

SEMINAR BY AMBASSADOR FESSEHATSION PETROS



The Eritrean Ambassador to the Republic of Italy, Mr. Fessehatsion Petros conducted a seminar for Eritrean community members in Roma on 20 January. The seminar focused on the objective situation in the homeland and regional developments.

Underlining that the new era of peace is the result of the resilience

and steadfastness of the people and Government of Eritrea, Mr. Fessehatsion called on nationals to shoulder their responsibility to maintain the peace and strengthen their contributions for the successful implementation of national development programs.

Stating that commendable progress is being registered in

strengthening all-rounded relations with neighboring countries and the international community, Ambassador Fessehatsion went on to say that various development programs aimed at ensuring common regional interests are being planned and implemented.

Ambassador Fessehatsion also answered questions from the audience and called on the members of the Eritrean community in Italy to strengthen their organizational capacity and enhance their contributions for the development of the country.

SUPPORT TO FAMILIES OF MARTYRS



The Sweden branch of the National Association of Eritrean War Disabled Veterans and youth residing in Israel pledged to boost contributions to support families of martyrs and war disabled veterans.

According to reports, at an event in Israel on 19 January, the Eritrean youth group "Finote Semaet'at" contributed \$US15,750 to support families of martyrs. The group had already assumed responsibility for supporting 250 families of martyrs.

Speaking at the occasion, the Charge d'Affairs at the Eritrean Embassy in Israel, Mr. Solomon Kinfé, expressed his appreciation for the group's initiative.

Similarly, the National

Association of Eritrean War Disabled Veterans branch in Sweden organized a program in connection with the International Day of the Disabled under the theme "Pledge for a Bright Future". At the event, the nationals contributed 24,000 Kroner in support of war disabled veterans.

The chairman of the branch association, Mr. Tekeste Fesehayé, indicated that efforts will be exerted to establish income-generating projects to enable war disabled veterans to become self-supportive and productive members of society.

Likewise, the YPFDJ organization in South Sudan organized a capacity upgrading workshop for its members.

PROGRESS IN CONTROLLING PREVALENCE OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

The Ministry of Health branch in Gash Barka region reported that promising progress has been registered in controlling communicable diseases in the region. The report was made at an activity assessment meeting conducted on 21 and 22 January focusing on the competence and coverage of health service provision.

Speaking at the meeting, the head of the branch office, Dr. Hayelom Kidané, said that commendable activities have been conducted with strong public participation in order to control the prevalence of communicable and non-communicable diseases. These included the successful completion of the measles and rubella vaccination program and the distribution of

Vitamin A.

According to reports presented by local health experts, awareness programs have been conducted, including in remote areas of the region. The result has been greater public awareness, which has led to a significant reduction in the prevalence of communicable diseases have significantly been reduced. Experts also called for increased participation of all stakeholders and the public for better outcomes.

Indicating that the Ministry of Health is working according to the national health strategic plan, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, Ms. Amina Nurhusein, Minister of Health, called on health practitioners to work to bring positive change to the public.



OFFICE OF AUDITOR GENERAL LAUNCHES FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

At a ceremony held on 22 January in Asmara, the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) launched a five year strategic plan, to be implemented from 2019 to 2023.

Indicating that strong and integrated efforts have been exerted in preparing the strategic plan, Mr. Gebrezgiabhier Gebremedhin, Auditor General, called for robust participation of all stakeholders for its implementation.

Mr. Gebrezgiabhier noted that the

main goals of the strategic plan are to enhance the independence of the OAG, to strengthen the organization and management capacity of the OAG, to enhance the competency and productivity of human resources, to enhance the quality of audit services, and to strengthen the OAG's communication with stakeholders.

The mission of the OAG, which was established with Proclamation No. 23/1992 and later replaced

with Proclamation No. 37/1993, is to audit all government institutions, parastatals, and state-owned enterprises.

At the launch ceremony, in which heads of financial institutions took part, briefings were provided on the main objective, mission, and core values of the strategic plan. The OAG also received an award of recognition from the African Organization for Supreme Audit Institutions.



OPINION

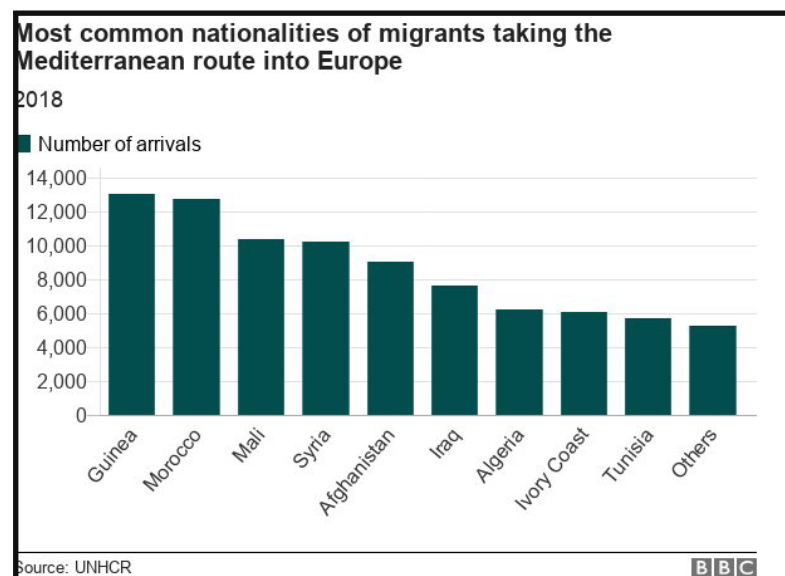
When Worn Out (African) Arguments are Repackaged for Mainstream Consumption

Metkel Sewra

When *African Arguments*, a publication by the African Royal Society (which supposedly is into promoting Africa), carries an article on Eritrea, you can pretty much guess the content from just reading the click-bait title.

In one article after another, especially those published after the signing of the peace agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia in July 2018, the publication has stayed true to its old ways, churning out doom and gloom “analyses” with so-called “experts” tripping over each other to paint a bleak picture inside Eritrea so far removed from reality and full to the brim of regurgitated attacks on the people and Government of Eritrea that any serious reader cannot help but move on after just the first few lines.

You really would be hard pressed to find one single *African Arguments* article on Eritrea that actually adds anything of substance in terms of nation-building, development, trade, sustainable peace, or any other area that would benefit from serious debate and scholarship and which would fit with the *Promoting Africa* tagline of the African Royal



Society. In fact, a quick search of the site returns more than two dozen articles dating back to 2011 with a clear condescending slant against the people and Government of Eritrea.

What is more is that these supposed experts seem to always be ranting out of personal vendettas or frustration (seemingly caused by inflated egos combined with a sense of entitlement to speak on behalf of Africans in their typical patronizing ways) rather than real insight or nuanced perspectives in their areas of “expertise”. Their work usually goes in circles, quoting biased outfits (the favorites being HRW and ICG) for affirmation of “facts”. Each author then adds one or two new vacuous lines that pass for “knowledge” and gets a stamp of approval with no one demanding accountability for sources.

Invariably, this is how “content” on Eritrea has been generated for mainstream consumption and policy formulation over the past two decades. Unfortunately, prejudiced corporate publications, like *African Arguments*, seem hell-bent on continuing the trend – even as the people of this region, especially Eritreans, have been increasingly vocal in their rejection of such patronizing and condescending approaches.

The latest *African Arguments* piece, published on 15 January and authored by Michael Emile Kynaston Jones, a Research Analyst at the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies, a British defence and security think tank, is really no different.

The article rehashes tired arguments about Eritrean migration and is peppered with irresponsible

guesswork of trends and causes, throwing in numbers and names for special effects, and presumably answering a non-starter question about “why are Eritreans still fleeing...?”

Jones makes no qualms quoting reports that rely on the now debunked COI report and refuted UNHCR numbers, and he tries to present his work as ground-breaking in its “discovery” that the Sudan is the preferred route out of Eritrea. The author brazenly argues that Eritreans do not trust the peace process with Ethiopia and hence are avoiding the newly opened borders to the south.

Jones makes no effort to include the ample evidence and material produced over the past decade that has proven beyond any doubt that the topic of Eritrean migration has been highly biased and politicized leading to much confusion on the issue.

The strategy to weaken Eritrea’s defensive and human resources capabilities – of which trafficking in humans was a major component – goes back to the early 2000s. The push factor of “harsh” conditions inside Eritrea misses the point by a mile and one cannot be a serious contributor to the debate if one does not reference TPLF’s calculated hostility, its manoeuvring inside regional bodies, and its refusal to abide by a final and binding decision for close to two decades. Furthermore, preferential treatment of Eritrean asylum seekers designed to drain Eritrea of its most important resource, along with sanctions based on cooked evidence of support for terrorism, and an intrusive and biased UNHCR stand against the country’s Government and people has greatly tainted the debate on migration.

If Jones was serious about understanding the issue of human trafficking and migration, let alone postulating on why the Sudan is a supposedly preferred route, he would have at least included a more balanced conversation that explored the issue from all angles. Even the most basic Google search on Eritrean migration would bring up a much-publicized, evidence-based, 2014 report by Denmark’s Immigration Service that has poked major holes in the numbers presented by UNHCR and ARRA, an organization itself involved in fabricating documents on behalf of Ethiopians from the Tigray region and registering them as Eritreans so as to gain automatic asylum in their destination countries.

Moreover, Jones overlooks the fact that the Government of Eritrea has long been committed to address migration, via a multidimensional response. As well, the attempt to tie smuggling and trafficking to elements of the military and government overlooks the ample publically available evidence that, in fact, Eritrea has long been “very keen” to eliminate human smuggling and trafficking.

A few lines into the article, Jones claims that: “**Concrete data is difficult to access** regarding irregular migration, **but in-country sources suggest** that the streams of people entering Sudan remained relatively consistent since the border opening.”

After reading that line alone, would we be wrong to dismiss the whole piece as nothing more than an immature conjecture that tries very hard to breathe life back into the all but dead “migration crisis” narrative? Can this “research analyst” be taken seriously if he makes no attempt to place the whole migration and human trafficking discussion in the context of the TPLF’s 20-year-long calculated strategy to isolate and weaken Eritrea by luring its best and brightest into the jaws of traffickers and death? Can anyone really discuss Eritrean migration without dissecting the politicized narrative surrounding the topic and without mentioning the devastating role of the TPLF’s military, ARRA, UNHCR, and other elements, since the early 2000s?

Without needing to devolve into “conspiracy” theories, a lot of evidence exists, including via

Wikileaks and several other sources, suggesting that the ARRA and the Ethiopian state were intricately involved in the smuggling and trafficking of Eritreans, saw the refugee industry as a “cash cow”, and had long been using “humanitarian operations” as a cover to establish and train Eritrean opposition.

One of the main issues with the article is that it completely fails to account for the fundamental fact that migration is a global, regional, and historical phenomenon, rather than strictly an Eritrean issue. Migration impacts a large number of countries throughout the continent, and the Horn of Africa, in particular. For example, according to an article by Leon Goldberg and the International Organization for Migration, nearly 150,000 migrants – over 90% from Ethiopia – arrived in war torn Yemen in 2018. This is despite ongoing conflict, a cholera outbreak and near famine conditions in much of the country. Remarkably, the number of migrants that arrived in Yemen before the end of 2018 *far exceeds* the number of irregular migrants who arrived in Europe in 2018, which is about 134,000. Furthermore, although the number of migrants to Europe sharply *declined* between 2017 and 2018, the number of migrants to Yemen *increased* by 50% compared to 2017.

It is also important to keep in mind that these figures are not some anomaly or only a recently breaking development; in fact, they are only a small part of a longstanding trend. Over the past several years, for instance, there have been reports, albeit a few, noting how tens of thousands of migrants from the Horn of Africa, again mainly Ethiopia and Somalia, had been deported from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries. However, this phenomenon, which has involved a far greater number of migrants than the phenomenon discussed in *African Arguments* and other outlets has been completely ignored. Why?

Effectively, just like every other article published on *African Arguments*, this latest piece is found wanting. It keeps up with the nauseating trend of regurgitated half-truths and is replete with the usual worn out distortions that say more about the state of lazy, yellow journalism and scholarship and less about any topic at hand.

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Extending the Conversation about Migration

Dr. Fikrejesus Amahazion

In the article, “When Worn Out (African) Arguments are Repackaged for Mainstream Consumption”, featured in this edition of *Eritrea Profile*, the author exposes several of the key shortcomings and weaknesses of a recently published article in *African Arguments* which discussed migration in Eritrea. Beyond its compelling arguments, the critique of the *African Arguments* article serves as an important reminder that most mainstream coverage about migration is frequently sensationalized, regularly lacks context, and often deeply flawed. In this article, I briefly discuss several important points that are often overlooked or downplayed when discussing migration, both generally and with specific regard to Eritrea.

Migration has long been characterized as a fundamental component of the human experience. It is a multidimensional issue, involving a broad array of complex factors. According to the UN’s International Labour Organization (ILO), in 2017, the total number of people who left their home country in search of work, to join family, or to flee conflicts and persecution increased to approximately 277 million from about 232 million in 2013. Of course, part of the reason for the growing number of people on the move across the world is down to a rising world population, which is expected to reach approximately 8 billion in 2023. Another important factor is the relatively improved quality of data, which allows for better estimates.

However, it is important to keep in mind that rates of migrants as a share of the global population have been stable and remained mostly unchanged for more than five decades. For example, between 1960 and 2015, the share of migrants in the global population has fluctuated narrowly between 2.5 and 3.5 percent. According to most analysts, migration will likely remain a fundamental feature of the world in the coming decades due to a number of factors, including globalization, climate change, continued income and opportunity gaps, differences in demographic profiles, and the rising aspirations of the world’s poor and vulnerable.

As was alluded to in the critique of the *African Arguments* article, most mainstream analyses of Eritrean

migration completely fail to consider, either deliberately or through sheer ignorance, one of the key external “pull factors” that has contributed to migration trends from Eritrea – the longstanding de facto policy of Western countries to grant automatic asylum to anyone from the country. If discussions of Eritrean migration are to be regarded as truly objective, balanced, reasonable, and ultimately useful or worthwhile, this surely would be an area worth

exploring and noting. Doing so would reveal how such policies (i.e. favorable treatment of certain groups of migrants) are not unique, are often intricately tied to broader foreign policy and geopolitical machinations, and have often directly impacted patterns of migration.

For instance, extensive research has been conducted on how for over half a century, patterns of Cuban migration to the United States (US) have been an outgrowth of the fact that Cuban immigrants to the US have been awarded unique immigration privileges with a path to citizenship offered to no other foreigners. The granting of special privileges is firmly grounded in US foreign policy and was implemented in order “to sap the Cuban regime of its talented citizens and highlight Cubans’ preference for capitalist democracy over communism” (Eckstein n.d.). The similarities with the politicized approach that has been applied to Eritrea are quite clear.

Furthermore, while Haitian migrants may face considerable challenges in posing as Cubans once they reach American shores, nationals of countries bordering or near Eritrea face a much less difficult time in posing as Eritreans. Interestingly, to date, inadequate attention has been given to

countries, with migrants frequently labelled as benefit seekers or welfare tourists. In contrast, however, the reality is that migrants generally avoid countries of high unemployment, and migrants – including low-wage and irregular migrants – make significant and valuable contributions to the socio-economic well-being of host countries. Research shows that most migrants do jobs that local populations shun or for which they lack the skills. Moreover, foreign-born populations are often net

that it is frequently categorized as “a problem to be solved”, particularly by the media and politicians, may also be construed as a problem by many. However, quite often, there is resort to the quick, easy answer, with many of the fundamental causes and drivers – such as poorly-conceived, hubristic foreign interventions, disastrous invasions, and devastating military engagements and support for repressive, harsh regimes – being obscured or ignored. Moreover, there is no genuine consideration of the fact that truly addressing migration will require that more be done to reduce poverty, decrease global inequalities (both within and among countries), and promote inclusive, sustainable socio-economic development within origin countries.

According to the ILO, rising levels of inequality in many parts of the world were a significant factor in the growing number of people on the move across the planet in recent years (along with a number of other issues). The World Bank estimates that almost half of the world’s population live on less than \$US5.50 a day, and struggle to meet basic needs. Recently, Oxfam released a startling report which revealed the growing concentration of the world’s wealth. One striking figure showed that the 26 richest billionaires in the world own as many assets as the 3.8 billion people who make up the poorest half of the planet’s population.

Furthermore, it seems simplistic and ineffective to fault and vilify migrants or solely pin blame on origin countries when much more can and should be done by wealthy, developed countries and international organizations or institutions to restructure discriminatory trade and economic policies. Trade distorting agricultural subsidies, tariffs, and quotas established by developed countries often contribute to significant challenges for farmers and producers within developing countries, thus contributing to poverty, economic instability, inequality, and emigration.

Migration is a complex, multidimensional issue. It has occurred throughout the history of humanity and will continue to do so in the future. As we seek to better understand migration, more nuanced discussions and debate, involving a greater number of views and perspectives, will likely prove to be more useful and beneficial.



positive

contributors to the welfare systems of many Western, developed countries.

considering the impact of this special treatment on patterns of migration from Eritrea and the Horn of Africa.

Invariably, most discussions and analyses about migration are filled with myths, inaccuracies, hasty assumptions, and misinformation. That is probably why the general population in many Western, developed countries (e.g. across Europe and North America) tend to grossly overestimate the number of migrants or foreigners residing in their countries, while the number of migrants and refugees in developed countries is actually far smaller than in the developing world.

Additionally, it is often claimed that migrants and refugees increase unemployment rates by undercutting wages and “stealing” scarce jobs, and also that they are a drain on host

It is also important to consider how long-term demographic trends within developed countries have led to critical labour and skills challenges, ageing populations, and threats to established social welfare and security systems. Accordingly, immigration from developing countries – which have higher fertility rates and young, growing populations – can actually end up supporting the economies and social systems of developed countries.

Despite the sheer complexity of migration, many discussions about “addressing” it are limited in scope and offer only crude solutions that are impervious to facts, logic, or reason. Of course, with migration being a fundamental component of the human experience and an intricate part of broader processes of globalization and change, the fact



Crazy January, Crazy Weddings!

Natnael Yebio W.

My social media timeline is flooded with pictures posted by recently married couples. Yes, it is January and with it comes weddings. So much so that it is traditionally called 'Tiri Ebidi', which roughly translates as 'Crazy January'. For some a reminder that time is moving and should get married so. For others, well...

The month of Tiri (January) is traditionally consecrated for marriages and wedding feasts. A mating season par excellence. Count nine months after January or even February, and that's, more often than not, when Eritrean Orthodox religious believers celebrate their birthdays, namely September and October. So if you forget the birthday of your close friend or even your wife, choose these months (give or take a week) and check and confirm with a relative to buy your present. You won't go wrong.

If it were not for the lent, wedding feasts would have rolled on throughout the whole year and there wouldn't be any way to stop them.

Eritrean culture and weddings are about community-building. For six months leading up to the wedding, both families will get together to cook, prepare, and make traditional drinks including sewa (a beer like alcohol) and mes (a fermented honey drink). And, of course, these six months are also full of singing and dancing. In Eritrea, the traditional Christian wedding ceremonies take two days.

Of course, it all starts when boy meets girl. (Or is it the other way

around? Not quite sure these days.) Sometimes it is love at first sight, but often it is a cumulative effect of daily situations and nightly hesitations.

In traditional Eritrea, however, it is the parents who fall in love with other parents in the village which result in the marriage alliance between the two households, with the boy and the girl forced to consummate the event in the nuptial bed. A sort of a shotgun marriage with the culture and tradition serving as the weapon.

You see, the father of the girl had previously promised the father of the boy that if the child of the former was to be a female, he would offer her to the latter for the sake of cementing the love that existed between them.

But it so happens sometimes that the groom and the bride are so young that, for all they know, the marriage and the life after the event feels like little children playing house. Only this time they have a real house.

One way or another, once the decision is made for the marriage to take place, no earthly power can alter it. The marriage usually takes place within a year unless something happens in between. The preparation begins quite ahead of time.

In modern Eritrea, this is how weddings go: on the first day of the ceremony, which usually falls on a Saturday, the groom, accompanied by his best-men, goes to the bride's house and takes her to the service at the church. After the priest performs the ceremony, the newlywed couple and their guests go to a nearby park to take wedding pictures. Afterward, the couple will go for a lavish



breakfast. After that, the couple are requested to dance while a camera crew aim to catch every bit of it.

In the past, the reception was held in a large tent near the groom's home. Recently, however, banquet halls have become more common. Either way, in a tent or a banquet hall, the bride and groom dance with their guests.

On the second day of the ceremony, events start early in the morning with the bride wearing her white gown and the groom sporting an immaculate suit. They go to a park and spend the morning taking pictures with loved ones and guests. The official ceremony then starts as the bride and groom make their way to the bride's home for a reception that is held in their honor. The newlyweds will be accompanied by a long line of white cars (often rented for the occasion). At the bride's reception, the family of the bride sit on one side and the family of the groom sit on the other side. Close relatives are in front.

The ritual starts after lunch, when representatives of both families exchange promises of loyalty and then a priest blesses the wedding.

When all this is taking place, the bride will be inside waiting for her grand entrance to the tent. When the time comes, she will enter the tent with her groom and have lunch with both families; they feed each other, symbolizing the promise to support one another, if necessary.

Once the feast is over, it is mandatory to sing two traditional songs before dancing: Awelo, song in honor of the family members, whose names are specifically mentioned by the singer, and Masse, in honor of the women who prepared the traditional food for the wedding.

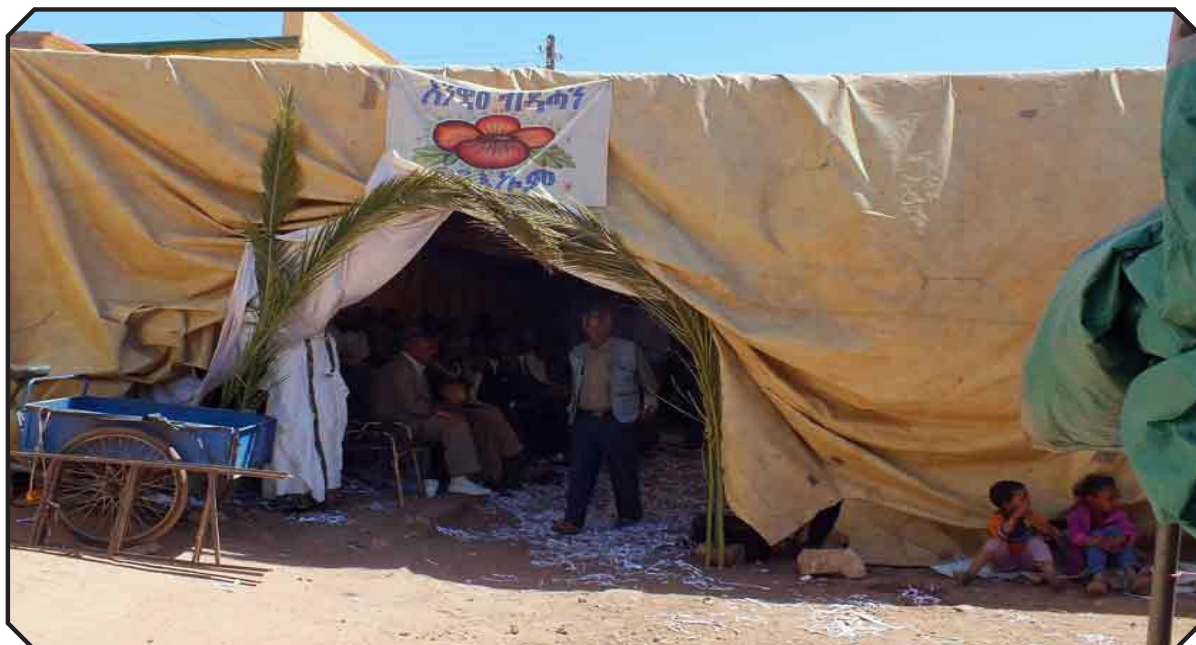
The ceremony is concluded with cake and champagne. Afterward, the bride and groom will open the dance. A basket is passed through the crowd to collect financial contributions for the wedding. The just-married couple will then leave to the groom's house, where there is another ceremony being held by the groom's family. In this situation, the bride will leave her house with her groom accompanied by her maid of honor. Her family will not attend the groom's wedding party, signifying their respect and blessing in giving their daughter. However, the family of the bride will continue to feast and dance long into the night.

All that might be beautiful and very traditional but to slightly digress and talk on a serious note, it is a bit concerning to see how much money is invested on weddings in our society. It bewilders me to see such

extravagant wedding ceremonies. It leaves you guessing where the money is coming from. In my humble opinion, I don't see the point of having such lavish weddings, especially done to impress the bride's family (or your own, for that matter). You spent almost all that you have in two days of hectic celebrations to end up with only a little for the beginning of your marriage. Furthermore, the relatives you had spent money on to make happy tend to forget about you afterwards. While they might talk about the lavish wedding, I am quite sure that is not going to pay the electricity bill.

The expenses include renting a venue for the reception, cars (preferably white Mercedes models), tuxedos, wedding gowns, dresses, suits, cake, band, and more. Of course, relatives have to buy formal clothes for the day itself, while the mother of the bride might feel it necessary to buy her sisters the same outfit as hers (so they can match). We all know if there are three or four women wearing the same outfit at a wedding, then they are definitely sisters. These are just some of the things that make Eritrean weddings quite expensive.

Last, while our weddings are romantic and distinguished from other cultures, the fact that they are really large makes them very expensive, to the point where both families, and at times even friends, have to spend beyond their capabilities. Weddings are supposed to be celebrations that set couples off to their new lives and a time of blessings and happiness. I am quite sure they are not all about showing how much money you can spend.



The Eritrea-Ethiopia Border: A Zone of Social and Economic Interaction

Simon Weldemichael

Following Ethiopia's 2018 acceptance of the EEBC and Ethiopian Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed's groundbreaking reforms, the tense relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia have been repaired. So far, President Isaias Afewerki has made three official visits to Ethiopia and PM Abiy has come to Eritrea twice. Telephone services and regular flights between both countries have resumed. The once militarized borders have opened and the embassies resumed service. Numerous high-level bilateral discussions have been conducted to outline plans and harmonize actions. In addition, other agreements have been signed, aiming to create a favorable environment for peace and security. In September 2018, a Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Cooperation between Ethiopia, Somalia, and Eritrea was signed in Asmara.

The National Charter of Eritrea states that economic and cultural

development will be immensely enhanced in a conducive environment of regional cooperation. The document indeed states that, "Establishing active and comprehensive cooperation with our neighbors and throughout the world is important for our economic and cultural development." Usually, a country's foreign policy is an extension of their internal policy. The internal operations of Eritrea focus on peace, security, and stability. Similarly, Eritrea's foreign policy is based on peace and non-alignment. That is why Eritrea has worked to establish peaceful relations with its neighbors and the countries of the region.

Tibor Nagy, the US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, recognized, during his last visit to the country late last year, Eritrea's potential contribution to regional peace and stability, stating, "...we see strong potential for Eritrea's contributions to improving regional security. Eritrea has resisted extremist

threats, and could provide lessons to others on how to maintain a diversity of communities free from violent extremism. Eritrea can also contribute to regional peace and stability, as we have seen with Eritrea's engagement with Somalia and South Sudan, and Eritrea's role brokering agreements among Ethiopian opposition groups."

Eritrea firmly believes that insecurity and instability cannot be confined within borders. Peace with Ethiopia and the lifting of sanctions have contributions in lubricating and expanding Eritrea's prevalent interactions with the wider world. Eritrea must recognize and accept its role as an important regional player to promote cultural, economic, and social cooperation in the region.

After the Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship between Eritrea and Ethiopia was signed on July 9, 2018, in Asmara, many initiatives were begun. The countries came to understand that it was time to move forward

"The complementarity of both peoples and countries, their common bilateral interests and prosperity, are sacrosanct objectives to which we have toiled and paid sacrifices for two generations. As such, it remains a priority for which we will be actively engaged."

Months later, the border between the two countries was opened, allowing for the free movement of peoples and goods. The movement of goods and peoples, if implemented with appropriate systems and procedures, can be a positive force for socio-cultural and economic development. It can remove the cloud of mistrust and hatred and promote cooperation. Through cross-border movement, the two countries can cultivate cooperation and solidarity, as well as improve the living conditions of their peoples.

Inevitably, the movement of people, goods, and services will require better infrastructural linkages and connections. The TPLF-instigated war completely ruined the infrastructure around the border region. With the borders closed for the past twenty years, there was also little reconstruction or development there. Today, however, large renovation projects are underway, especially on the strategic roads that link Eritrea with Ethiopia. The ports of Assab and Massawa are also being rebuilt.

It is interesting to consider that Africa's position in global trade is still in its infancy. Various reports and indices show that Africa plays only a small role in global trade.

For example, in 2016, Africa represented only 3 percent of the world economy.

Many experts suggest that Africa first boost trade within the continent in order to boost its standing in the global arena. According to the 2018 African

Trade Report, in terms of intra-African trade, Africa continues to trail other regions. At about 15%, Africa compares unfavorably to Europe (68%), North America (37%), and Latin America (20%).

Apart from the economic benefits, cross-border movement can increase familiarity and understanding. In order for peace to be sustainable, we need to have respect for each other. People of both countries have been able to interact and build a platform for understanding. The divisions that existed previously have been broken down and progress is being made. In order to translate political agreements into reality, a strong social foundation is necessary.

Of course, there are certain challenges associated with the free movement of people and goods across borders. The various challenges will require well-thought out regulatory mechanisms developed and agreed by the two countries so as to stem and offset deleterious implications and consequences.

Eritrea and Ethiopia remain low-income, developing countries. This is in spite of the considerable resources that they are endowed with. Sustainable and durable peace will thus enable both countries to funnel their energy solely towards development and to that extent induce rapid economic growth. Indeed, if the two countries cooperate fully and harness their resources, their people's standard of living will be lifted. If Eritrea and Ethiopia move together, there is no limit to how high they can reach.

In a nutshell, the optimal arrangement is for both countries to cooperate and move forward; to struggle together and pull ourselves up. While remaining proud of our respective national identities and sovereignty, the peoples of Eritrea and Ethiopia are determined to transcend their former divisions to forge a common destiny.

through peace and cooperation. In his speech on June 20, 2018, President Isaias stated,



ADS

United Nations Development Programme

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برنامج التنمية التابع للأمم المتحدة

Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.**VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT VA/01/2019**

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office in Asmara invites qualified applicants (Eritrean) for the following vacant post:

Job Code Title: Common Services Associate
Classified Grade: GS-7
Duty Station: Asmara
Type of Contract: Temporary Appointment (6 Months)

Organizational Context

The Common Services Associate will work under the overall guidance of UN Country Team (UNCT), through the Chair of the Operations Management Team (OMT) and the direct day-to-day supervision of the UNDP Operations Manager. The incumbent is responsible for managing UN common premises and services including financial management.

The CSA will promote a client-oriented approach consistent with UN/UNDP rules and regulations and work in close collaboration with the OMT and UN Coordination Officer and all operations personnel in all UN Agencies in Eritrea to implement common services-related programmes, exchange information and ensure timely delivery of services to various clients.

Summary of Key Functions:

1. Ensure management of cost-effective common services and implements the UNCT-approved activities.
2. Contribute to the efficient management of financial resource, overseeing common services, including asset management.
3. Oversee outsourced common services and promote excellent client relationships and manage networks.
4. Facilitate information, communication and knowledge management and sharing and documentation of good practices in common services and premises, where necessary.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- **Education:** University Degree is essential. Secondary Education with specialized training in procurement would be desirable.
- **Experience:** Minimum of 5 years of relevant working experience in facilities maintenance/management is required at the national or international level. Experience in the usage of computers and office software packages (MS Word, Excel, etc.) and knowledge of automated procurement systems, experience in handling of web-based management systems.
- **Language requirements:** Fluency in oral and written English; knowledge of other official UN languages is an advantage.

Other Information: For more details, please collect the Terms of Reference from the UNDP Reception Desk. Interested applicants should submit duly filled P11 form (available at the UNDP Reception Desk, UN Office in Asmara) and a detailed CV with supporting documents. Copy of document indicating exemption from/completion of national service should be sent to **UNDP Reception Desk, UN offices, Asmara, Eritrea.**

UNDP will contact those who are considered potential candidates. Closing date for the application is 10 days from the date of announcement.

“UNDP is an equal opportunity employer which strives to achieve overall balance in its staffing patterns”.

United Nations Development Programme

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برنامج التنمية التابع للأمم المتحدة

Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

United Nations

CORE VALUES: *INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM, RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY*

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT VA/02/2019

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office in Asmara invites qualified applicants (Eritrean) for the following vacant post:

Job Code Title: Development Coordination Officer, Data Management and Results Monitoring/Reporting
Classified Grade: NOC
Duty Station: Asmara
Type of Contract: Fixed Term Appointment (One-year renewable subject to funding availability)

Organizational Context

The position is located in the United Nations Resident Coordination Office (RCO) in Eritrea and typically reports to the Senior Development Coordination Officer, Strategic Planning and RCO Team Leader.

Responsibilities:

Within delegated authority, the Development Coordination Officer, Data Management and Results Monitoring/Reporting will be responsible of the following duties: (These duties are generic and may not be carried out by all Development Coordination Officers, Data Management and Results Monitoring/Reporting.)

Summary of key functions:

1. Provides substantive support for the development and implementation of UN Country Team (UNCT) data and research strategies
2. Develops and expands strategic research and data partnerships
3. Coordinates monitoring and reporting of UNCT results
4. Supports knowledge management and capacity development

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Education: Advanced university degree (Master's degree or equivalent degree) in business or public administration, information management, statistics, sustainable development, social sciences, education or related area. A first-level university degree in combination with two additional years of qualifying experience may be accepted in lieu of the advanced university degree.

Experience: A minimum of five years of progressively responsible experience in providing strategic support to research and data analysis, knowledge management or project/programme management in the context of development cooperation or related area is required.

Language: Fluency in one of the working languages of the UN Secretariat, English or French, is required; knowledge of the other is desirable. Knowledge of another UN official language is an advantage.

Other considerations: For more details please collect the Terms of Reference from the UNDP Reception Desk. Interested applicants should submit duly filled P11 form (available at the UNDP Reception Desk, UN Office in Asmara) and a detailed CV with supporting documents. Copy of document indicating exemption from/completion of national service should be sent to **UNDP Reception Desk, P.O. Box 5366, and UN offices, Asmara, Eritrea.**

UNDP will contact those who are considered Potential candidates. Closing date for the application is 10 days from the date of announcement.

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United Nations Development Programme

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CORE VALUES: INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM, RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT VA/03/2019

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office in Asmara invites qualified applicants (Eritrean) for the following vacant post:

Job Code Title: Development Coordination Officer, Partnership and Development Finance

Classified Grade: NOC

Duty Station: Asmara

Type of Contract: Fixed Term Appointment (One year renewable subject to funding availability)

Organizational Context

The position is located in the United Nations Resident Coordination Office (RCO) in Eritrea and typically reports to the Senior Development Coordination Officer, Strategic Planning and RCO Team Leader.

Responsibilities:

Within delegated authority, the Development Coordination Officer, Partnerships and Development Finance will be responsible of the following duties: (These duties are generic and may not be carried out by all Development Coordination Officers, Partnerships and Development Finance.)

Summary of key functions:

1. Provides substantive support for strategic planning for and coordination of UN Country Team (UNCT) partnerships
2. Participates in joint resource mobilization for the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)
3. Provides substantive support on financing for accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
4. Supports knowledge management and capacity development

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Education: Advanced university degree (Master's degree or equivalent degree) in business or public administration, sustainable development, social sciences, education or related area. A first-level university degree in combination with two additional years of qualifying experience may be accepted in lieu of the advanced university degree.

Experience: A minimum of five years of progressively responsible experience in providing strategic support to partnerships, project/programme management, resource mobilization or development finance in the context of development cooperation or related area is required.

Language: Fluency in one of the working languages of the UN Secretariat, English or French, is required; knowledge of the other is desirable. Knowledge of another UN official language is an advantage.

Other considerations: For more details please collect the Terms of Reference from the UNDP Reception Desk. Interested applicants should submit duly filled P11 form (available at the UNDP Reception Desk, UN Office in Asmara) and a detailed CV with supporting documents. Copy of document indicating exemption from/completion of national service should be sent to **UNDP Reception Desk, P.O. Box 5366, and UN offices, Asmara, Eritrea.**

UNDP will contact those who are considered Potential candidates. Closing date for the application is 10 days from the date of announcement.

"UNDP is an equal opportunity employer which strives to achieve overall balance in its staffing patterns"

Vacancy Announcement

Eritrea-Sichuan Mineral Construction Corp. Ltd invites
Qualified Candidates for the following position:-

INTERPRETER (Required – 1)**MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Fluent in both written and spoken of English language.
- Fluent in both written and spoken of Chinese language.
- Good knowledge of computer.
- Good knowledge of labor law of the State of Eritrea.
- Good knowledge of custom clearance and regulation/s.
- Good knowledge of application procedures and regulation/s of immigration and Ministry of Labor and Human Welfare.

Education: BA in English

Work Experience: More than 5 years' experience

Other skills and abilities:

- Ability to work well with people.
- Physically strong and healthy.
- Ability to present information in a consistent, organized and accurate way.
- Ability to communicate and work effectively with staff, the Board of Directors, and the public.
- Ability to work in a self-directed, organized manner.
- Good working knowledge of office procedures and office management.
- Ability to understand technical instructions.
- Excellent computer skills – Microsoft Office (Word, Excel and Access), and email.
- Ability to function independently in a multi-task environment, as well as part of a team.
- Knowledge of human resources concepts, practices, policies, and procedures
- Disciplined and able to maintain confidentiality.

Salary: Negotiable

Additional requirement for nationals:

- Provide evidence of completion or exemption from National Service.
- Present clearance paper from current or last employer

Interested applicants should send their letter of application, CV & other documents through post office.

Closing Date: 7 days from the date of this announcement.

Address: Eritrea-Sichuan Mineral Construction Corp. Ltd. P.O. Box 4832 Tel. 154960

Every applicant is required also to send a copy of application to the

The state of Eritrea Office National Security Aliens
Employment Permit Affair
P.O. Box 7940 Asmara, Eritrea



The man with urban plan

Billion Temesghen

A l e m s e g e d Ghebrekidan, an Eritrean Assistant Professor of Urban Planning at the University of Juba, South Sudan, a consultant and an author is our guest today. With his many years of practice in Eritrea, Ethiopia and South Sudan, Alemseged works hard to contribute towards urbanization, using the right approach, in several African cities and towns.

Thank you for your time. Let us start with a brief introduction about you?

I was born and raised in Ethiopia. I finished my undergrad studies there and moved back to Eritrea soon after graduation. I did my post graduate in Holland and Sweden. My professional journey started when I was in Ethiopia but I worked mostly in Eritrea and now as of lately I have been working in South Sudan. I have been engaged in several research programs starting from 2009 and I am still at it. I look in to ways of embarking on strategic urban planning and expansion of cities and towns in different countries of the Horn of Africa. I worked as a lecturer at EIT and I am currently working as an assistant professor at the University of Juba. I am passionate about my profession and I believe that African countries should encourage a multi-disciplinary approach towards the urbanization of their cities and towns.

In simple words, what is urban planning?

Urban planning is a tool for bringing rational development of towns, cities and nations. It is an integrated approach for a nation's socio-economic development.

Asmara is an African pride being one of the earliest urban settlements of Africa. What is your opinion about Asmara, its edifice and its expansion, now, after more than a century?

Asmara has its peculiar characters and feature that make it unique. So Asmara is not only about the arrangement of its building structure nor its roads, parks or sewage system. It is a city that reflects beauty beyond the physical arrangements. Asmara is about its people and their diverse cultures, its geographical location, its beautiful climate and other assets that make Asmara special. Many refer to "Asmara" as the Asmara of the 1889. But it is wrong. Asmara existed many centuries before the arrival of the Italians. There were four towns whose women decided to unite in one settlement to stand against brigades. Even the name of the city is the Tigrigna pronoun for 'they, feminine, united'. These four towns that later united to form Asmara had their own tradition and customary laws. The Italians were in Tripoli and Mogadishu as well. But why do you think it was easier for them to construct a city in Asmara? That is because, principally, there existed regulations that enabled the four towns to function as one body; an integrated system of coexistence typical of urbanization. Of course, the colonial era saw the building and beautification of a city built on European architectural trends that make Asmara even more beautiful. Therefore, the significance of Asmara is driven from multiple aspects that I just explained. This is my opinion.

As per its expansion, Asmara started expanding soon after Independence. There were massive ambitions to build new buildings to replace older ones with high-rise buildings. The people complained against those plans. The President then took the community's side in one of the public meetings. He strongly



advocated for new constructions to be carried out outside the city settlement and for the city to be maintained and safeguarded. Once again, the people's tradition and indigenous knowledge prevailed and the high-rise buildings that don't fit the character of the art deco of the city were stopped almost immediately.

Keren, Akordat and Massawa are cities of Eritrea, which alongside other beautiful towns, compose a pleasing structure for the country? How should they be preserved and what is the role of urban planning in their preservation and expansion?

Each city and town is explained beyond its physical edifice, especially in Eritrea, where the culture shelters traditional laws that regulate the socio-economic affairs of the people. In modern times the expansion of towns and cities should be studied and analyzed, avoiding urban sprawls. The concept of land should be respected. If you respect your land and environment they will respect you. If not the punishment is severe. It goes down to

generations. The expansion of towns and cities should follow certain principles, especially that of density. New settlements should be built for a minimum of 300 people in a hectare. There is no need of ungoverned expansion. We should watch out for the mistake we see in many African cities. Luckily, that was detected early on around Asmara, when big chunks of land were initially given out to residents but was stopped early on after revisions. Making policies drafted upon basic principles of planning strategies for development that put ahead the social, economic, cultural and environmental aspects of development that bind people living in urban areas. It is important that there exists integration between rural and urban areas. The linkage there is extremely important.

Asmara saw a slight horizontal expansion when 500 meter square of land was being allocated for individuals for housing and other purposes. I had a consultancy office at that time and neither my office nor other professionals saw the negative impact of it. Many

houses were built in a short time. The stoppage of it soon after seemed wrong to many. But it was the right decision. Even if it meant that my office had to be out of work and I became broke the cessation of land allotment was a decision made for sustainable development. The move forward now will avoid making the same mistake.

You have worked in Eritrea, Ethiopia and South Sudan. What is your opinion?

I was born and raised in Addis Ababa and now I am working in Juba. I also have been in other African cities for personal reasons. I have to say that Eritrean cities are better off than the rest. I am not saying this because I am an Eritrean, but this is strictly my professional opinion. The reason is that Eritrean towns and cities are less dense than other African cities and towns. Urban sprawls are evident in many African cities. People complain about sicknesses and epidemics being spread, environmental pollution, crimes, evident societal hierarchies and more... all of that is the result of failed planning strategies.

In poor countries it is easier for people to set up small and cheap edifices to survive. Don't you think that maybe the process of urban advancement might be unaffordable?

It is not about the money but the awareness of urban development. It is a question of management. Urban development is about preserving the identity of a community while granting a healthy socio-economic development. The nation means its people, land and government. The government has the duty of allocating the nation's resources equally and sustainably for the society without compromising the future of the coming generations. Every part of the society and professionals in all disciplines should be involved.