



World Food Safety Day Celebrated

‘Food Safety: Science in Action’

World Food Safety Day is a global event observed annually on June 7. This year, the celebration took place at Adi-Hawesha Resort, located in Eritrea’s Central Region, under the theme “Food Safety: Science in Action.” on the 10th of June 2025. The event aimed to explore the latest advancements in food safety and promote responsible food handling practices. It was attended by more than 85 participants, including the Minister of Health, senior officials from the Ministries of Agriculture and Health, representatives from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as experts from various government and non-governmental organizations, academia, food processors, and farmer representatives.

The event attracted local food enthusiasts, researchers, and professionals in the field. The theme, emphasized the crucial role of applying scientific knowledge and principles to real-world food safety challenges. By highlighting the latest research and innovations, the event aimed to inspire a new generation of food scientists and safety professionals.

In his keynote speech, Mr. Tekleab Mesghena emphasized the importance of science in ensuring the quality and safety of food products. He highlighted the critical role of research and development in advancing food safety, noting the Ministry of Agriculture’s ongoing efforts to modernize food-related regulatory services. These efforts include establishing quarantine stations at key entry points, reinforcing inspection services,



Mr. Tekleab Mesghena

and promoting public awareness—especially among food processors through Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). Mr. Tekleab concluded by underscoring the need for a national food control system and policy to unify and streamline initiatives across various ministries and institutions.

Representing the FAO, Mr. Sium Teame remarked, “Food is not a



luxury but a fundamental human right.” He noted that each year, 600 million people fall ill due to contaminated food, resulting in approximately 420,000 deaths—



Mr. Sium Teame

many of them children under five. He highlighted the economic burden, especially in low- and middle-income countries, where foodborne illnesses cost an estimated \$110 billion annually in lost productivity and healthcare expenses. “This is where science plays a vital role—not as an academic exercise, but as a practical, powerful tool,” he said. Mr. Sium Teame stressed that scientific research enables the identification and control of foodborne hazards, the improvement of hygiene across the food chain, the development of risk-based international standards, and the rapid response to emerging threats.

Dr. Nonso Ejiofor, representing the WHO, echoed similar sentiments. He explained that this year’s theme

underscores the essential role of scientific research, innovation, data, and technology in identifying risks, guiding effective food safety practices, reducing illnesses, and saving lives. “Food safety is not only a public health issue—it is a shared responsibility and a cornerstone of sustainable development and food security,” he stated. Dr. Ejiofor also recognized the ongoing efforts of the Ministry of Agriculture and other stakeholders in strengthening Eritrea’s food safety systems. He reaffirmed the WHO’s commitment to supporting capacity building, risk-based regulation, and public awareness under the One Health approach in collaboration with the FAO and other partners.



Dr. Nonso Ejiofor

During the event, six papers were presented:

- Food Handling & Hygiene Practices in MoA Day Care: The case of Villajo by Ms. Selamawit Gebregziabhier from the Ministry of Agriculture
- Food Expiration: Administrative,

Regulatory, and Safety Implications by Mr. Merhawi Debesay from the Ministry of Health;

- Ensuring food Safety at College of Science Mainefhi Student Cafeteria by Mussie Kidane from the Administration office of the college
- Effect of Processing on Heavy Metal Content in Selected Leaf Vegetables Cultivated in Asmara by Mr. Bereket Abraha from Hamelmalo Agricultural Collage;
- Environmental Safety of Food Safety by Mr. Aman Tezare from the Ministry of Land, water and Environment;
- The Role of Science in Food Safety by Dr. Michael Kidane from Mainefhi College of Science
- Moreover, a panel discussion was held on the day’s theme, featuring experts and representatives of food processors. The discussion centered on the latest research in food safety, including how precision agriculture can enhance food health and minimize waste. Furthermore

Key Takeaways and Recommendations

After discussing the presentations and following the panel discussions, participants put forward several recommendations, including but not limited to:



Presenters during discussion



Panelists

- Reinforcing collaboration among all relevant stakeholders
- Applying scientific methods to all aspects of food safety
- Enhancing traceability and identification of food sources
- Promoting public awareness on safe food preparation and consumption practices
- In addition, short video showcasing national efforts in food safety, and a message from the FAO and WHO offices were also presented during the event.

World Drought and Desertification Day Celebrated

‘Restore the Land. Unlock the opportunity.’

The World Drought and Desertification Day (WDDD) was commemorated at the Emba soira Hotel in Asmara, Eritrea on June 17 2025 under the theme ‘Restore the Land. Unlock the opportunity’. The day is a reminder of the devastating effects of climate change and the urgent need for collective action to combat desertification and promote sustainable land use.

The event, which brought together key stakeholders, experts, representatives from the Eritrean government, organizations, relevant ministries, associations and institutions, featured presentations on various aspects of the issues, including land use planning, conservation measures for

restoring degraded land, and the role of date plantation in restoring land degradation.

A keynote speech was delivered by Mr. Semere Amlesom Director General of the Agricultural Extension Department of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) of Eritrea. In his address, he highlighted the Eritrean government’s commitment to combating drought and desertification, and emphasized the need for collective action to restore degraded land. In his speech he noted that drought and desertification are among the main causes of the down fall of biodiversity, poverty, forced migration, and conflicts. That’s why restoring the land can solve all those



Mr. Semere Amlesom

problems and redirect their courses. Furthermore, he underscored that those circumstances have affected over 3.2 billion people in the world currently and if such pace continues the world will reach to a point of no return.





Presenters during discussion

Papers presented during the event covered various aspects of drought and desertification, including:

- Eritrea's Commitments and Experience in Combating Desertification, Land Degradation, and Drought (DLDD) by Mr. Micheal Berhane.
- Land-use Change and its Impact on Poverty and Livelihoods by Mr. Teklezghi Tekie
- Conservation and Sustainable Land-use Management Practices by Mr. Huruy Frezghi.
- Agroforestry System for Restoring Land by Mr. Zerai Sultan.
- Environmental Impact Assessments of Agricultural Farms along Barka River Basin in Dighe Sub-Zone one by Mr. Micheal Kibreab.
- Modeling Land Degradation using Geospatial Techniques by Eng. Okbaldet Negede
- The Role of Date Palms in Restoring Degraded Lands by Mr. Mussie Fekadu

- The Effect of Biodegradable Porous Alpha on Agricultural Soils by Mr. Eyob Gebremeskel

The presentations were followed by a panel discussion featuring all the presenters of the day and representatives from various organizations.

A panel discussion, addressing "The Government's Commitment in Restoring Land and Unlocking Opportunities", attracted prominent experts. It highlighted the need for a holistic approach to addressing drought and desertification taking into account the complex relationships between human activity, climate change, and the environment. The discussion centered on the need for policy and legislative measures to address the root causes of drought and desertification.

Conclusion and Way Forward

In conclusion, the event emphasized the importance of continued efforts to address drought and desertification, and called upon all stakeholders to work together to achieve this goal. As the world continues to grapple with the challenges of climate change and desertification, it's essential to accelerate the implementation of sustainable land use practices and conservation measures.

The event concluded with a strong call for action and commitment to achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. Such an event is a significant step forward in the global efforts to address drought and desertification, and will contribute to the country's efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.



Panelists

Ministry of Agriculture Commemorated 20 June Martyr's Day with Great Zeal

On June 18, 2025, the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) commemorated Martyrs' Day with solemn remembrance and meaningful activities, including a tree-planting in Emba Derho area 12 Km North-west of Asmara, the capital city.

The day began at 6:00 AM, as MoA staff planted seedlings, renewed and watered trees planted in previous years in honor of the martyrs. In the evening, around 5:30 PM, staff members gathered within the ministry's premises to pay tribute through candle lighting, dramatic performances, poetry recitations, story telling and musical presentations.

Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Arefaine Berhe, delivered the closing remarks, emphasizing the profound significance of the day. "This day is a heavy tribute to those who gave their lives for the betterment



Minister Arefaine Berhe

of our country," he stated. "Every martyr's final words echoed the phrase 'Victory to the Masses', a phrase that is far more than symbolic. It is a solemn responsibility entrusted to us, the living."

He further stressed that the Ministry's goal which is "Safe and Nutritious Food for Everyone, Everywhere" is a vital part of honoring that legacy. Set to be achieved by 2028, the Minister called on all staff to work tirelessly to meet this goal, ideally even ahead of schedule.

During the commemorative event, a total of 11 songs, 2 dramas, 8 poems, and one short true story were presented by MoA staff and guest artists, making the occasion both reflective and inspiring.



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