

PRESIDENT ISAIAS AFWERKI RECEIVES CHINESE DELEGATION



President Isaias Afwerki received on November 6 this week, a senior delegation of the People's Republic of China led by Mr. Liu Jie, Vice-Governor of Sichuan Provincial People's Government.

President Isaias referred to the

long-standing warm ties that exist between the two countries and underlined the reservoir of good will as well as the conducive climate that exists for Chinese companies to actively participate in major investment ventures in the country.

Mr. Liu Jie, for his part, paid

tribute to the deep and expanding ties between the People's Republic of China and Eritrea. The

Vice Governor stated that Chinese companies are prepared to invest in physical infrastructure and particu-

larly in mining, the construction of dams and bridges as well as in agricultural projects.

In addition, the Chinese delegation met with Mr. Hagos Ghebrehwet, Head of PFDJ Economic Affairs, Mr. Berhane Habtemariam, the Minister of Finance and Mr. Abraha Asfaha, the Minister of Public Works to assess progress of investments already underway and explore concrete prospects for future engagement. Mr. Liu also met with the Governor of the Central Region, Major General Romodan Awilyay, for discussions on specific areas of cooperation.

An agreement for the purchase and transfer of Sunridge Gold Corporation's (SGC) 60% share of the Asmara Mining Project to the Sichuan Road Bridge Mining (SRBM) was signed during the visit of the Chinese Delegation. The Eritrea's National Mining Corporation (ENAMCO) owns the remaining 40% equity in the venture.

NATIONAL BANK ISSUES LEGAL NOTICE

The Eritrean National Bank issued on 4 November this week Legal Notice No. 124/2015 that specifies regulations for the redemption of the old Nakfa currency notes with new Legal Tender Nakfa currency notes. The main contents of the Legal Notice are the following:

- The old Nakfa currency notes in circulation will be redeemed with the new legal tender Nakfa currency notes at the same exchange or equivalence rate. The replacement period will last for six weeks.
- The Bank of Eritrea shall declare, through local media outlets, the period during which redemption shall commence and terminate.
- During redemption, individuals or entities shall be allowed to exchange in cash only up to twenty thousand new Nakfa currency note for the old currency note. Any amount shall be deposited in their bank accounts.
- In the same token, individuals or entities shall be allowed to withdraw from their accounts only up to twenty thousand in cash in the new Nakfa currency notes. Any transactions in excess of this amount may only be settled through checks or other bank instruments.

The full text of the Legal Notice as published in the Gazette of Eritrean Laws is reprinted on page 2.

TRUST FUND

PFDJ members in Frankfurt have donated 1,000 Euros in support of the Martyrs Trust Fund. Likewise, members of the Eritrean National War-disabled Veterans Association in Sweden have

donated 10 thousand Kroner to disabled veterans at the Denden camp.

In the same vein, the Parents Committee in Mannheim con-

tributed 1,300 dollars raised at a sporting event to the Commission of Culture and Sports. Over 118 thousand Nakfa was also donated to the Asmara orphanage by Eritrean women residing in the UK.

FORUM ON SOCIAL DIALOGUE

A forum on "social dialogue at the work place" was jointly organized in Asmara from 3-4 November this week by the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the National Confederation of Eritrean Workers (NCEW).

Speaking at the forum, Mr. Yemane Tesfai, Chairman of the Eritrean Employers Federation, stated that the platform was vital for promoting good relations between workers and employers.

The representative of the ILO

North Africa Region underlined the significance of the forum in enhancing workers' capacity, ensuring safe work environment as well in consolidating the ties that exist between the NCEW and the ILO.



Legal Notice No. 124/2015

Legal Tender Nakfa Currency Notes Regulations

Article 1. Issuing Authority.

The Bank of Eritrea hereby issues these Regulations pursuant to authority vested in it by Articles 5 and 52 of the Bank of Eritrea Proclamation No. 93/1997.

Article 2. Short Title.

These Regulations may be cited as the "Legal Tender Nakfa Currency Notes Regulations No. 124/2015".

Article 3. Redemption of the Nakfa Currency Notes in Circulation.

(1) The Bank of Eritrea shall declare through media the period during which redemption shall commence and terminate.

(2) The Bank of Eritrea shall, through the commercial banks, redeem the old Nakfa currency notes in circulation with new legal tender Nakfa currency notes at the rate of one old Nakfa currency note equals one new Nakfa currency note.

Article 4. Commercial Banks and Customers.

(1) Commercial Banks shall,

from the day of entry into force of these Regulations up to the end of the process of redemption pursuant to Article 5 of these Regulations, engage in opening new accounts for customers, redeeming the old Nakfa currency note with the new Nakfa currency note, ensuring that the forms accordingly prepared are properly filled, providing receipts to customers and clarifying the redemption procedures.

(2) Any individual or entity shall be allowed to redeem currency solely in one bank and solely once.

(3) During redemption, individuals or entities shall be allowed to exchange in cash only up to twenty thousand new Nakfa currency note for the old Nakfa currency note. Any amount in excess shall be deposited in their accounts.

(4) During redemption, individuals or entities shall be allowed to withdraw from their accounts only up to twenty thousand in new Nakfa currency notes.

Any transactions in excess may only be settled through checks or other bank instruments.

(5) Foreigners or foreign entities wishing to exchange old Nakfa currency notes for the new Nakfa currency notes may be allowed to do so after the le-



gitimacy of the mode of obtaining the old Nakfa currency they wish to exchange has been verified.

Article 5. Time Limit for Currency Redemption.

(1) The currency redemption process shall terminate within six weeks.

(2) Individuals or entities may, during the first two weeks, deposit any amount of money in their accounts.

(3) During the last four

weeks, however, they shall only be allowed to deposit or exchange up to twenty thousand Nakfa.

(4) All old Nakfa currency notes not surrendered for redemption within the time frame provided for in sub-Articles (1), (2) and (3) hereof, shall be irredeemable and worthless for the purpose of effecting payment.

Article 6. Penalty.

Whosoever intentionally violates the provisions of these Regulations or hinders their implemen-

tation shall, upon conviction, be punishable in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Transitional Penal Code of Eritrea.

Article 7. Effective Date.

These Regulations shall enter into force as of the day of their publication in the Gazette of Eritrean Laws.

Done at Asmara, this 4th day of November

The Bank of Eritrea.

Bank of Eritrea announces Time lines

The Bank of Eritrea has issued the timelines and other relevant information for the commencement and termination of redemption of the Nakfa currency notes in circulation in accordance with Article 3 (1) of Legal Notice no.124/2015.

According to the Bank's announcement, the redemption program will commence on 18 November and continue until December the 30th on all working days as well as on the Saturdays of each week. Working hours in all banks on each day will be from 8:00 to

11:00 a.m. and from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Cash deposits without any upper limits will be made from 18th to 21st November; from the 23rd to 28th November; and from 30th November to 1st of December only. Cash deposits in excess of 20,000 cannot be made thereafter. In as far as places of exchange are concerned, the Bank's announcement specifies:

1. Redemption of old Nakfa currencies in

• Asmara, Massawa, Dubaruwa, Assab,

• Mendefera, Keren, Barentu, and Tesenai

shall be carried out at the Commercial and Housing banks in these cities.

2. Redemption of old Nakfa currencies in

• Adi-Keih, Dekemhare, Aqordet and Afabet

shall be made at the Commercial Bank in these cities.

3. Redemption of old Nakfa currencies in

• Ginda, Nakfa and

shall be carried out at the Housing Banks in these cities..

All government Ministries and institutions, the Army, and PFDJ bodies will carry out redemption functions on behalf of the Banks for their respective members. Administrative Regions are also empowered to carry out these functions to their members and to rural residents. All these redemptions will be for cash amounts that do not exceed 20,000 Nakfa.

ERITREA PROFILE

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ERITREA in Mainstream Media

Analysts or Apologists of occupation?

Sophia Tesfamariam

Eritreans have learned a few things about the western media and its partners in the NGO community in the last 15 years. They have learned to detect the nauseating stench of anti-Eritrea campaigns from afar, and have also been able to pin point its source. As past evidence has shown, the scared minority regime in Ethiopia remains the sole source of all the distortions about Eritrea and its leadership. Its foul stench permeates every single audacious anti-Eritrea campaign. No matter what the label of the day, or where it is embedded, one will find the regime lurking not too far behind—less than six degrees of separation.

From the lies during and after the 1998-2000 “border conflict”, to the outlandish fabrications found in the Somalia Eritrea Monitoring Group’s reports, to the unsubstantiated allegations against Eritrea found in the Commission of Inquiries reports, one will find the “invisible hand” of the regime in Ethiopia or its patrons. Eritreans also know the repeat offenders in the regime’s club of apologists and the BBC’s Martin Plaut has served in that role for over 15 years and a cursory look at all his reports will show how he advanced the minority regime’s agendas. Suffice to mention a few examples:

Knowing full well that the Eritrea Ethiopia Boundary Commission had “unequivocally” awarded Badme, the casus belli for the Eritrea Ethiopia 1998-2000 border conflict to Eritrea, after initially reporting that fact in his BBC report, after being reprimanded by the regime, Plaut and the BBC began to backtrack and parrot the regime’s propaganda with statements such as this:

“...The international community has suggested that there be some compromise on the issue, but Eritrea has dug in its heels, demanding its rights...Ethiopia could continue to administer it, while acknowledging Eritrean sovereignty over the area...It might even be possible, with a little goodwill, to agree to a joint administration of Badme...”

In order to divert attention away from Ethiopia’s invasion and occupation of Somalia in 2006, Plaut shamelessly parroted the discredited Somalia Eritrea Monitoring Group’s (SEMG) accusations against Eritrea without providing an iota of evidence to support his claims. In his

18 November 2008 post “Pirates ‘working with Islamists’”, instead of researching the issue and learning about the real causes for the rise in piracy off the coast of Somalia, he chose instead to refer to a discredited report produced by Bruno Schiemsy, of the Somalia Monitoring Group, which was replete with bogus and outlandish assertions and unsubstantiated allegations. Citing Bruno Schiemsy’s discredited Report on Somalia, without providing any other independent verification of its assertions, Plaut wrote:

“...The Islamists are using the pirates to train their own forces in naval tactics so that they can provide protection for arms being smuggled in Somalia from Eritrea...It says two shipments in May were for Sheikh Hassan Abdulle Hersi, who is also known as Hassan Turki, an Islamist leader who is based in southern Somalia near Kismayo...They are reported to have been picked up from islands off the Eritrean coast...”

This was a ploy designed to implicate Eritrea in the Somalia crisis. History and the Somali people can attest to that. It was also in that report that the Monitoring Group claimed that there were “2000 Eritrean forces” fighting in Somalia. That information according to Wikileaks came from the minority regime in Ethiopia.

Let us move on...

Plaut has partnered with many anti-Eritrea groups and individuals, so it comes as no surprise that he would today co-author an article with a member of the clan, whose specialty is the European Union and it is there that the regime needs the most help today—to influence EU lawmakers and policy makers and dissuade them from engaging with Eritrea. The Ethiopian regime defers to its European (White) partners in crime, when its tantrums and ultimatums are dismissed or ignored by EU leadership. These two also serve as caretakers for the regime’s surrogates who have served as the “Eritrean Faces” in its vilification campaigns against the State of Eritrea and its leadership. The minority regime feels threatened by Eritrea’s economic, social and political development and will do anything, and say anything, to thwart it.

The regime’s behind the scenes tantrums, empty bravado, lies, deceptions and embarrassingly childish attitudes, especially when

meeting with western officials, is well documented in the American Embassy cables from Addis Ababa. They show an ugly pattern of a regime that has left no stone unturned to disseminate distortions about Eritrea, its people and its leadership. Its crab mentality is rooted in, and stems from, its incurable inferiority complex, and a desperate fear that Eritrea will develop into a prosperous nation, and surpass Ethiopia. In its warped mind, Eritrea’s success will cause it to lose its favored status with the West. It cannot imagine a scenario where it can, like Eritrea does, maintain its dignity and respect, and its relationship with the West.

It was not long after its usurpation of power in Ethiopia that the regime saw itself rejected by the Ethiopian people. That exacerbated the regime’s incurable case of inferiority complex and in an attempt to present itself as the viable “anchor”, a label given by its handlers; it tried to eliminate all threats against its power. Populating the Ethiopian armed forces with Tigrayans and making sure that all of Ethiopia’s vital institutions were headed by card carrying cadres of the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF), it wrongly believes it can suppress the will of the Ethiopian people and use force to enforce its domestic and foreign policy agendas. Obviously, it has not learned much from its predecessor, the Derg regime, touted as having the largest army in Africa.

Whenever the minority regime in Ethiopia finds itself in one of its self-created quagmires, its handlers unleash a string of mercenaries who post and plant fabricated stories about Eritrea and its leadership in the mainstream media and as we have seen in the last 10 years, UN documents have not been immune wither. The noise gets louder if anything positive is said or written about Eritrea, by anyone. That has been the staple for the last 15 years, so nothing the regime or its surrogates say or do surprises Eritreans anymore. One can understand how the regime in Ethiopia can obsess about Eritrea on a daily basis, but what is perplexing is the obsession with Eritrea of some western journalists, such as the BBC’s Martin Plaut.

Despite the façade of ‘research’ and ‘investigations’, reports written by Plaut and his partners are filled with lies and distortions. The most recent being a piece co-authored with Mirjam Van Reisen, a known apologist for the regime in Ethio-

pia, and someone who has under the cover of her NGO, the European Policy Advisors, provided the regime and its surrogates forums to advance anti-Eritrea campaigns in a bid to influence European states. In their latest article, filled with unsubstantiated allegations and hearsay, the duos falsely claim the following:

“The UN Security Council has concluded that the Eritrean regime remains a serious threat to peace in the Horn of Africa and the region as a whole...”

Eritreans are accustomed to reading distorted reports from Plaut and Van Reisen, and would actually be surprised if they read anything different from these two self-baptized experts. But this brazen and blatant lie is a clear sign of their desperation. Both of them know full well that there is nothing in Resolution 2244 (2015) adopted on 25 October that says anything like that about Eritrea. The Resolution is not hidden in some secret vault; it is out there for all to see. It is an insult to their readers.

Plaut and Van Reisen wrongly assume that their “analysis” and “research” will remain unchallenged and that their “NGO” and “journalist” covers will shield them from criticism and rebuke. It will not. While there may be some gullible individuals and lazy journalists who will accept such skewed articles without verification, Plaut and his partners must know that no self-respecting Eritrean will remain silent when such deliberate and malicious content is being disseminated. It is not the first time that these two have misrepresented the facts on Eritrea in a futile attempt to white wash the Ethiopian regime’s crimes and divert attention from its violations of international law. It will also not be the first time that they have come out in support of its agendas against Eritrea. This time, the transparent campaign is to stop European Union’s development aid to Eritrea.

Both Plaut and Van Reisen have been cavorting with individuals and groups, made up of disgruntled defectors, detractors and defeatists, residing in Western capitals, receiving alms and laundering information, all the while posing as “victims of religious persecution”, “exiled journalists”, “reformists”, “democrats”, and “human rights” activists. Plaut is one of the foreigners, who have provided these individuals and

groups access to parliamentarians, state officials and the media, access they would not have otherwise had, to carry out the campaign to vilify the government of Eritrea and undermine its leadership. For a country that they have not visited, their obsession is curious. Both are quick to jump on anti-Eritrea bandwagons, no matter who the driver was. While they have produced many articles and reports on Eritrea, most are based on second and third hand knowledge. Unsubstantiated hearsay.

So what provoked the latest lie by Plaut and Van Reisen?

The minority regime in Ethiopia and its surrogates have been up in arms and screaming at the EU ever since it announced resumption of its program in Eritrea. It should be recalled that Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, during an address to EU Ambassadors also chastised the EU for maintaining its cooperation framework with Eritrea and extending the 11th EDF cycle. Summoning “academics” and “analysts” to produce long winded papers on Eritrea and sending letters to dissuade the EU, the regime whose national budget is subsidized by donors, and his starving population is also fed by them, has no shame in attempting to block development aid to Eritrea.

No matter what else is written in their long winded articles—the agenda is clear, and has nothing to do with advancing “human rights” or “democracy” in Eritrea. Their “cut and paste” series of articles are nothing more than a desperate attempt to sway EU policy for Eritrea. The narrative being employed by all anti-Eritrea campaigns is the one crafted by the regime in Ethiopia. Plaut and Van Reisen have parroted it in their piece:

“...Increased aid to Eritrea may well contribute to undermining peace in the region and therefore increase the number of refugees...”

No doubt there are astute EU lawmakers who can differentiate fact from fiction and have a 20-year successful relationship with Eritrea to boot. The minority regime in Ethiopia and its surrogates, like Plaut and Van Reisen, must know that, the government and people of Eritrea will chart their own destiny—and are perfectly capable of doing so...with or without development aid from others.



To Date or Not To Date?

Today I want to talk about the advantages and disadvantages of dating. I will then leave the choice entirely up to the readers. But before I get into it let me say a few things about what dating is and how it is relevant to our country and our society.

Over the past decade our society has slowly but steadily been changing.

As we well know, we Eritreans have a very proud and honorable culture. Our culture paves the way for our character and our judgment. It also defines the choices that we make.

Whether it is education, marriage or job we always keep in mind what our watchful society would say based on our culture.

Especially the youth.

Our society always keeps an eye over its youngsters. And through the years, young women went from getting married at the appropriate age with the appropriate man (all carefully chosen by the parents of course), to having their own voice and deciding for themselves if, when and with whom to get married (some choosing to follow through on their education before getting married).

And this is where dating comes into the picture.

Dating is a complex and yet simple procedure in which the girl decides to give the boy her time and later on decides if he is "the one".

It is basically the system through which every societies love story is written.

It usually goes like this: the boy meets the girl at some event or by simple accident.

He likes her and therefore he devises some way to impress her and after getting to talk to her he asks for her phone number.

If the girl was impressed she will give him her phone number and after the first call from him the first date will follow.

The date itself depends on the age of the individuals.

The older the individuals (say 25 and above) the more serious and expensive the date will be. It will usually consist of dinner in a fancy restaurant.

The younger the couple (say 16-25) the more loose and relaxed the date will be. It will generally entail meeting in a café or having ice cream. It might involve long walks and a lot of laughing. Of course not everyone follows this exact procedure.

Dating allows the youngsters to gain more confidence (not at first but through successive dating one will learn more about him/herself). You learn to express yourself and your ideas clearly. And through the good dates and the bad ones you do learn a great deal about the opposite gender. You might find yourself the one guy

or girl who really understands you.

So it could lead to something special. It might even lead to love.

Naturally dating has its disadvantages as well.

Not only is it frowned upon by our society (if you don't believe me look how older people look at a couple holding tight at each other on the street), but not every date leads to love.

Then there is the question of money. That is if you are the guy (because usually, especially in our country, the girl almost never picks

up the check).

Time is another issue. There are some students (in college) who refuse to date because they want to concentrate on school. Then again there are those who don't believe in love. And even if you believe in love, former bad experiences in dating just might not encourage you to keep searching for "the one".

It seems therefore that there are a lot advantages to dating but a lot of disadvantages as well.

The ones who support dating will also be aware that until our society really understands and encourages the concept of dating, there are not many places where one can go out for a date. (At night you see a lot of couples wondering about in dark alleys and corners).

Every man who has dated at least once (in our country) will also know that the social principals in dating are a little hard to follow.

The guy has to pay for everything and later on has to accompany the girl to her house. He has to think of places to meet, things to do, basically he is the only one putting an effort into the date. He has to please, impress, and make his date laugh. The pressure is on him. Never mind that he has to be the first to make a move (to ask for the phone number and to call and set up the date).

Nevertheless the choice to date or to not date can vary across different people. I just thought we should at least know what the concept of dating entails.

Man and woman have always had one way or another of getting together. Whether in the earlier times of arranged marriage or in these modern times of choosing your own partner.

So whatever our choice I'm sure we'll do fine. After all one can go to a million dates and still not find his respective half, while the one who is forced into the relationship by the parents might later on find love and happiness in his or hers arranged marriage. Just ask your parents how they got together? They might even have never heard of the concept of dating.

Finally I'd like to say that whether through dating or not, one might find his true soul mate.

An adult is free to make up his own mind. So let's try to be more supportive of our young adults who have found love. Granted we should educate them about love meaning, but it might not be wise to constrict them.

Yemane A'nkesom





Fostering Relations of Cooperation and Partnership

Eritrea's foreign policy is firmly anchored on the cultivation and expansion of ties of cooperation and partnership with all countries that subscribe to universally accepted norms and principles of equality and mutual respect between nations irrespective of their size, power, wealth or political persuasions and systems.

This principled stance of the people and Government of Eritrea has found concrete expression in the country's normative and routine diplomatic efforts in the past two decades.

And, it was reiterated by the high-level Eritrean delegation led by Foreign Minister Osman Saleh to the 3rd India-Africa Forum that took place in New Delhi city recently.

Foreign Minister Osman noted that although much more remains to be done, encouraging progress has been registered in the emerging strong partnership between Africa and India, particularly in trade and investment, and the crucial common struggle for peace, stability and a more equitable world.

He further underlined that the existing friendly and warm relations between Eritrea and India should be translated into robust cooperation in line with the tremendous opportunities that exist for both sides.

In this connection, it is quite in order to mention that upon receiving a senior Indian government official recently, President Isaias Afwerki said that Eritrea is keen

in fostering partnership with India in the sectors of human resources development, transport and communications services, as well as agriculture and food processing.

In the same vein, upon receiving and holding talks recently with a special envoy of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on enhancing relations between Eritrea and Japan, President Isaias underlined the significance of fostering bilateral economic cooperation in diverse fields such as marine resources, mining and manufacturing at partnership level.

Still in other respects, Dr. Ghiorgis Teklemichael, Minister of National Development, held talks with the senior Japanese government official focusing on the exploitation of fisheries, marine resources, health, education, sports, culture, infrastructure, climate change, food security and investment opportunities in Eritrea.

The Minister stressed that Eritrea highly appreciates Japanese support in exploiting the nation's vast resources and opportunities within the framework of relations of cooperation and partnership.

From the foregoing facts, it is clear that Eritrea's efforts and demonstrated good will are yielding tangible results as they are indeed shared and reciprocated by its major partners.

Nurturing these ties is vital for all sides to ensure that the scope of their partnership and the dividends that accrue from them grow with time.

REPORTAGE

Chinese Delegation Work Visit

As a continuation to various engagement platforms between Eritrea and China, six members of a Chinese high delegation visited Eritrea. In a three-day work visit, the Chinese delegation, led by Madam Zhou Baoying, Deputy Director-General of Guizhou Provincial Education Department, held extensive deliberations with different Eritrean officials. And during their work tour, the members of the delegation shared views as regards promoting Eritrea's cultural and educational treasures.

Following to an official reception by Mr. He Zhigeng, acting China's ambassador to Eritrea on October 28, the delegation headed to Education Ministry's central office and held extensive deliberations with Minister Semere Russom. Mr. Semere asserted to the delegation Eritrea's indisputable readiness for strengthening the on-going positive engagements between both sisterly countries.

After an exchange of constructive views as regards efforts that have been exerted towards preserving assets in educational and cultural domains, Mr. Semere commended efforts of the delegation and highly noted the significant role such engagements could play in excelling profiles of Eritrea's higher educational institutions. In the event, Professor Li Jianjun, President of Guizhou Normal University, Professor Xiang Shuwen, Vice President of Guizhou University, and other members of the diplomatic corps in Asmara took part.

On similar day, the delegation also welcomed by Professor Tadesse Mehari, Executive Director of National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE). In the event in which respective deans of the seven higher educational institutions participated, Professor Tadesse Mehari



expressed that the people of Eritrea highly welcomes such positively architected engagement links.

"On this event, I assert you that Eritrea's engagement with any constructive quarter is not a subject to be devalued. Thus, I recall to members of the higher educational institutions from Guizhou province of China also to strength this successfully managed links thereby to play vital role in enhancing the platforms for mutual engagements," Prof. Tadesse Said.

Members of the delegation on their part affirmed readiness to play to play significant role in the development of Eritrea's higher educational institutions potency by minimizing inescapable challenges as much as possible. Eventually, a memorandum of understanding was signed by both parties.

Accompanied by Professor Tadesse Mehari, the delegation visited the Confucius Institute. Director of the Institute in Asmara, Dr. Wang Xiaohua, briefed panoptic activities of the Center and clarified tangible victories the institute has been achieving in serving as a hub of cultural and educational exchange be-

tween both countries. After expressing the highly appreciable culture of friendliness and honesty among other respectable values which are great assets of Eritreans lifestyle, she expressed her optimistic anticipation to exert due effort in excelling the already witnessed encouraging outcomes of the Institute.

Eritrea's Pearl City, Massawa, also welcomed the delegation on 29 October 2015. In line with the pre-scheduled plan, Dr. Zekeria, Dean of the College of Marine Science and Technology, received the delegation at his office and gave them briefings about the College's endeavors towards accelerating Eritrea's economic development by adding educated youngsters to the pools of well trained human resources indexes.

Moreover, Department heads in the college explained to the delegation about the main challenges and achievements that have been registered to date. The delegation on its part ascertained its undoubting readiness in providing preliminary forms of assistance.

Following extensive discussions with various Education Ministry's officials, the delegation from the Guizhou Provincial Educational expressed willingness to by far reinforce the ties that have already started among the two parties.

The delegation which comprised Professor Xiang Shuwen, Vice President of Guizhou University, Mr. Zhou Jin, Principal of Guiyang High School, Mr. Zhang Chengquan, Principal of Zunyi High School, Madam Wang Rui, Director of Guizhou Education Center for International Exchanges and Linkages, among others, left for China on October 30 after a successfully managed work visit to Eritrea.

Yosief Abraham Z.



OPINION

Media Reporting From the Global Fringes – Observations from Eritrea and Beyond

Over the last three decades or so, I often found myself in places, first in Nicaragua in the 1980s and then in the Horn of Africa, that I would not have recognized when listening to international media reports.

Even in pre-internet times, when short-wave radio access to the BBC World Service was one of the main connections to the wider world, reportedly even for Nelson Mandela in his prison cell, the news reported from places I was actually at often seemed to come from far away lands. Or at least I did not recognise that the reality reported on was how my daily life was supposed to look. Friends who lived in the 1970s and 1980s in post-liberation Mozambique shared this impression.

More recently, and I admit these are rather random examples, chosen because I have some connections to those settings, the same seems to apply to Venezuela in the context of its faltering ‘Bolivarian revolution’.

This makes one wonder whether one reason behind such reporting may be connected to the fact that these were all settings where some sort of ‘revolutionary’ movement, whatever that may have meant in practice at the time, tried out a model of society different from global capitalism and liberal democracy, often combined with ‘Western’ geopolitical interests?

A recent visit to Eritrea, one of the countries that has been routinely condemned in media stories written or broadcast by people who often have never set foot into the country, offers some nuances to such reporting – not least because an unprecedented number of foreign journalists were given access to the country over the last few months.

To be sure, media reports still exist that claim reporting from Eritrea is not possible and thus one has to rely on the narratives of those who have fled. In that they are supported by and often cite the June 2015 UN Human Rights Commission Report report that took anonymity and confidentiality to a level that makes many of its statements devoid of context or temporality and thus hard to engage with, critically or otherwise. I shall leave those ac-



counts aside for the moment but want to offer some thoughts on the reporting that has been done by some of those who did actually visit Eritrea.

Roughly speaking, they fall into two broad categories: There are those who are genuinely puzzled by the fact that so many young people flee a country not visibly at war, and are prepared to spend some time trying to investigate the dynamics behind this exodus. Then there are those, thus far in the majority, who “know” Eritrea is a dictatorship where human rights are being constantly violated, where everybody is a spy and nobody will talk openly.

This group usually spends a very limited amount of time in the country and to little surprise its members come away confirming their initial impressions.

A pronounced example of the latter group was a recent visit by the Nairobi correspondent of a German TV news channel. Spending less than two days in the country on an assignment to find out why people flee, the news clip subsequently broadcast used the statement of a refugee based in Kenya – because nobody in Eritrea wanted to talk about this subject.

We see the correspondent on the market in Asmara, holding his microphone into people’s faces, asking them why they want to flee.

Unsurprisingly, no footage emerges from such encounters and more generally it confirms the government’s almost pathological suspicion of foreign journalists. Even in slightly subtler cases, reporting lacks any understanding of the specifics of Eritrea, its people, and the way they relate to their country with outsiders – an understanding that is hard to gain in those flying visits.

Take the example of a camera team from the UK who came to do a story on the health service.

While the main report rather unfairly complained about having a government minder with them all the time – I am not sure which country in the world would allow a foreign camera team to film in its hospitals and speak to patients without such official oversight – another team member ventured into the streets to interview “normal” people. Again, people did not want to speak into a microphone and some reportedly said once the microphone was turned off they were afraid. This was taken as proof that “Eritrea’s reputation as one of Africa’s most repressive states shows little sign of changing”.

Such a rather stereotypical interpretation ignores the fact that many Eritreans shy away from critiquing their country and its politics publicly in front of outsiders they do not know or trust – and would

certainly not do so into a microphone – not necessarily out of fear but equally because they are aware how vilified their country often is in international media.

Even many of those who are very critical of the government find this in essence unfair and have no intention to contribute to this negative image. In fact, even at the time up to 2001 when there was a vibrant private newspaper scene, I remember journalists working for those papers having trouble when interviewing people.

Back then it was acknowledged that it takes time for people to feel confident about giving interviews or putting their stories out into the public eye, as there simply was no tradition for doing this in the country. In addition, people are suspicious of what might be made of what they say.

When discussing this more generally with a frank speaking long-term acquaintance he told me that “whatever you say to a journalist, they will cut it in a way that transforms the meaning, thus I would never do that as you lose control of your words”.

Undoubtedly, much is wrong in Eritrea, not least in relation to its own media sector – state owned and dominated. That is why most people have switched off, they may read the state owned newspapers but otherwise watch foreign

TV channels beamed to them by the satellite dishes that cluster the roofs and balconies of Asmara’s buildings.

The constant enforcement of a rather one-dimensional narrative by foreign journalists based on broad generalizations will not in any way help rectify that situation. Those distortions in rather bizarre ways even apply to some academic visitors:

“During my stay in the country I found myself in the company of an academic from a Eastern European University who aims to become an expert on the Horn of Africa.

This was the first visit to Eritrea, intended to get a feeling for the country and potentially establish some contacts.

The fact that some questions were asked upon arrival at the airport about the purpose of the visit was taken as a first sign of a repressive dictatorship.”

In reality, entry procedures have become totally relaxed compared to a few years ago, and I certainly was interrogated more thoroughly during a visit to the US recently than on my arrival to Asmara (in stark contrast to previous visits).

Subsequently during a drink in one of the Asmara hotel bars with fairly good Wi-Fi services, an Eri-

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Zara Mining

Share Company

Job Title & number required	Fuel Tank Operator (02)
Duties & Responsibilities	Receiving, storing, and issuing of fuel. Control for appropriate storage, removal, recording and reporting of any Hazmat and waste Fuel generated. Perform operational maintenance & pre-maintenance check service on relevant equipment (filter separators, fuel pumps, Nozzles & strainers, fuel pressure gages, fuel meters, hoses, valves etc.). Control of product quality in the tank through Water Testing, Temperature, Performs the frequent visual inspection of fuel samples daily. Manage bulk inventories through one real-time monitoring system. Accountable for all systems used in the transfer of fuel from bulk storage to refueling other equipment. Ensure proper handling and segregation of products received and verifies quantity and quality. Keep detailed accounting records of all fuel transfers within the bulk storage systems for equipment / machine. Conduct inspections on the entire systems and identify any potentially hazardous conditions that could result in a catastrophic failure of any system. Adhere and obey to safety requirements based on the Company policy.
Knowledge & Skill Requirement	English and local literacy to a conversational level. Excellent interdepartmental communication skills. Safety oriented. Able to work in height, and hazardous area. Physically fit and strong. Knowledge and skill of MS office.
Education	High school completion, certificate in technical school.
Experience Required	Minimum of 2 years in a relevant work, preferable from oil company.
Physical Requirement	To be able to pass a full Doctor's examination. To be available to work in accordance with ZMSC rosters.
General Information and other requirements: Place of work: Koka Gold Mine Site. Occasional assignment to other locations. Salary: As per Company scale.	
Additional Requirement for nationals: Having fulfilled his/her National Service obligations and provide evidence of a release paper from the Ministry of Defense. Having finished registration and duty performing for the National Army, and present the release paper or registration card issued by National Army. Provide a Clearance paper from office of the Eritrean Police and present Medical Certificate from Hospital. Present Clearance paper from the current/last employer. Only short listed applicants would be considered as potential candidates for an interview. Application documents will not be returned back to the sender and/or applications should be sent through the Post Office. Deadline for application: 10 days from the day of publication in the Newspaper.	
Address: Please mail your applications to: ZARA MINING SHARE CO. P. O. Box 2393. Asmara, Eritrea.	
Note to Eritrean applicants: Please send a copy of your application to: Aliens Employment Permit Affairs P.O. Box 7940 Asmara, Eritrea.	

Media Reporting From the...

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trean with a laptop took a set near us in an otherwise sparsely populated space.

This was the only seat with an electric plug next to it into which the laptop was plugged immediately, a valuable source of power in a city that suffers from regular power cuts and where no household has electricity for the whole day but only for certain time periods.

The academic in question, however, remained convinced that this must be a spy, sitting there to listen to our conversation – and I am quite certain this will appear as some form of “truth” in a future paper or presentation in some Eastern European University.

As mentioned above, there is a small but hopefully growing number of foreign journalists and visitors who venture into Eritrea with a quest to gain a deeper understanding of the country and its discontents. Some balanced reporting has indeed come out of some of these visits, usually in print media

– a prime example being a very thoughtful account in a leading German newspaper – rather than on TV, but even for the latter some refreshing honest footage has emerged in some EU countries. Footage that also acknowledges that journalists can indeed move around freely and without any government minder in Asmara and all the settings that can be visited with the travel permit that all foreigners need to obtain but which is easily done.

During my own stay I met a journalist from a small EU country who was curious and made a sustained effort to engage with people in normal encounters. People still did not want to talk “politics” with him but he also understood some of the reservations the government has against foreign media. In fact, he told me that when a government official complained that mostly the same negative clichés would be reported about Eritrea, for example in relation to national service, while nobody reported that also the

President’s children are in Sawa (the national service training grounds), he issued the following challenge: Let me go to Sawa, let me talk to people there, including the President’s children, and I will be delighted to broadcast that story.

Unfortunately, nobody with a responsible position in the present leadership of Eritrea would take up that challenge.

Coming back to the question if there is a system behind the stereotypical reporting on Eritrea and the singling out of this small nation as the major villain in the politics of the Horn, one may wish to turn from journalism to fiction. Undoubtedly, the narrative of Eritrea as an unrepentant dictatorship fulfills an important geopolitical function not least in relation to the so-called War on Terror and its manifestation in the Horn of Africa, and as such is aptly propagated and used by a more diplomatically capable Ethiopian government.

For an alternative level of understanding of those dynamics, the first novel of journalist and non-fiction writer Michela Wrong provides excellent reading.

Her book *Borderlines*, based on clear analogies to the border conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia and its subsequent stalemate, does – in the words of one of its reviewers, himself a former diplomat – take no prisoners but also conveys a deep understanding for the injustices done by outsiders to the rights of a small and proudly self-sufficient people. And this struggle to have a history of one’s own and maintain outside respect against many odds is at the heart of much that drives Eritrean politics – in similar ways as it is or has been for other post-revolutionary societies.

By: Tanja R. Müller,



Eritrea in the UNCCD COP 12th Session

Billion Temesghen

Subsequent to Eritrea's two decades long endeavors in combating desertification, Eritrea participates in the 12th UN Conference in Combating Desertification in Ankara Turkey, from 12-23 October.

Mr. Hadgu GebreEnderias head at the planning and statics unit at the Ministry of Agriculture gives us further details.

About the UNCCD

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification is one of the three Rio Conventions. The concept of protecting the environment through integrated approaches of sustainable resources management and fighting against desertification, land degradation and drought was initiated in the international conference held in Stockholm, Sweden in 1987. When an international conference was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the need for the fight against Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) and the principles of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) were given due international attention and importance that the concept was up graded in to a convention. The convention has 194 member countries, in which Eritrea is a member. Eritrea signed the Convention in 1994. The Ministry of Agriculture is the focal Ministry of the Convention and the Agricultural Extension Department is the focal point. The main aim of the Convention is to work on the rehabilitation of the environment to fight against DLDD and to encourage member countries to practice sustainable land management principles.

The Convention holds international conferences of its member countries once in every two years. This year's Conference, the 12th Session (COP 12), was held in Ankara, Turkey from 12 to 23 October 2015.

Eritrea in the UNCCD 12th Conference of Parties (COP 12) session

Eritrea presented posters and audio-visual exhibition that reflect challenges and efforts being performed to overcome the challenges through community mobilization. Soil erosion in river banks, farmlands and mountains; deforestation for many purposes basically for firewood and traditional house making; siltation of ponds due to untreated catchments; low watertable induced by lack of water conservation structures were mentioned among the main challenges. Afforestation programs in Serejeka subzone, check dam construction in Tsilma plain, Success stories of farmland treatment in Dieda; Mai Aini Subzone; Soil and water conservation activities in Nakfa Subzone as well as enclosure development in different parts of the country were among the audio-visual presentations that attracted many Turkish and international visitors.

We also successfully pulled off some side events aimed to be of an arena of sharing and exchanging experiences on various interventions being carried out, and/or planned to be carried out on regards to the fight against DLD as well as to best SLM practices.

The United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) had arranged a side event for

three countries that included Eritrea. Mr. Heruy Asghedom, Director General of Agricultural Extension Department at the Ministry of Agriculture and the head the Eritrean delegation gave a Power Point presentation of the methodology followed in preparing the Aligned National Action Program document.

UNCCD had also arranged a two day High Level Segment meeting where Ministers or their delegates discussed issues related to DLDD and SLM practices.

Mr. Heruy Asghedom, Director General of Agricultural Extension Department at the Ministry of Agriculture attended the meeting and gave a statement which mainly focused on the importance of and the need for the fight against DLDD and the practice of SLM. In his statement, he mentioned the various challenges, activities and the way forward in the fight against DLDD and in SLM practices. Mr. Heruy Asghedom further stressed the importance of community participation and involvement in all the interventions during the fight against DLDD and in practicing SLM as this develops and increases ownership and sustainability.

Best practices

The Ministry of Agriculture has a good working relationship with the UNCCD at headquarters level. It participates in various UNCCD programs by submitting community based best SLM practices and climate smart agriculture. We could mention some examples submitted to UNCCD and are available in its website, such as:

A. Drylands Champions Program - This program is open to all member countries that want to submit best SLM practices. If the submitted documents are found reasonably well and could be replicated in other member countries, the selection committee of UNCCD publishes them in its website. So far, Eritrea has submitted the following documents.

Debona enclosure and activities undertaken in this enclosure; like its establishment, administration and management practices were



presented. This enclosure is administered and managed by communities of Dembedoran and Foulina administrative villages, Sub zone of Molki, Gash Barka region. It has an area of about 12,000 ha.

SLM practices carried out by Ato Rezene Andom from Adi Neamin, sub zone of Logo Anseba and Sagem Secondary School, Tessenay both from Gashbarka region were also presented.

B. Land for Life Award Programme - The Ministry of Agriculture submitted detailed activities, achievements, challenges encountered and measures taken to tackle these challenges as well as the way forward of an enclosure administered and managed by a village named Adi Shumhabti, located in sub zone of Debarwa. The various interventions of the community of the village to fight against DLDD and the SLM practices undertaken were highly praised by the UNCCD selection committee. As a result, it was rated second in the world. The various integrated interventions made by the community of Adi Shumhabti are available in the UNCCD website.

Eritrea at the World Day to Combat Desertification

June 17 is marked in all members countries as the World Day to Combat Desertification. Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with the Ministry of Information marks the event by publishing articles related to the importance of this day in the local newspapers and a copy is sent to UNCCD headquarters.

About the submission of biennial progress reports

All member countries are requested to submit progress reports once every two years. Eritrea has submitted progress reports for the years 2010, 2012

and 2014 which are all available in UNCCD website.

As to the preparation and submission of Aligned National Action Program (NAP) - UNCCD has prepared a ten-year strategic objective in which all member countries have to align their DLDD and SLM activities to this Plan and submit a document to UNCCD.

And Eritrea has prepared and submitted its Aligned NAP document to UNEP. According to UNEP reports, Eritrea is the first country in the region to submit its Aligned NAP document.

To facilitate some of the UNCCD related activities; mainly in the preparation of Aligned NAP document and report writing, some fund was allocated. The focal Ministry has spent this fund fully in the planned activities. This is clearly shown in UNCCD country (Eritrea) fact sheet distributed by UNCCD at the COP 12 conference.

And the Fact Sheet...

In the COP 12 International Conference held in Ankara, Turkey, the UNCCD distributed country fact sheet. The Eritrean fact sheet shows that the country is fully committed to fulfill the principles of the Convention as it is diligently fighting against DLDD and adheres to the principles of integrated approach to SLM through participation and involvement of farming communities and other land users. It has also developed a five year (2014-2018) Strategic and Development plan which is in line with the ten- year (2014-2018) strategic plan of the UNCCD.

The fact sheet compares each member country regionally as well as globally. It is a great achievement for Eritrea. The fact sheet is a result of many years intervention in the areas of environmental rehabilitation activities to fight against DLDD and SLM practices.



Students at Summer work program