

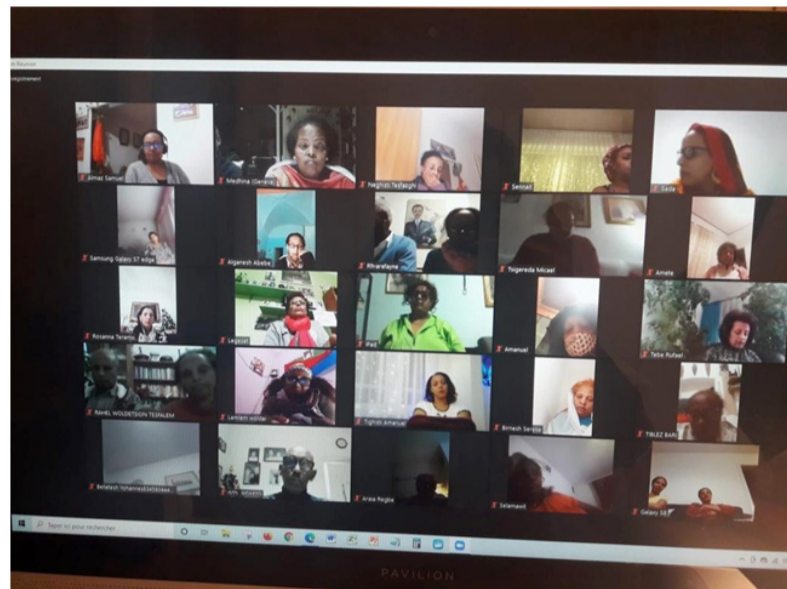


SEMINAR TO NUEW MEMBERS

The President of the National Union of Eritrean Women, Ms. Tekea Tesfamichael conducted virtual seminar to members of the union branch in Europe.

In the seminar that was conducted from 23 December to 5 January, where board members and heads of branches took part, Ms. Tekea gave briefing on the development programs of the union.

Commending the participation of Eritrean women in realizing national independence and safe guarding the national sovereignty, Ms. Tekea underlined need to strengthen organizational capacity in the implementation of national



development programs. Ms. Tekea also called for strengthening the role of women in preserving peace, unity and the noble societal values.

SIX NEW SCHOOLS CONSTRUCTED IN SRSR

As part of the effort being made to expand educational services in the Southern Red Sea region, six schools constructed by the Eastern Command have been inaugurated.

Stating that the 6.2 million Nakfa worth new schools include 5 preschools and one elementary school, Mr. Tesfamariam Yohannes, Director General of infrastructural development in the Southern Red Sea Region, said that the schools are built in Afambo, Central Denkalia sub-zone as well as in Beylul and Wade Alale, South Denkalia sub-zone.

outcome is being registered in the areas particularly in Wade resulting in the increased number of students; Mr. Tesfamariam stated that the construction of the schools is expected to alleviate the lack of adequate class rooms in the areas.

Mr. Tesfamariam further said that 10 of the 11 schools planned to be constructed in the Region in 2020 have been finalized that the remaining one will be constructed in this New Year.

With the construction of the new educational facilities, the number of schools in the Southern Red Sea region has increased to over 90.

Encouraging educational



FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO FAMILIES OF MARTYRS

Mr. Yosief Fesehay, acting head of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare branch in the Southern Red Sea region, reported that over 4 million Nakfa has been disbursed in support of families of martyrs and disadvantaged citizens.

Indicating that the Government has been exerting effort to ensure the wellbeing of citizens, Mr. Yosief commended the youth workers organization in the region for assuming the responsibility to support 30 families of martyrs.

Pointing out that more attention has been given to support disadvantaged citizens with a view to ease the burden they might encounter due to 'stay at home' guidelines to combat the spread of COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Yosief called for community based involvement to support disadvantaged citizens.

According to Mr. Yosief 53 disadvantaged citizens in the sub-zones of Araeta, Central and South Denkalia as well as 23 disadvantaged citizens in the port city of Assab have been rehabilitated with livestock and other materials.

Mr. Yisief went on to say that the support to families of martyrs and disadvantaged citizens will continue in cooperation with partners.

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Forty patients have been diagnosed positive for COVID-19 in tests carried out yesterday at Quarantine Centers in Asmara (13), Central Region; and, Dibarawa (7) and Mendefera (20) in the Southern Region.

On the other hand, One hundred thirty one patients who have been receiving medical treatment in hospitals in the Central Region (8), and Southern Region (123), have recovered fully and released from these facilities.

The total number of recovered patients to-date has accordingly risen to 934 while the number of deaths stands at 6.

The total number of confirmed cases in the country to-date has increased to 1596.

Ministry of Health
Asmara
12 January 2021

HEADS OF ERITREAN NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN SAUDI ARABIA

Ms. Weini Gerezghiher, Charge d'Affairs at the Eritrean Embassy in Saudi Arabia, on 8 January held seminar to heads of national organizations in Riyadh.

At the seminar, Ms. Weini gave briefing on the objective situation in the homeland and called on

nationals to take advantage of the opportunities being created.

Ms. Weini also expressed appreciation for the contribution the Eritrean nationals extended to the effort by the people and Government of Eritrea to combat the spread of COVID-19 pandemic.

Regarding the consular service, Ms. Weini said that compared to that of 2019 the consular service has declined by 37% in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

She also gave appropriate response to questions raised by the participants of the seminar.



Birth of a Lake

Part II and Final

Kesete Ghebrehiwet

The assignment given to Keyih-Bahri Construction Company to build Kerkebet Dam was the first of its kind and, therefore, quite demanding which included the installation of piles for the foundation and erecting concrete panels in the construction of a 23-meter high dam. But the company's competence in the construction of bridges proved useful for such an exclusive opportunity.

Before moving to Kerkebet, Keyih-Bahri Construction Company was engaged in the construction of major bridges in Alebu and Tokombia, Gash-Barka region, and other parts of the country using a newly introduced BG 22 drilling machine, which was instrumental in the construction of the dam's foundation.

In 2009, a team consisting of Mr. Mebrahtu Mael, Manager of Keyih-Bahri Construction Company, along with other construction experts moved from Massawa to Kerkebet to carry out a preliminary assessment of the suggested dam's site. At that very time, the team came to understand the challenge of building a dam in an arid zone that is characterized by a hot climate and sand ridge which needs deep drilling of over 20 meters to get to the inner most part of a metamorphic rock at the riverbed.



Mr. Mebrahtu Mael

Work on the dam's foundation was to be completed before rain started flowing from the highlands. So, BG machine operators and members of the Eritrean Defense Forces worked day and night to speed up the construction and help make the project a reality. While the construction of the foundation was underway, extensive preparations were made in mobilizing the needed machinery, including around 25 heavy trucks, crushers, loaders, bulldozers, excavators and construction materials to the dam's site.

The foundation of the dam was constructed 22 meters below the surface, penetrating the sand ridge accumulated in the riverbed; this increased the underground water resource. "This development increased the underground water level of the areas 20 kms away from Kerkebet," Mr. Mebrahtu said. "Residents of kerkebet sub-zone and other localities reported that their surrounding has been transformed to wetland owing to the construction of water retaining structures."

Mr. Salah Ahmedin, a member of Adi-Halo Infrastructural Projects and former member of Keyih-Bahri Construction Company, said that the first phase of the construction of Kerkebet Dam, especially the finalization of the foundation, attests to the project's success in boosting both underground and surface water of Kerkebet sub-zone. "Once the piles for the foundation were erected, we were able to harvest water after drilling just one meter, which is indicative of the site's richness in underground water," Mr. Saleh elaborated.

The challenge the company encountered due to an early start of the rain season in the highlands was quite worrisome as water filled the construction site. This challenge re-

quired exceptional expertise of the company's young engineers who worked day and night, including on holidays, to come up with a remedial solution to the heightening threat that could wash away everything along the site. Mr. Saleh said that amidst such a challenge President Isaias's frequent visit to the construction site was a great motivation for them, boosting their capacity to move forward for a better accomplishment.

The construction of concrete dam along Barka and Aliet rivers and an earth embankment around Amalaiet had to go simultaneously to get rid of possible flooding through any of the embankments that were under construction. "We had to construct the reservoir and the three sections were to be finalized as soon as possible. The construction of this massive dam required over 70,000 cubic meters of stone, 20,000 cubic meters of mortar and over 600 quintals of steel, and all these were carried out against wind, hot climate and freezing nights," Mr. Saleh explained.

The company had also to prepare floating water pumps to be used in the distribution of water to the farms through the active engagement of skilled general metal workers and plumbers who played an instrumental role in the installation of pipe lines for the development of large farms that transformed Kerkebet sub-zone into a green area, giving livestock herders easy access to animal feed.

By 2013, major infrastructural works, including the construction of the dam, installation of water pipe lines along with other facilities were accomplished. After achieving the set out plan, the team that participated in the construction of the dam moved to Adi-Halo to launch a vocational training center to train the youth in a variety of disciplines with a view to boosting the number of

skilled human resource in the fields of agriculture, general metal works and operating heavy construction machineries among others.

As Barka River flows for more than six months in a year, the construction period was seasonal (mainly January to April). Applauding the concerted efforts made to build the strategic dam, Mr. Mebrahtu said that the construction of a 17-meter high wall of the dam was completed in just five months with active participation of members of the Eritrean Defense Forces. Machine operators, construction workers and technical experts had to work from 16 to 18 hours a day while others were assigned in four shifts, and each shift had 250 workers. The construction work continued at night which shortened the construction period and minimized the operational cost.

In the period between 2015 and 2020, the trained youth from Adi-Halo moved to Kerkebet to do additional work such as the installation of concrete panels of six meters to raise the overall height of the dam from 17 to 23 meters, bringing its capacity to 330 million cubic meters of water. As excessive water changed the dam's structure, in March 2020 another team from Adi-Halo engaged in the 4th and 5th phases of the dam's construction which involved an expansion of the spillways, installation of extra water tanks and pipe lines and other construction work.

Eng. Mohammed Ata, Deputy Manager of Bidho Construction Company, said that the company's prior experience in the construction of dams and roads contributed to the successful completion of the earth embankment section of Kerkebet dam. "Rain was the main constraint we experienced during construction which forced us to speed up



Mr. Salah Ahmedin

our pace with the deployment of adequate machinery and around 200 diligent workers," Mr. Mohammed explained.

In 2014, Bidho Construction Company built a 3.4 km-long earth embankment to ensure that water flow from Aliet and Barka sections of kerkebet dam is retained in the expanded structure, leveled over 10,000 hectares of farm land and built roads linking the farm area with the dam.

Mr. Mebrahtu finally said that Eritrean and expatriate visitors expressed their appreciation of the construction of this massive dam by relying on local resources and expertise and the ingenuity in modifying machineries to suit particular construction needs. He added that the encouragement and tour of inspection from the leadership was quite motivating for the workers, and the experience gained in Kerkebet has transformed Keyih-Barhri Construction Company and boosted its confidence in building similar dams, including Gahtelay Dam.

Through integrated team work of construction companies, local communities, members of the Eritrean Defense Forces, regional and sub-zonal administrative bodies and other partners, and at a total cost of around one billion Nakfa, the birth of this massive dam became possible.



**ERITREA
PROFILE**

Published Every
Wednesday & Saturday

Acting Editor
Amanuel Mesfun

P.O.Box: 247

Tel: 11-41-14

Fax: 12-77-49

E-mail:

eritreaprofilenews@gmail.com

Advertisement: 12-50-13

Layout
Azmera Berhane
Aida Johar

OPINION

The International Year of Health and Care Workers

Dr. Fikrejesus Amahazion

**Note: the following is a collection of brief thoughts on recent happenings and issues related to Eritrea.*

1. The International Year of Health and Care Workers

This year, 2021, is officially recognized by the global community as the International Year of Health and Care Workers (IYHCW). The original decision came late last year when the World Health Organization (WHO) and its affiliated bodies made the designation in recognition of health and care workers' dedication to providing care during and despite the COVID-19 pandemic that has challenged health systems worldwide. Health and care workers include all those engaged in health services, public health and related areas, as well as those providing support to these activities. This broad category of workers encompasses health professionals such as doctors, nurses, midwives, pharmacists, and physiotherapists, in addition to allied health professionals, such as mental health workers, social care workers, occupational health workers, radiographers, laboratory workers, and others.

It is worth noting that the health and care sector not only helps to ensure the health, safety, rights, and protection of individuals and communities, it is also essential to development, provides a significant boost to the economy, and acts as a multiplier of economic growth. Furthermore, the health and care sector is also a major employer of women and helps to promote gender equality, which is generally regarded as an important social goal. For instance, data from the International Labor Organization (ILO) illustrates that globally, "women make up 70% of those employed in the health sector and, based on data available for close to 100 countries, 72% of skilled health occupations."

Here in Eritrea, from as far back as the independence struggle, health and care workers have been essential parts of the society and vital cogs within the general community. During the long

struggle, barefoot doctors and other health workers provided care and support to refugees, civilians, and of course formed a critical part of the liberation forces. More recently, without the countless skilled, competent, and committed health and care workers across the country, few, if not absolutely none, of Eritrea's significant achievements in health-related developments – such as the fact that it was one of the few countries in the developing world that entered the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals period having achieved most of the Millennium Development Goals targets on health – would have been possible. Of course, during the past year our nation's health and care workers have remained at the forefront of the challenging fight against the



COVID-19 pandemic, exhibiting great heroism, professionalism, and dedication. Ultimately, the fact that Eritrea, notwithstanding the recent and worrying increase in positive cases, has had a generally successful overall response to the pandemic is to a considerable degree down to the sheer commitment and dedication of its health and care workers.

As we begin a new year and usher in the IYHCW, we should all take a brief moment to reflect upon and show genuine appreciation for how our health and care workers have been so professional and dedicated to promoting the health, care, and well-being of all, particularly during this past year. Moreover, in addition to recognition and praise for the efforts of health and care workers, the IYHCW offers us, as a society, an opportunity to draw our attention to the need to



tackle the persistent challenges that they face and to make greater investments to support them. Thus, for example, renewed and expanded investments can be made in: education and training;

who is a board member of the Council of East and Central Africa Football Associations, is among the CHAN Organizing Committee members.

The upcoming CHAN tournament, originally scheduled for 2020, features 16 countries separated into four groups. Not to be confused with the larger Africa Cup of Nations, the CHAN tournament is a recent creation, created in 2007 and with the first competition held in 2009. CHAN rules stipulate that players participating in the competition must be based in their domestic leagues. This year's competition will run from 16 January to 7 February, with matches being played in three different Cameroonian cities: Yaoundé, Douala, and Limbe. Morocco, scheduled to compete in Group C, are the reigning CHAN champions.

With little doubt, the selection of Esayas to participate in the CHAN is a great personal and individual

achievement. At the same time, it is also something that we, as Eritreans, can cherish and be proud of: he is representing us all and flying the flag high. Moreover, what also makes his selection especially important is that it can help to grow and develop our local game, particularly in terms of contributing to professionalization, the improvement of levels of officiating, and raising technical standards.

Notably, Esayas, who has a long history and extensive background in local football, is also President of the Eritrea National Football Federation. The ENFF, which was founded in 1996, officially joined FIFA, football's governing body, and the Confederation of African Football, which oversees football on the continent, in 1998. Locally, the ENFF works to improve the development and growth of the game, organizes the Eritrean Premier League competition, and oversees the country's various national football teams.

establishing more medical, dental, and health sciences facilities and schools; broadening linkages with foreign partners and continuing professional development; improving working conditions; and ensuring the well-being and occupational safety of all our health and care workers. Additionally, more attention and focus can be placed upon our health care infrastructure (from primary to tertiary levels), as well as those working within it, in order to ensure access and enhanced quality delivery of services for all citizens.

2. Congratulations to Esayas Abraham, Head of ENFF...

Several days ago it was announced that Eritrea's Esayas Abraham Weldeyesus will be one of the officials at the 6th edition of the Total African Nations Championship (CHAN). Esayas,





Apprenticeship in Eritrean Families - the Cornerstone of Children's Later Life

Abraham Habte

After months of hard-work, most Eritrean farmers start to relax in January. Their hard-work starts in May, before the beginning of the main, summer rains. By July they finish tilling their plots of land and sowing them, and sometime later, another activity begins: the weeding of fields. By December, they finish harvesting the crops and they are ready to relax. During these months, after school, the children of the farmer contribute their shares of labor and, through involvement, learn the knowledge and skills necessary for survival as farmers. Parents take special interest in the apprenticeship of their children.

Parents do not equip their children with skills and knowledge only but also with useful attitudes and imbue them with their values. Children start looking after their parents' sheep and goats early in their childhood. Once they become a little older, Eritrean fathers teach their sons how to plough the field, and all the activities related to farming. They are taught how to yoke the oxen and plough the field without hurting the animals, the farmers' golden goose. They are also taught the value of diligence and hard-work, and through the numerous stories they are told, they learn social-friendly behavior and acts. Through the society's proverbs, in which it has stored its experiences and wisdom and with which Eritreans grace their utterances, they learn what made the society as it is - its strengths, its attitudes to life, and its challenges.

The roles of the father and the mother differ, and they share their different experiences with their children. Work in Eritrean communities is separated along gender lines: some activities are only for men while others are strictly for women, and for this reason, men and women have different experiences to share with their children, fathers mainly 'training' their sons as mothers coach their daughters.

The mother plays her role and teaches her daughter cooking and brewing skills, and shares what she has learnt through years of experience, and what she, in turn, learnt from her mother. It is obvious that young women in towns can learn some of these skills in cooking

and other schools. The daughter, as with the son, doesn't learn only skills and knowledge but also the society's attitudes: what makes a good wife, an attitude not always kind to women, which she doesn't get from cooking schools. Later, the young woman realizes these do not reflect her abilities and ambitions, and cannot determine her destiny, or even her role in society. She also learns to challenge them and, through her work and determination, to prove the society wrong about the ability and capacity of women.

Eritrean mothers take these informal lessons very seriously because they are aware that if (in the eyes of the community) their daughters failed to prove themselves as skillful wives later in their married lives, people would not blame the daughter, but her. In other words, the views and attitudes of the society play such a crucial part that they influence the mothers' efforts as they prepare their daughters for their later lives. They are aware of the significance of: "Ngual kitfelT, Ade reay." (To understand a young woman, observe her mother." The implied meaning is that mothers influence their daughters so much that the latter adopt the beliefs, attitudes, and values of their mothers to a large degree. It imparts the same meaning as "like father, like son" does to English language speakers.

Offered beauty or skills, a proverbial Eritrean woman chose beauty. "*Melkie habeni ember WuHlnetsi kab gorebietay ElqHo*". ("Give me beauty," the woman is reported to have answered, "for I can borrow skills from my neighbor.") I have no doubt that, offered the same choice, a great number of women from around the world would have no different choice. This, however, doesn't show that Eritrean women do not value skills. They are keenly aware that lack of such skills in their daughters would result in their disgrace because the possession of such skills is highly prized by the society. In the rural areas, for example, *suwa*, the Eritrean local drink, is part of the farmers' menu most of the time, and his wife is expected to hone her brewing skills. Once she did, she passes it to her daughter. Similarly, a woman, who can't cook properly is no woman. For this reason, the mother personally

takes it upon herself to impart these skills and takes it upon herself as her



daughter's teacher, trainer, or coach.

In towns, parents start taking interest in their children's future immediately after their children start going to school, especially if they want them to acquire skills the parents themselves do not have. If the children didn't do well academically by middle school, many parents decide to attach their children to a garage, a bicycle repair-shop, or a place where they want them to get some technical skills. Many of the mentors do not pay the children (but give them only pocket money) because they are assumed to be giving the parents a favor by taking their children under their wings and teaching them the skills of their trade. Such apprenticeships, though not financially profitable to the children, provide them with skills, which they use to their advantage once their apprenticeship is over. Many of the carpenters, mechanics, and other technicians in our towns acquired their skills through such apprenticeship, under some experienced technicians.

In such apprenticeship sessions, parents give the first-born a special attention. It is believed among parents that if they trained and

shaped the first-born well enough, his siblings would follow in his or her steps. I

don't think that is a wrong conclusion.

Such attention on the first-born puts a lot of pressure on him or her, and causes conflicts with parents. If the parents successfully diffused the conflict, and are effective, the first-born, in turn, coaches his or her siblings, and in turn begins to influence them.

Successful parents use this approach in almost all areas, where they want their younger children influenced. For example, in academic matters, they busy themselves only with the first born (if they don't have time for every child) and the first born, later on, does the same to his younger brothers or sisters. For this reason, except in rare cases, an academically successful first-born has other academically successful siblings trailing behind him or her, as long as the parents supervised their children's progress, and aided them, which the first born cannot deliver.

In some cases, children acquire their parents' professions not because they were coached, but incidentally. Many vocalists are children of vocalists, and a number of actors, the children of actors. It is not because their parents take initiative that the children adopt their

parents' professions. They see their parents performing, and like what they see, and develop interest in it. Undoubtedly, some of the budding artists learned their skills from art schools and from other people.

An Eritrean story best shows how such sessions influence children, and why Eritrean children act the way they do. A man decides to burgle a house as quietly as possible and he decides to take his son along. They approached the house, the target of the father's illegal act. However, before they got in the man checked his surroundings to see if anyone was observing. He looked to his left, to his right, and behind him.

The son, aware of the activities of his father and his intentions, told him. "Daddy, you have looked behind you, to your right, in front of you, and to your left. There is one direction you haven't checked."

"Which one?"

"You haven't looked up." [That is Heaven.]

The child reminded his father about an important lesson: a crime is still a crime, even if no human-being observed it being committed. Above human law, the child reminded his father, another law forbids people from committing acts that hurt fellow human beings, and people should listen to their consciences before they commit themselves to an act of breaking the law.

Now, it doesn't surprise any Eritrean that an Eritrean child (who could use the money in any way he likes, and no one would know he has that money) submits a wallet stashed with money to the police, which, the Eritrean Police magazine, *Hizbn Polisn*, often reports.

Eritrean parents give their children these stepping stones to a better enriched knowledge, and more pragmatic attitudes, which the children themselves must develop, test, and use during the rest of their lives. These steps are laid in the children's lives during their impressionable age, form the foundation stones of their adult lives, and continue to influence them long after their parents, their first teachers, are dead and buried.