue to be interested in learning the history of their nation. And the teaching of history should aim not only at equipping students with knowledge of historical facts, but also introducing them to ways of thinking, understanding, and interpreting history.





## SpotLight

# Eritrea's Agricultural Progress in Different.....

**C**ontinued from page 4

The pilot projects were carried out in nine sub-zones of the Gash-Barka region in about 36.8 hectares of farmland, in two sub-zones of the Northern Red Sea region in 2.7 hectares while in 6.8 hectares in the Southern Red Sea region. Commendable produce was obtained from a total of 900 quintals of the improved seed of potato cultivated in 46.3 hectares across the regions. The produce per hectare, in the Shamboko sub-zone is 276 quintals, in Ghinda'e 74 quintals, and 170 quintals in Afambo. Such results indicate that the lowland areas of the country will play significant roles in increasing potato production.

**What is the situation of livestock resources?**

Eritrea is self-sufficient in the supply of livestock. A survey carried out in 1997 shows that the number of cattle is 1.9 million, the number of sheep and goats is 6.8 million and the number of camels was 300,000. There has been an increase of 1% each year and thus a reasonable estimate in the carried number of cattle would be 2.4 million, the number of sheep and goats 8.6 million, and that of camel 400,000.

A comprehensive assessment of the number of livestock would be carried out in collaboration with all regional administrations to understand the exact number of livestock resources. In a bid to augment the supply of alternative supply of meat, the Ministry of Agriculture has in 2015 and 2017 imported 220 rabbits, increased their number to 6,000, and distributed them to beneficiaries. Around 180 farmers are now breeding rabbits on a small scale. Breeding activities on selected pigs and horse breeds have already been in process and since remarkable progress has been gained, efforts are underway to speed up the program.

**How about the progress in dairy and its product as well as the interventions taken to boost production?**

It is hard to quantify the amount of milk produced in the country. Traditionally milk has been supplied from households and in remote villages of the country. So, we will only focus on intensively kept dairy. The number of dairy cows was around 13,000 in 1991 and this figure increased to more than 20,000 in 2021/22. The amount of milk from

Holstein Friesian and crossbreeds was 8.5 million liters as opposed to above 18.4 million liters at this time. The average amount of milk from a Holstein Friesian was 12-15 liters per day in 300 milking days; the amount from the cross breeds was 8-12 in 300 milking days with 6-8 liters of milk in 210 milking days have been gained from indigenous Barka species. Collectively there has been a growth of 20 – 30% in milk production while more needs to be done to boost production to the best level.

Extensive efforts have been made to augment animal feed. In 1992 only 67 hectares were cultivated for animal feed. This figure was dramatically changed with more production of animal feed that rose to around 2,000 hectares in 2021 resulting in the production of more than 77 tons per hectare of animal feed. Since 1998, the Ministry of Agriculture has been assisting farmers in dairy farms through the distribution of churners, milk testing equipment, and other milking equipment along with accessories in the form of donations and loans to associations of dairy farmers and individual farmers. Milking machines and stainless steel containers were also distributed.

Much has been achieved in dairy processing activities. There were four dairy processing plants in 1991 and this number increased to 18 at this time. Most of the plants have been engaged in the production of yogurt and beneficiaries in cities have been gaining access to quality and healthy products and thus importation of poor-quality yoghurt stopped. Production of dairy products such as; cheese and butter have also increased. Three milk collection and cooling structures established in Anseba and Southern regions have been dispensed to associations of dairy farmers and the facilities are currently providing effective services.

**How is the status of poultry activities and the progress so far made in the field?**

Serious tasks have been accomplished in this field. There were hardly any poultry activities in the pre-independence period except holding chicken at a household level in the rural populations. Considering such conditions, the Ministry of Agriculture imported improved varieties of chicken and distributed them to farmers in the early years of independence. Around 113,000 parent stocks and over seven million one-month-old chickens were

distributed in the last 32 years. The distribution of chicken was increasing annually in terms of number and distribution. In 1992, for instance, 20,000 chickens were distributed to beneficiaries but this number rose to over 880,000 in 2020-21 growing to 44-fold.

**Coming to beekeeping, how is the distribution of bee hives and improvement in honey production?**

The number of bee colonies was estimated to be around 19,000 in 1991. Through steady progress, the number of bee colonies has raised to 30,000 in 2021. Even though the progress being made is not so big, it has paved a venue for modern apiculture in Eritrean society. Around 65,000 of the bee colonies are managed in modern hives. Honey production is mostly determined by the condition and distribution of flowers. Although honey production has been fluctuating due to climate change and drought, honey production has increased by 46% when compared to that of 1991. The price of honey per kilo has declined from 600 Nakfa to below 200 Nakfa due to an increase in production. Efforts are being made to transform and modernize beekeeping with the introduction of Top bar hive, which is easy to make and manage.

**What are the major activities carried out in transforming the livelihood of households, particularly the livelihood of women?**

Relative progress has been made through various activities carried out to improve the living standards of women and particularly the livelihood of women-headed households. The support includes the distribution of livestock, training on handicrafts, and provision of improved seed and water pump motors among others.

The most important of all was the distribution of improved energy-saving stoves 'Adhanet' aimed at reducing pollution which has a direct effect on the health of women and in the prevention of deforestation for firewood. Around 170,000 stoves have been distributed across the country and 17,000 women were trained on how to make improved stoves and the trainees on their part trained other women.

**Animal and plant Health are major issues. Let's start with animal health problems in the country and mitigation actions taken to prevent and control such diseases.**

Animal diseases that were

prevalent in the pre-independence period and post-independence period include Rinderpest, Brucellosis, Tuberculosis, Anthrax, Peste Des Petits Ruminants (PPR), Lumpy Skin disease in cattle (LSD), Sheep and Goat Pox, Foot and Mouth Disease(FMD).

Actions taken to prevent and control such diseases include compulsory vaccination services, raising awareness on how to prevent the spread of contagious diseases and improving effective ways of preventing brucellosis and tuberculosis, introduction of medicines and vaccines, and establishment of veterinary clinics in all sub-regions of the country.

Considering the number of livestock and their distribution, the government established veterinary clinics in all sub-regions of the country. The establishment of 76 veterinary clinics across the country has alleviated casualties of animals to the lowest level. A total of 45 of the overall 76 veterinary facilities are equipped with renewable energy sources.

**Tell us about animal diseases the country prevented and eradicated?**

Rinderpest was among the deadly animal disease that cause dire consequences in livestock resources negatively affecting the economy of the country and farmers. Once an outbreak of disease occurs it reaches vast areas and kills around 90% of infected livestock. Considering the huge losses this disease causes, concerted actions have been taken not only to control but to totally eradicate it from eastern and western Africa in a coordinated manner. The disease was totally eradicated from Eritrea as per the set-out plan. The prevention and control intervention of rinderpest started in Eritrea during the struggle for independence and a comprehensive vaccination campaign was carried out in 1997. Continuous surveillance was carried out to ensure the livestock developed immunity against the disease and blood samples were collected from calves to check its prevalence. Research conducted in 2005 shows that the disease has been eradicated from the country. As a result of their relentless efforts, Eritrea was awarded a medal and a certificate from the International Animal Health Organization for the eradication of Rinderpest. The total eradication of the disease from the country has been a great relief to farmers.

**Could you brief us about**

**vaccination programs carried out in the country?**

The Government carried out compulsory vaccination programs from 1993-1997. Hence the occurrences of contagious animal diseases were reduced from 67 to 32. Since the result of the veterinary services was encouraging, vaccination programs have been carried out on 2.5 million livestock annually since 2013. This intervention has reduced the prevalence of animal diseases to the lowest level.

**What are the activities carried out in the prevention of plant diseases?**

Extensive studies were carried out in 1992 to prevent and control the prevalence of plant diseases. The surveillance was mainly on pests, weeds, and various types of plant diseases. The Ministry of Agriculture carried out concerted actions to prevent pests, delivered awareness-raising seminars to farmers, distributed manual and motorized pesticide sprayers, and introduced varieties of pest prevention mechanisms. At this time, bio-pesticides have been introduced and commendable achievement is being registered.

**What about the tasks accomplished in combating migratory pests and desert locusts?**

Eritrea is among the exemplary countries in controlling migratory pests. In the last 30 years, the country controlled the infestation of desert locusts in around 520,000 hectares with the collaboration of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of local government, active participation of people, and members of Eritrean Defense Forces.

The outbreak of the African Army Worm has been occurring during the rainy seasons in all regions of the country. In the last 30 years, infestation of such pests in over 30,000 hectares was effectively controlled.

Pest infestation particularly of quela-quela birds mainly occurs in the western part of the country in the Gash-Barka region. Efficient controlling activities were carried out on over 5,000 hectares over the years. Moreover, when the migratory fall armyworm infestation broke out in 2018, Eritrea carries out exemplary and immediate controlling measures.

**A Monthly Newsletter Prepared by the Public Relations Division, Ministry of Agriculture.**



# Photographers Corner

Photo: Abrham Beyene  
February 2022

# Northern Escarpment: Around Filfil Solomuna



# LOCAL NEWS

## ASMARA MUSIC SCHOOL GRADUATES 20 STUDENTS

The Asmara Music School has graduated 20 students with certificates.

According to Mr. Elias Woldegebriel, director of the school, the graduates have been provided three years of training in various domains of music, including music history, music technology, group music performance, and traditional music instruments, among others.

Mr. Elias also said that the music school has provided two years of training to the National Military Marching Band in various musical instruments.

Noting that the Asmara Music School is exerting strong effort in the development of music in the country, Mr. Tesfay Seium, Director General of Technical and Vocational Training at the Ministry of Education, called on the graduates to play a due part in the development of art works in the country.

A representative of the graduates, on his part, commending the training opportunity provided, expressed readiness to develop their capacity through practice and play a due part in the country's music development.

Asmara Music School is graduating students for the 21st time.



## YOUTH SOCIAL SCIENCE TRAINING

The National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students branch in the Northern Red Sea Region organized social science training program for 61 youth, including 25 females from the sub-zones of Afabet, Nakfa, and Karora.

The training included the basic concept of nation and nationalism, information technology as well as youth and environmental protection.

At the conclusion event of the training organized on 7 July, Mr. Tekle Zere, head of Political and Organizational Affairs of the union branch, said that the training program was part of the effort to develop the overall capacity of the youth and commended the interest the trainees demonstrated during the program.

The trainees also conducted environmental sanitation, planted tree seedlings, and tour to historical tranches in the vicinity of Afabet.

Speaking at the occasion, Mr. Ahmed Mohammed-Nur Rejib, administrator of the Afabet sub-zone, called on the trainees to apply the training they received in the nation-building process and become exemplary to fellow youth.

## RESOLVE TO STRENGTHEN UNITY AND CONTRIBUTION

Nationals in Israel expressed resolve to strengthen unity and organizational capacity and contribution to the national development drives.

The nationals expressed their commitment at a public seminar organized in Tel Aviv.

At the seminar, Mr. Solomon Kinfe, Charge d'Affairs at the Eritrean Embassy in Israel gave an extensive briefing on the objective situation in the homeland as well as regional and global developments and the role of Diaspora nationals in the nation-building process.

The participants conducted extensive discussions on the issues raised at the seminar and adopted various recommendations.





# Senafe Sub-Zone: Home to Important Historical Places

**Mussie Efriem**

*Could you please give us an overview about Senafe Sub-zone?*

Senafe is one of the 12 sub-zones in the Southern region. It is inhabited by two ethnic groups -- the Saho and the Tigigna -- who live in 118 villages. It was founded during the Italian occupation in 1915 and borders Tserona sub-zone to the west and Northern Red Sea region to the east. Its population today is over 20,000. In terms of social services, there are schools ranging from kindergarten to secondary school, a modern hospital, potable water and electricity.

The highest point of Eritrea, Mount Soira, is located here with approximately 3013 meters above sea level while the region's lowest elevation is approximately 1150 meters. The climate of the region is very pleasant and comfortable to live. The sub-zone is approximately 1211 square kilometers, of which more than 16,000 hectares is arable land. The residents' major sources of income are trade and agriculture. Senafe is the sub-zone's main market place, and the town of Serha has recently began to serve as a market place once a week.

*Tell us about the tourist attractions in the sub-zone?*

There are several tourist attractions in the region. The historical and ancient landmarks within the sub-zone include Belew Kelew, Metera, and Keskesse monuments; monasteries such as Debre Libanos (Ham), Enda Meskel, and Abune Anbes; and mountains such as, Soira, Eritrea's highest mountain, and

*Following is an abridged translation of Senafe sub-zone's administrator Mr. Idris Ali Shker's interview published in Hadas Eritrea.*

other prominent mountains such as Metera, Sayim, Tarika, and Keskesse. There is also the Abune-Anbes celebration (also known as the Smejana festival), a long-standing religious ceremony held in September following Qudus Yehannes, which is a popular tourist destination. The festival is a unifying pilgrimage that brings all religions together in one square while also playing an important role in protecting and enhancing culture and tourism.

*How would you describe the sub-zones resources and problems, as well as the people's engagement and commitment to the development struggle?*

Because most parts of the sub-zone's territory border Ethiopia, it is a region with the potential to grow when peace prevails. Serha, for example, can serve as a land port for commercial exchange with Ethiopia as it did in the early years following Eritrea's Independence. When it comes to development work, the people have been working without reservation alongside the Eritrean Defense Forces. As a result, 10,000-20,000 seedlings are planted each year, and we're constructing a new dam with two or three 'check dams' above it. We are also constructing a new health center in Mezba.

*How many schools have been built in the sub-zone?*

In the sub-zone, there are 17 kindergartens, 28 primary schools,

10 middle schools, 4 secondary schools, as well as 14 centers that teach the basics that are aimed at eradicating illiteracy. When it comes to education, we can claim that we have sufficient facilities.

*Health-care coverage in the Sub-Zone?*

We have one hospital, one health center, six health stations, and two clinics. In line with the Ministry of Health's policy, regular cleaning tasks are performed in the sub-zone for environmental sanitation and to fight against communicable



working on it.

*What about transportation and other social services?*

There are nearly no places where automobiles cannot enter, with the exception of the eastern slopes adjoining Foro and Gel'alo. There is public transportation that

*What about irrigated farming?*

Our sub-zone is quite weak in terms of irrigation considering our rich land and good infrastructure of water dams and distribution centers. Of course, we do have few irrigated farms at Adi Abagi, Enda Dashim, Enda Gunaguna, and Enda Abune Anbes, which don't meet the needs of the sub-zone. We shouldn't have brought fruits from Asmara and Adi-Keih when we've enough natural resources in our sub-zone.

*Do you have plans to boost this?*

Extension workers and other experts from the Ministry of Agriculture have inspected the area. And the development zones



diseases. The communities in the sub-zone are constructing toilets as part of the nationwide campaign to ensure that every household has its own toilet to make Eritrea open-defecation free. Of course, long-established ways of life cannot be altered overnight, but we are

serves the residents of the area as far as the country's highest point, Emba-Soira. From Senafe to Serha, there is an asphalt road. This route serves the communities in villages located along the road. As a result, the transport service, which previously didn't go beyond Serha, is now being extended to Anbesete-Geleba. The existing dirt road routes have been extended by deploying local communities. Harat's public transportation service from Senafe to Dashim is currently fully functioning. The remaining links to nearby villages are being worked on so that public transport service can begin soon. The service will now cover Menekuseito and other areas. Wells have been dug, water pipelines laid, and electricity provided. We do not have water deficit in the sub-zone since we have sufficient groundwater and water pipelines. We also have water trucks and distribution stations to provide drinking water to the residents.

are identified. It has been working to eliminate artificial fertilizer and is continually being treated to create compost, because artificial fertilizers hurt crops and erode soil minerals. Furthermore, farmers have a difficult time delivering it on time. Even if they do get it, it will be costly. As a result, the only solution is to focus on natural fertilizers. It is also time to move on to bigger opportunities, therefore we will work hard and expand.

*What are the plans for reforestation?*

We used to have a nursery at Adi Abagi and were able to grow 200,000 seedlings. By setting up more nurseries, we'll boost the number and are prepared to offer more than 750,000 tree seedlings this year. Our biggest hope is for the nurseries to generate next year good seedlings in terms of quantity and quality if all of the essential facilities are made available.

