



## PRESIDENT ISAIAS HOLDS TALKS WITH CROWN PRINCE OF ABU DHABI

### President Isaias returns home concluding working visit to Somalia and Kenya



President Isaias Afwerki held talks with Sheik Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahya, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, at the Abu Dhabi National Palace on 17 December.

During their meeting, President Isaias and Sheik Mohamed bin Zayed discussed the progress of the political, economic, and social relations, as well regional and global developments of interest to the two countries.

Upon arrival in Abu Dhabi

during the morning hours of 17 December, President Isaias was awarded a warm welcome by Sheik Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahya and other senior government officials.

President Isaias' working visit to the UAE follows his recent working visits to Somalia and Kenya.

It is to be recalled that, President Isaias Afwerki returned home in the afternoon hours of 15 December after concluding a three-day working visit to the Republic of Somalia and Republic of Kenya.

In Kenya, President Isaias

held discussions with President Uhuru Kenyatta at the Nairobi National Palace on strengthening bilateral relations and regional developments of interest to the two countries.

The two leaders identified opportunities for cooperation between Eritrea and Kenya and agreed to work to develop partnerships in trade and investment. They also agreed to work for peace and stability in the Republic of Somalia.

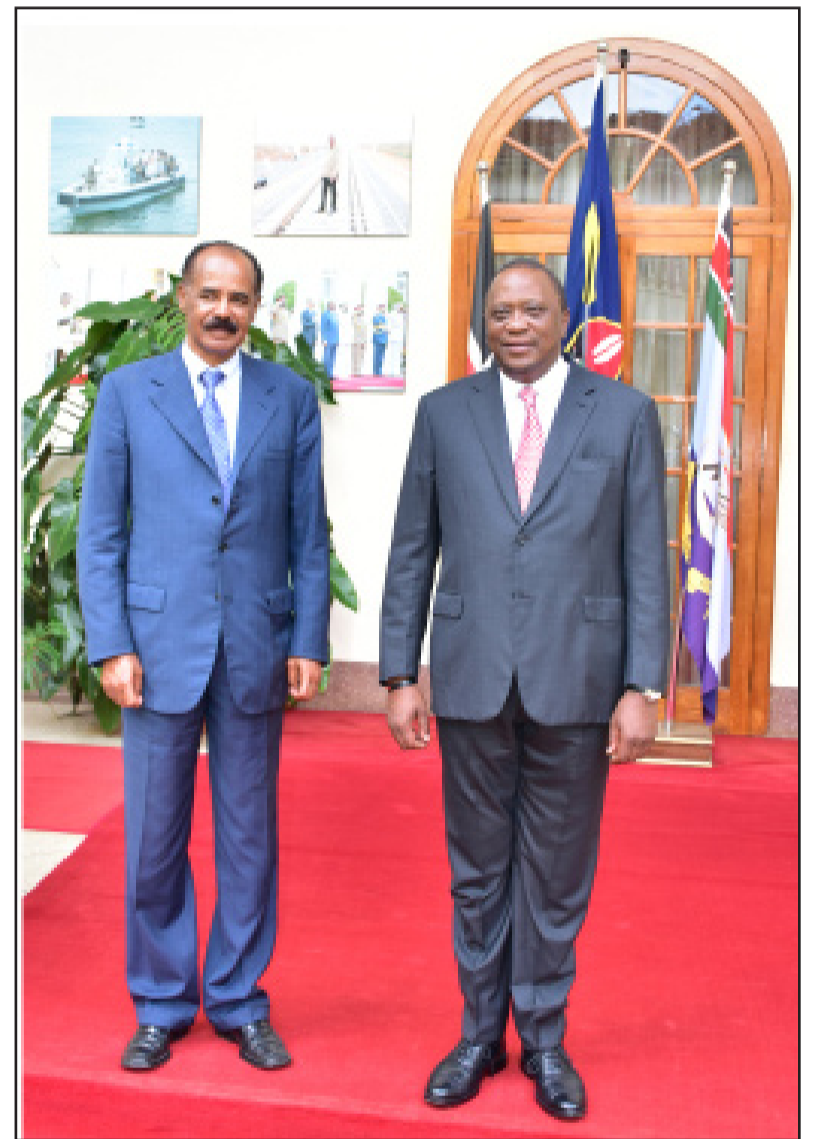
President Uhuru Kenyatta will

conduct official visit to Eritrea in January 2019 at an initiation of President Isaias Afwerki.

on a number issues of mutual interest.

Prior to visiting Kenya, President Isaias conducted a two-day official visit to Somalia, where he held discussions with Somali President Mohammed Abdullahi Mohammed

The Eritrean senior delegation included Foreign Minister Osman Saleh, Presidential Advisor Mr. Yemane Gebreab, and Director of the Office of the President, Mr. Amin Hassan.



## LAUNCHING CEREMONY FOR TWO VOLUMES OF BOOKS

The Proceedings of the International Conference of Eritrean Studies (ICES), held in Asmara from 20-22 July 2016, have been compiled in two volumes. The launching ceremony of the two volumes was conducted on 14 December at the Hotel Emba Soira. The ceremony was organized by the National Institute of Higher Education and Research and attended by government officials, representatives of UN bodies, and others.

Volume 1 spans 687 pages and has 30 papers by 36 authors in 11 thematic areas, while Volume 2 has 495 pages and contains

23 papers. The research papers compiled cover a range of issues, including literature, art, history, socio-cultural issues, gender, law, earth sciences and disasters, technological developments, and other issues.

Speaking at the occasion, the Executive Director of the National Institute of Higher Education and Research, Dr. Haile Mihtsun, shared his views of the significance of and lessons learned from the compilation of the proceedings of conference. He also revealed that preparations are underway to hold a similar conference in the future.

In a review of the two volumes, Professor Seife Berhe commended the initiative and stated that the research papers would help

expand and encourage research in Eritrea.

Professor Zemenfes Tsige, a local scholar, stated that the

research papers were prepared by respected local and foreign scholars and commended the researchers for their contributions.



# Development

## Football for Development and Peace: Eritrea vs. South Sudan

Natnael Yebio W.

Five minutes from the end of an enthralling exhibition football match between the youth national teams of Eritrea and South Sudan, Eritrea's Simon scored the third goal in what was a thoroughly convincing win for the Eritrean team. What a goal it was, too. Nahom delivered an inch-perfect cross-field pass to Mrust. Mrust laid it back to Moab, who fed it to Nahom on the left flank. Nahom then dragged the ball back into the path of Simon. Simon took one touch and unleashed a rocket from 25 yards, which ended up in the back of the net.

The Eritrean team was beautiful to watch as they put in a great performance in Asmara Stadium to beat South Sudan 3-0. However, they won the game not only with guile, but also with guts.

The first goal came from central defender Mrust Habtom, who scored an incredible Beckham-esque goal from the half-way line. South Sudan's goalkeeper, John Maik, knew he was in trouble as soon as the ball left Mrust's foot. To be accurate, after having begun with such poor positioning, there was little the goalkeeper could do to prevent the ball from ending up in the back of the net.

Conceding a goal within the first 5 minutes in a match away from home certainly wasn't the start that South Sudan wanted. However, it gave the Eritreans the platform to dictate the match. The Eritrean players, at times, were mesmerizing, wowing the crowd with a series of flicks and tricks, which they balanced with unselfish runs, clever passes, and good positioning. When Eritrea

had the ball, South Sudan struggled to look anything other than utterly bewildered. To their credit, they did not give up. In fact, they kept the game close at 1-0, until the 71st minute, when Mewael Tesfay scored the second goal for Eritrea. By then the game appeared to be over as a contest. Eritrea's first international football win in nearly seven years was cemented when Simon scored the third of the evening for the Red Sea Camels.

The match was about more than just football, however; it was a match of peace, development, and solidarity between the two nations. It was great to see hundreds of



fans, including many families and women, attend the much-anticipated match.

"It is great for the people of South Sudan for the national team to come and play in Eritrea. We are brothers and sisters. This is the first time that the South Sudan national football team has come to Eritrea to play a friendly," stated the team's head of public relations, Mr. Gabriel Daniel.

For millennia, there has been

an association between sport and nation bonding. The ancient Olympiad, for example, begun in 776 BC "in a religious setting as one of the activities during the festival of Zeus", would develop into a vast sporting competition, a gift to the people, and a way to sublimate conflict. In the 19th century, the strategic rivalry between Britain and Russia for supremacy in Central Asia was considered the "Great Game" (or "Tournament of Shadows"). For the British, spurred on by Henry Newbolt's *Vitai Lampada*, a stirring homage to sport, sport was one of the foundations on which the Empire was spread and consolidated. More recently, during

the 21st century, there have been numerous examples illustrating the close relationship between sport and development.

And let's not forget the film *Invictus*, a portrayal of how Nelson Mandela used the rugby World Cup to help foster the country's healing process after he was elected as South Africa's first post-apartheid president.

Most of the time, football is viewed as something that transcends politics and prejudice. Football, you see, is a universal language and it can be a powerful tool to promote development, tolerance, and understanding. It brings people together across boundaries, cultures, and religions. Its intrinsic values, such as teamwork, fair play, discipline, respect for the opponent and the rules of the game, and courage are understood all over the world and can be harnessed in the advancement of solidarity, social cohesion, and peaceful coexistence.

During the closing ceremony, which was held at Imperial Hotel



after the game, the President of the Eritrean National Football Federation mentioned that he hoped that the match would be just the beginning of friendship, development, and cooperation between both nations.

Additionally, the President of the South Sudan Football Association stated that while the match was organized to promote friendship between South Sudan and Eritrea, it also provided both teams with important lessons. He added that he hoped it would be the precursor to the development of football in the region and that football had the potential to affect positive change.

Mr. Salah Rajab Bunduki, the Minister of Information, Culture, Youth, and Sport, expressed his thanks to the ENFF and the Commission of Culture and Sports for successfully hosting the match

in Asmara. He also extended an invitation to the Eritrean team to play a friendly match in Juba in the near future.

Undeniably, sport is one of the world's most popular leisure activities. People from all over the world play, attend, watch, listen to, talk about, and experience sport or sporting competitions. Sport is often described as a language that everyone in the world can understand. Indeed, it can bring together and unite groups and communities, as was the case after the end of the match between Eritrea and South Sudan. Players from both teams embraced and danced to Tigrigna songs as they waved flags of both nations. Selfies were taken and phone numbers and email addresses were exchanged by the end of the night. This was a lasting friendship fostered through the beautiful game.

### Match Facts

**Venue:** Asmara Stadium

**Eritrea:** (4-2-3-1): Kibrom Solomon, Nahom Awet, Mrust Habtom, Esseyas Abraham, Henok Michael, Robel Teklemichael, Michael Habte, Nahom Hadgu, Simon Asmelash, Mewael Tesfai, Ali Osman.

**South Sudan:** (4-2-3-1): John Maik, Emanuel Oroma, Paul Puk, Rehan Anger Malong, Buay Lam Chan, Daniel Samuel, Daniel Angelo, Chol Matur Majok, Dani Lual, Martin Dominic, Peter Antony.

**Goals:** Mrust Habtom 5', Mewael Tesfay 71', Smeon Asmelash 85'

**Man of the Match:** Robel Teklemichael



# No Need to Speed: A Brief Note on Road and Traffic Safety

*Dr. Fikrejesus Amahazion*

I grew up as one of five children within a single-mother household. While I was born in Asmara, I was raised abroad. Most of my favorite memories from growing up are of playing football. My brothers and I would play football every single day –rain, snow, or shine. We would often round up the neighborhood kids and organize small tournaments, which we referred to as “World Cup”. I fondly recall how we all would pretend that we were famous players and representing certain teams. Our tournaments, which could often get very heated and intense (neighborhood bragging rights were on the line, after all), would last for hours and would only end when the sun went down and it was too dark to see the ball or our parents would demand that we come home to complete our household chores, do our homework, eat dinner, or wash up and go to bed. Although we played in many different locations, the place where we most often could be found was at one of our local schools.

Occasionally, as we were playing, wayward shots, desperate clearances, or wild kicks out of frustration



would lead to the ball ending up on the street. Usually, we took turns collecting the balls (at other times, those eliminated from the tournament in the early stages were assigned to do so). However, despite our many years of playing, I cannot recall an instance of any of us ever being in danger of being hit by a car driving on the road while we were retrieving the balls. In fact, I cannot recall any instance in which children in our area playing football or on the

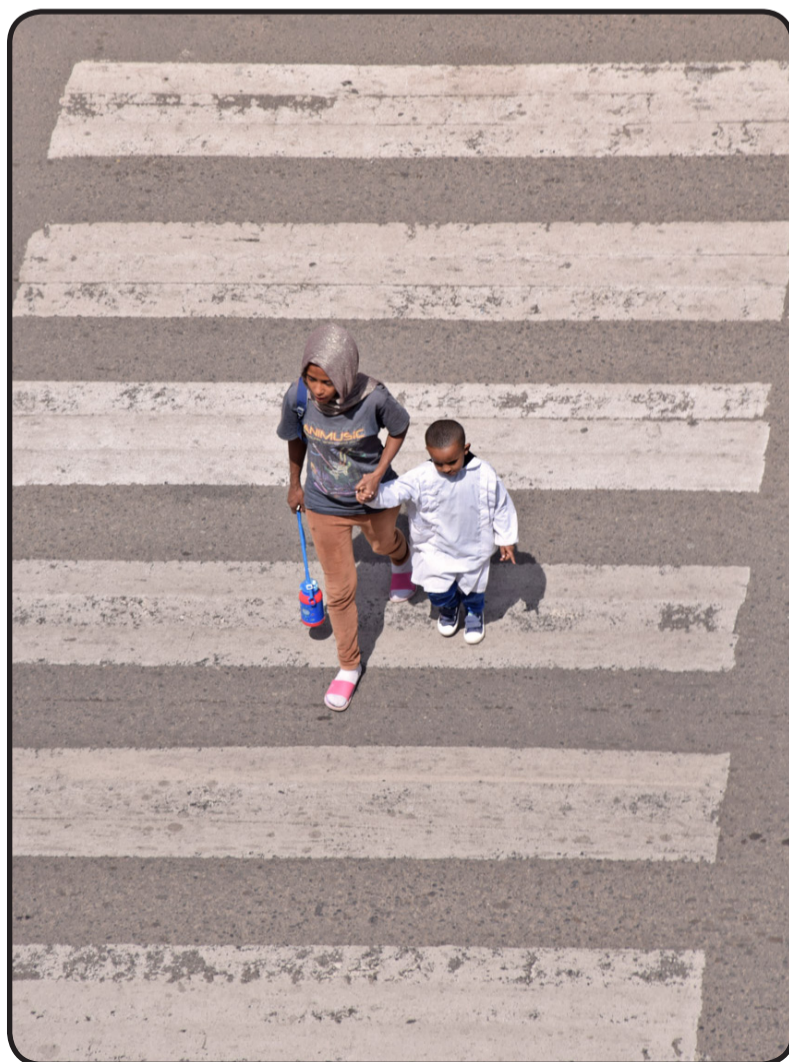
nearby playground were ever hit by a car. Although a number of different factors can account for this, some of the most important include the fact that the streets surrounding our schools were located within a school zone and also that we all were taught traffic and road safety guidelines at our schools.

A school zone basically is an area on a street near a school or near a crosswalk leading to a school that has a likely presence of younger pedestrians. In many countries around the world, school zones generally have a reduced speed limit (often approximately 20 to 40 km/h), which is applicable during certain hours (such as in the morning or afternoon) and on certain days (generally weekdays). School zones are often marked with special signs and pavement markings in order to alert drivers of the high concentration of children and to remind them to take special care when driving. I also remember how my school arranged special lessons about road and traffic safety (e.g. having to always stop at the curb or edge of the street and look both ways before crossing the street, never running into the street, making eye contact with drivers, etc.), in order to ensure student safety. Importantly, a considerable amount of research shows that school zones and road and traffic safety lesson programs for children can significantly reduce collisions, injuries, and fatalities.

I raise these points because of several recent observations I have made in some parts of Eritrea.

Specifically, one can often see cars driving at relatively high speeds when they are near or within areas where schools and young children are located. Although school zones exist in the country, it seems that some drivers fail to comply. In fact, just several days prior to the publication of this edition of *Eritrea Profile*, I was witness to a near fatal accident. Specifically, a truck that was being driven at a high speed almost struck a group of children who were crossing the road to get to their school. The outcome could have been tragic. Moreover, in many parts of the country, it is quite common to see children running around or playing near or on relatively busy streets, often completely oblivious

cost measures. For example, policymakers and local authorities should first investigate the factors contributing to the lack of driver compliance in these school zones. In addition, they could also assign (more) traffic authorities to monitor designated school zones. Their greater visible presence would likely cause drivers to slowdown and help reduce the likelihood of accidents. Additionally, the introduction of road markings, such as different colors or painted symbols on the road, could better indicate to drivers where school zones begin and end. As well, the possibility of introducing solar-powered pedestrian lights should be seriously considered. These could be triggered by students or other



to the potential consequences of their actions.

These observations are troubling, since the need for drivers to abide by speed limits is particularly important in school zones given the high levels of child pedestrian activity and the consequences of a collision. When children are struck by vehicles, their injuries often result in life threatening or permanent damage. Furthermore, the faster a vehicle is moving, the greater the impact and the more devastating the results.

The “encouraging” thing is that the situation can be improved or addressed through a number of relatively simple and low-

pedestrians wishing to cross roads near schools and alert drivers to slow down.

Another possible step that could be taken is to erect speed bumps or humps in school zone areas. Speed bumps or humps are simply vertical obstacles – literal bumps or humps in the road – that jolt the occupants of a vehicle that is moving too quickly over them, thus forcing drivers to reduce their speed. Positively, they are cost-effective; they provide years of high performance and require little maintenance. Furthermore, while other traffic control measures

**C**ontinued on page 5

# OPINION

## Playing together, living together

Simon Weldemichael

For years, the Horn of Africa has been plagued by conflict and tension. However, in recent months, the dark clouds over the region have begun to recede. Importantly, Eritrea has been playing a positive role in contributing to the developments toward peace and cooperation that are unfolding across the region. The country's principled stand and diplomatic efforts, after years of criticism, have actually been an important part of the unfolding peace.

Notably, recent weeks have seen athletic competitions take center stage in the region. For example, last month Eritrea hosted the Africa Cup cycling competition. Many countries from across Sub-Saharan Africa, including Ethiopia, participated in the historic competition. In addition, at the weekend, Eritrea's youth national football team had an exhibition match in Asmara against South Sudan. These initiatives reflect how powerful a force sport can be for peace, cooperation, understanding, and friendship. Recognizing sport's role in consolidating peace, Eritrea has used it to help establish a safe, cooperative, peaceful neighborhood – a fundamental pillar of Eritrea's foreign policy.

The match between Eritrea and South Sudan last Sunday, which was broadcast live by Eri-TV, was organized under the theme: "Football for Peace and Development". Thousands of football lovers attended the match in Asmara, while many more around the world watched it on television. In Juba, Eritreans and South Sudanese fans watched the match together. In many ways, the score did not matter as much as the spirit of friendship and camaraderie.

During the match, the young players were not only kicking the ball to score. Rather, they were kicking away conflict and mistrust. They were removing the historical stumbling blocks that divided the Horn. This was a match of friendship and a match for change. The teams not only played to win, but to help ease the historical pains of the region



Asmara Stadium was filled with excited spectators. They proudly cheered on the players (including the opponents) and demonstrated their high level of discipline and ethics. Beyond being a venue of competition, the stadium became a platform for interaction between two countries that have strived and sacrificed a lot for liberty and justice.

Sport's contribution to a wide range of ideals, such as intercultural understanding, trust, reconciliation, and cooperation, is great. Over the years, there have been many examples of sport helping promote peace and development. Let alone for the people of Eritrea and South Sudan, who are tied by common history and culture, sport has the power to bring together warring parties. Sport can help decrease prejudice and it creates the potential for important interactions (things which traditional politics often fail to do). Sport encourages tolerance and the acceptance of difference. Sport is an effective counter to suspicion and xenophobia. It's a lubricant that greases relations.

In addition to the recent political and diplomatic measures, the friendly match between Eritrea and South Sudan should be seen as an important contribution to peace, understanding, and cooperation in the region. Eritrea is

committed to utilizing all means – including sport – to achieve peace and cooperation.

Sport can have a positive impact on youth development and it can strengthen ties between different communities. Sport as a means for development and peace has been recognized by government and nongovernment actors. It can erect a bridge of unity and tolerance where previously there was only a chasm of hate and difference.

Sport can also contribute to development, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs can only be achieved by eliminating all forms of insecurity and if governments around the world ensure lasting peace.

With sport contributing to eliminating insecurity and ensuring peace, it follows that it can contribute to development. While many regard it as simple fun and games, it is more appropriate to suggest that sport plays an important role in society. Of course, fun and entertainment are important, as well, and thus these aspects of sport should not be dismissed.

Sport, like music, is universal. The rules are the same everywhere and often easy to understand. Music has often been described as a universal language enjoyed by people around the world, despite their various differences. Similarly, sport has the power to bring people together regardless of their national, religious, or other differences.

ences.

The powerful winds of peace are blowing across the Horn of Africa. Many hurdles have been overcome largely due to the efforts and resilience of the leaders and the people of the region. However, goodwill or good intentions alone cannot erase the many deep-rooted problems of the region. To bring about sustainable peace, we need to chart programs, strategies, and policies. Considerable work is still required. In this context, sport can help peace and cooperation to take root and flourish in the Horn of Africa. Sport, in many ways, is diplomacy by other means. It clears the way for sustainable peace and delegates the process of peace building to the people.

Returning to the football match, the official result is hardly what mattered. The most important thing is that the two countries were able to come together and bring a smile to the faces of their people. However, the match certainly was entertaining. Both teams showed great promise and players from both sides demonstrated great potential. The physical fitness of the South Sudanese team was neutralized by the speed, individual skills, and teamwork of the Eritrean team. Eritrea won the match 3-0, scoring some impressive goals. The first and third, in particular, were breathtaking. Although the South Sudanese attackers were talented, they had a difficult time breaking Eritrea's defense. Regardless of the final score, both teams shared the spoils.



# LOCAL NEWS

## NUEW: COMMENDABLE PROGRESS IN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

At an assessment meeting conducted on 13 and 14 December, the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW) executive board reported that commendable progress has been registered in 2018, particularly in terms of improving members' livelihoods and ensuring equitable

opportunities for women.

At the meeting, in which representatives from the six regions, as well as from Europe, the US, and Saudi Arabia took part, the President of the NUEW, Ms. Tekea Tesfamicael, said that gender issues are society's issues and that

combating harmful practices and perceptions are vital in order to ensure gender equality and the development of women.

Indicating that the vision of the NUEW is to realize gender equality within all sectors, the participants conducted extensive discussions on government policies on women's issues, strengthening the capacity of women, and increasing the societal awareness of the rights and obligations of women.

At the meeting, reports regarding activities conducted to eradicate harmful practices and their consequences, ensure social justice, and improve women's participation in education, as well as the role of the media in the development of public awareness on women's issues were presented.



## No Need to Speed . . .

**C**ontinued from page 3

such as road markings or signs can lose efficacy over time, the reduction in speed and traffic volume from speed bumps and humps can remain long after local drivers become accustomed to their presence.

Last, elementary and kindergarten schools across Eritrea, particularly those located in urban areas, could develop brief lesson plans or

programs about road and traffic safety for young children. This could be done in coordination with local traffic authorities, could involve activities like field trips, guest talks, school assemblies, and the distribution of specially developed books or pamphlets, and would significantly help to ensure that Eritrea's young children are more aware about road and traffic safety, less likely to practice risky behaviors, and better able to protect themselves. Of course, while all of these potential measures are important, the role of

drivers in contributing to road safety should not be overlooked. Simply, automobile drivers must do more to comply with traffic regulations and respect all school zone guidelines.

Ultimately, while Eritrea is blessed with an abundance of natural resources, its most valuable asset and most precious treasure are its children. The injury to or loss of even one child is too much. Thus, it is imperative that we do all that we can to protect our children and ensure their safety.



## FIFTH ANNUAL PHARMACOVIGILANCE CONFERENCE CONCLUDES

The Fifth Annual Pharmacovigilance Conference, focusing on adverse drug reactions, was held from 13 to 14 December at the NCEW Hall under the theme "Every Report Counts: Vigilance Saves Lives!" The conference was attended by health officials from around the country and a number of distinguished guests.

During the conference, research papers on a range of issues related to adverse drug reactions, including the side effects of anti-malaria and anti-TB pills and other septic diseases, were presented.

Speaking at the conference, the director of national medicine and food administration at the Ministry of Health, Mr. Iyasu Bahta, said

that Eritrea has made considerable progress in drug regulation, partly due to the interest and cooperation of health professionals and sustained information exchange by government institutions. Mr. Mulugeta Russom, head of the Eritrean Pharmacovigilance Center, pointed out that the Center began operations in 2012 and has achieved many successes during its short existence.

After lively discussions, conference participants adopted various recommendations. According to reports, Eritrea stands first in Africa in drug surveillance and control activities, regulatory excellence and case report documentation, and information exchange activities.

## DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITIES BY ERITREAN NATIONALS ABROAD



Eritrean nationals abroad have conducted various diplomatic activities.

According to reports, Mr. Mohammed Suleiman, Eritrean Ambassador to Uganda, and Mr. Saleh Omar, Eritrean Ambassador to the Republic of South Africa and Southern African countries, participated in the first BRICS summit with participation by African, Middle Eastern, Asian, and Latin American countries, recently held in Pretoria.

At the summit, which was officially opened by Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa, briefings were presented on multilateralism, industrial development, inclusive economic development, and peace and stability. Eritrean and Ethiopian representatives also provided updates of the progress of peace and cooperation between the two countries.

Meanwhile, the Eritrean Ambassador to France, Ms. Hanna Simon, participated in the 11th Global Forum on Migration and Development, held in Marrakesh, Morocco.

Speaking at the event, Ambassador Hanna said that the Horn of Africa has long been plagued by war, tension, and political and economic problems, which have led to heavy costs in a number of areas, including lost opportunities for development and harmed capacity for migration management. The presentations delivered by the representatives of Eritrea and Ethiopia were well received by participants of the

conference.

Additionally, Eritrean nationals in the German cities of Mannheim and Stuttgart celebrated the International Day of the Disabled with various programs.

At the program in Stuttgart, the "Eritrean Patriots Group" donated electronic wheelchairs worth €9,500, nationals in Belingen donated €3,000, and nationals in Mannheim donated €2,587 toward the National Association of Eritrean War Disabled Veterans.

Similarly, Eritrean nationals in Rehovot, Israel donated \$US 2,200 to the families of martyrs in Eritrea.

Likewise, nationals in Cincinnati, USA, as well as nationals residing in the Australian cities of Melbourne, Perth, Sidney, Brisbane and Adelaide expressed support for the peace agreement reached between Eritrea and Ethiopia and celebrated the recent lifting of sanctions that were imposed on Eritrea. The nationals also expressed readiness to strengthen their participation in the implementation of national development drives.

Additionally, Mr. Berhane Gebrehiwet, Charge d'Affaires at Eritrean Embassy in the US conducted seminar to nationals in Denver-Colorado on the objective situation in the homeland.

The heads of national organizations in Italy also conducted an activity assessment meeting from 8 to 9 December in Rome. Participants at the meeting expressed their support for the peace agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia.



**AZEL PHARMACEUTICAL SHARE Co.**

## **Notice**

### **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR HUMAN RESOURCE TRAINING & SUPPORT SERVICES**

Azel Pharmaceutical Sh. Co. invites reputable management consultancy practitioners who have valid renewed business license to submit sealed proposal for provision of Human Resource Training & Support Services.

Interested eligible bidders may obtain the “**Request for Proposal for Human Resource Training & Support Services**” document upon payment of non-refundable ERN 100.00 from the address below during office hours Monday through Friday.

Proposals must be submitted on or before 5:00 P.M December 28, 2018 and will be opened at 10:00 A.M. the following day in the presence of bidders or their representatives who wish to attend and shall remain valid for a period of 90 days after bid opening.

Azel Pharma reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals without needing to justify the grounds for its action and without assuming any liability for expenses incurred by the bidder in the preparation of the bid document, to negotiate the terms and conditions of any proposal leading to the execution of a contract and to waive any technical or legal deficiencies therein.

**Address :-**

Procurement Manager

Azel Pharmaceutical Sh. Co.

P.O.Box:6799

Zip Code 175-11 St.No.51 (*near Albergo Italia, formerly Keren Hotel*)

Asmara, Eritrea

Tel:+291-1-120028/120028, Fax: +291-1-121002

Email: [purchase@azelpharma.com](mailto:purchase@azelpharma.com)

Visit: [www.azelpharma.com](http://www.azelpharma.com)



Photo: Salih Abdelkadir

## President Isaias's historic visit to the Federal Republic of Kenya





## An Exclusive Interview with Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, President of Somalia

*“The agreements made by the three countries will certainly help to bring these countries and other countries from the region closer.”*

**Asmait Futsumbrhan**

**President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed**

*Last week, on 13 December, Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki made a historic visit to Somalia, where he met and held talks with Somali President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed. President Isaias's visit to Somalia was in continuation of the recent consultative Tripartite Summits of the Heads of State and Government of Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia. Earlier this year, in July, President Mohamed came here to Asmara, where he met President Isaias and reached an agreement to establish diplomatic relations, exchange ambassadors, and promote bilateral trade.*

*Although the Horn of Africa region has historically been plagued by conflict and tension, 2018 has certainly been a year of stunning developments toward peace and cooperation. Longtime foes have become close friends and partners. President Isaias's visit to Somalia should ultimately help to strengthen diplomatic relations between the two countries. Notably, during the visit, the two leaders held a series of discussions about expanding cooperation in security and investment, as well as other issues of mutual interest.*

*Today, Eritrea Profile is excited to feature an exclusive interview conducted by Eri-Tv Journalist Issak Mehari with Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, President of Somalia.*

*Thank you for your time, Your Excellency, President Mohammed Abdullahi. At this time, the people of Somalia are looking forward to a much brighter future. Could you share your thoughts on that?*

Thank you for being here. It is a great honor for me to welcome my brother, Isaias Afwerki, to his second home, Mogadishu, Somalia. Somalia has been in turmoil and destruction for close to 30 years now. We have been in office for close to two years - 18 months to be precise. We have made progress in many areas, including security. As you know, we are fighting against extremism - Al-Shabab, who are affiliated with Al-Qaida.

What we have done is re-organize our national army and our security apparatus, as well as provide proper training and equipment in order to fight effectively against Al-Shabab. As a result of that, in the last 3 months, we took over a town

called Merka, which was previously controlled by Al-Shabab. We are also planning to remove all the remnants of Al-Shabab in lower Shabele and middle Shabele in the next few months, Insha' Allah.

*During your visit to Asmara, you discussed a number of issues, including security, cultural affairs, and economics. What is the significance of President Isaias Afwerki's current visit to Somalia in regard to previous meetings and discussions?*

While we are improving the security situation, we also have to work on economic development. Working in security and economics, hand in hand, is very important. If you are fighting terrorism, you also have to create job opportunities for the youth because terrorism - Al-Qaida and Al-Shabab - tries to attract the younger population in our society. If we don't provide job opportunities for them or if we



don't provide hope, there might be some potential that these young people may join Al-Shabab. That is why we wanted to create regional economic cooperation. In order to invite and bring more investment in the region and to work on economic development so that our people will have a better life and job opportunities. That is the reason we came together; to think about stabilizing the region and to work on economic development.

To do that, we discussed this initiative. That these three countries can come together and initiate and develop economic cooperation. In the future, other countries from the region will be invited to do the same. If we succeed in doing that, investors from Europe, China, and North America will come here and invest. This will help reduce poverty and conflict in the region. That is the only way to ensure that this region will thrive.

This is the first time this region has no tension or conflict. The agreements made by the three countries will certainly help to bring these countries and other countries from the region closer.

*Regarding the two-day visit of President Isaias Afwerki, what are your thoughts about what is to come in the future?*

First, I am glad to see that the

sanctions have been lifted. There is no way we can talk about economic development when one of our regional states has an embargo or sanctions. To see Eritrea free of sanction is a goal that the region has achieved.

We discussed how we can implement regional economic cooperation. That is why President Isaias is here - to discuss ways and means of how to put our ideas of regional cooperation and integration into action.

Initially, it was a beautiful idea to bring this region together. This region is in a strategic location, which has enormous resources and a population of almost 150 million people. The question is how we can benefit from and use all these resources, whether human or natural? We discussed how we can make these ideas a reality.

I think we, Somalia and Eritrea, will benefit from this initiative because the Somali people are good in trading and have many years of experience. Also, Somali businesses extend all the way to South Africa, central Africa, and West Africa. This will positively impact the Somali, Eritrean, and Ethiopian people, as well as other countries that join the initiative. This is helpful for our people. And that is what President Isaias Afwerki is promoting,

to make sure that international business communities can invest in the region. This is something that I agree with.

*Before we conclude our interview, Mr. President, what message do you want to give out to the people of Somalia and Eritrea?*

Somalia and Eritrea have a long history of ties and shared values. Of course, Somalia has participated in the liberation of Eritrea for the last 50 years. After Eritrea got its independence in 1993, President Isaias and the people of Eritrea have not forgotten their brothers and sisters in Somalia who went into chaos and civil war. President Isaias and the people of Eritrea have done everything they can to help the people of Somalia, whether through taking part in the Somali reconciliation process or through President Isaias Afwerki helping warring factions in Somalia to come together to help find common ground.

I am glad that finally the two sets of people have found each other. I am also happy to have visited Asmara and received a warm welcome by the great people of Eritrea. I am also glad to see my brother, President Isaias Afwerki felt the same way when he came here. Of course, it is not his first visit. My visit to Asmara was my first visit. I felt very welcomed. The President has been here before, during the struggle. He knows many places in Mogadishu as well as many parts of this country. He is familiar with the Somali people and the beautiful city of Mogadishu. It is great opportunity for all of us to work together for the benefit of our people and the region.

*Thank you, Mr. President!*

Thank you so much.

