

**Eritrea: Land of
Can-Do People!**

*(Yikealo! kikewn eyu
kemey zeykewn!)*



ERI-NEWS

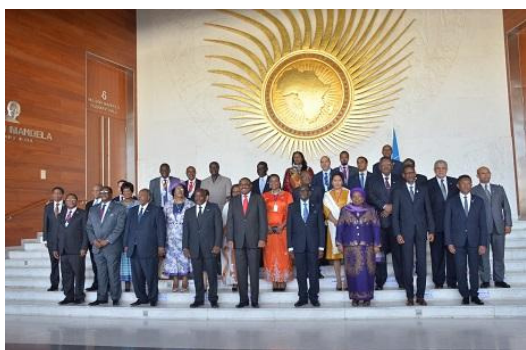
**Bi-Weekly Newsletter
Permanent Mission of the State of Eritrea to AU
and UNECA
Press Section**

**National Service: A tool
for Economic
Development, National
Cohesion and the
Defence of Sovereignty**



Eritrea Participated in the 18th COMESA Summit

The 18th Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) was convened in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 30 and 31 March 2015. The Summit was held under the theme “**Inclusive and Sustainable Industrialization.**”



The Summit was preceded by the meetings of COMESA Policy Organs at the level of experts, senior officials and Ministers which took place from 18-29 March.



Eritrea was represented at the Summit and the preparatory meetings by its Permanent Mission to the AU and UNECA.

The Summit noted that annual intra-COMESA trade which stood at USD 3.1 billion in 2000, when the COMESA Free Trade Area was launched, grew seven-fold by 2014 to USD 22.4 billion.



The Summit endorsed the COMESA Industrialization Policy, considered the reports of the COMESA Organs and autonomous institutions and gave directions on the way forward.

The Summit also reviewed the state of peace and security in the COMESA region, and appointed new Judges of the COMESA Court of Justice, Commissioners of the COMESA Competition Commission, and members of the Committee of Elders.

The 19th COMESA Summit will be held in Madagascar in 2016.

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 **Eritrean Mission to
AU & ECA**

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea Press Statement on Eritrea's Stance on the Situation in Yemen

In the past few days, various media outlets have been alluding to statements made by certain Yemeni authorities and other fabricated accounts to falsely assert that "Houthi insurgents have received weapons from Iran via Eritrea".

Eritrea has naturally been monitoring the allegations peddled on the "existence of Israeli bases" in Eritrea in past years. These baseless stories were spiced up recently with new claims of juxtaposed "Iranian bases" in the country. Eritrea knows full well the sources, identities and purveyors of these worn-out invectives. Sadly, these allegations have been ratcheted up this week - unwittingly or for other ulterior political motives - by so-called experts and government officials.

In the event, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea reiterates the following to clarify its stance on the events unfolding in Yemen.

1. Eritrea remains profoundly concerned by the aggravation and complication of the situation in Yemen. In this regard, Eritrea hopes that underlying causes of the prevailing situation would be allayed to restore prevalent peace and stability in the country.
 2. The maintenance of peace and security in Yemen is of paramount importance to Eritrea; more so than any other country. This is predicated on the historical and good neighborly ties that exist between Eritrea and Yemen and between their brotherly peoples.
 3. Eritrea unequivocally supports the territorial integrity of Yemen and the unity of its people. In this vein, Eritrea only recognizes and accepts a constitutional and legal leadership of Yemen.
 4. Eritrea rejects, for the umpteenth time, all false allegations on the military presence of Iranian, Houthi, Israeli or any other external power in its sovereign territories; land and/or maritime.
- Eritrea is aware that these allegations are deliberately and solely peddled for purposes of defamation.
5. Eritrea maintains that the "statements made by Yemeni officials in the past few days" are part and parcel of ongoing smear campaigns, essentially concocted by certain intelligence agencies, and that are routinely conducted to sully the image of Eritrea especially in the Arab world.
 6. Eritrea is keenly aware that insidious regurgitation of these baseless allegations as "established facts" by various news agencies, newspapers and journals is primarily designed to negatively influence public opinion in the Arab world.
 7. As it may be recalled, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea had summoned early this week, Yemen's Chargé d'affaires to request an explanation of the statements made by Yemeni authorities. The Yemeni diplomat flatly refuted these statements as untrue further disclosing that the Yemeni Embassy in Asmara did not receive calls and queries from any media outlet or other interested party to ascertain Yemen's position.
 8. Eritrea does not allow its islands, ports and territory for lease or sale. Eritrea reiterates that it is indeed the only country in the region which has not opened its doors for external intervention or military bases since its independence.
 9. Eritrea does not subscribe to polarizing policies of military alliances and blocs. As such it neither endorses nor joins such groupings. Consequently, it has no membership in associations of this nature.
 10. Eritrea affirms that its doors are open for any news media in the Arab world that wishes to ascertain the veracity of these allegations repeated *ad nauseam*. These can be easily secured by requesting an entry visa to the country at the nearest Eritrean Embassy.

Press Statement on Eritrea’s Stance on the Situation in Yemen...

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11. As a country that has the longest coastline relative to other littoral States, Eritrea's stance on the security of the Red Sea is firm and robust. The regional and international importance of the Red Sea is indeed too palpable to merit emphasis. As such, Eritrea affirms that it has been and shall remain engaged in continuous consultation

with all littoral States in order to cultivate a clear and common understanding on the security of the Red Sea.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
31st March 2015
Asmara

Eritrea’s Achievements on Gender Equality Applauded at a UN Side Event



A side-event was co-organized by the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the UN and the United Nations Country Team under the theme “Empowering Women: Eritrea’s Achievements and Experience” during the 59th Session of the Commission on Status of Women in New York on the 16 March 2015, with a full house participation of representatives of states, UN Agencies and civil society organizations.

In his opening remarks the co-moderator, Ambassador Girma Asmerom, Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations, underlined the contextual premise to understanding Eritrea must be based on its strategic location, abundant natural resources, and the “yes I/we can do it” mindset and harmony of its 50% Christian and 50% Muslim population.

The co-moderator, Ms. Christine Umutoni, UN Resident Coordinator, summarized that the UN witnessed Eritrea’s ability to “do for more with

less”. Ms. Umutoni also emphasized her assessment that when compared to many other civil society organizations from her vast experiences, the National Union of Eritrean Women is one of the most effective community movements with a high level of accountability and efficiency.

Speaking on the occasion, the keynote speaker, Ms. Tekea Tesfamichael, the President of the National Union of Eritrean Women, stressed the fact that the **Eritrean women earned their rightful place in the society through active participation and contribution to the struggle for national independence and nation-building efforts.** She noted that the Union has been studiously working over the past two decades of independence to ensure the socio-cultural, economic and political empowerment of women through various innovative projects and gender mainstreaming in government institutions. **She appealed to the participants to urge Ethiopia to withdraw from sovereign Eritrean territory, including the town of Badme, and the UN Security Council to lift the unjustified sanctions that are negatively affecting women and children.**

The guest speaker, Ms. Christine Musisi, Regional Director of the UN Women, **applauded the progress made in status of women in Eritrea through initiatives such as land ownership legislation for women, ensuring education of girls, especially among the nomadic population, the criminalization of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) as well as the successful multi-sectorial approach on addressing gender equality.**



Eritrea's Achievements on Gender Equality Applauded at a UN Side Event...

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Ms. Raquel Lagunas, UNDP Policy Advisor on Gender, emphasized UNDP's commitment to increase and expand its partnership with NUEW. She stated that the vast membership of NUEW and its effective implementation of programs give it full legitimacy to be the lead organization on gender

Dr. Dan Odallo, UNFPA Representative in Eritrea, elaborating on the experience of development partners in the country, said **"Eritrea's success is attributed to the partnership between the government, UN Team and the NUEW that is based on clearly defined objectives and outcomes as well as vision."**



equality issues. She commended the grass-roots and community approach and legislative process that took place when the FGM was criminalized in 2007. She stated that countries, like Eritrea, which give emphasis to ensuring gender equality, will succeed in their poverty eradication development efforts. In conclusion, she said, **"what Eritrea is doing is not only the right thing to do but the smart thing to do"**.

Ms. Tsegga Gaim, Director General of NUEW, expounded in detail Eritrea's experience in the empowerment of women. In her presentation, Ms. Tsegga, stated that the empowerment of women in economic, health, education, decision making was the result of innovative and incentive oriented projects implemented by the Union, other stake holders, and partners. **She stressed that the NUEW, a grass-root civil society organization with 300,444 membership, is playing important role in transforming all sectors of the society. She also underlined the strong political commitment and leadership of the Eritrean government to gender equality.**

He further stated having worked in many countries, in his experience, **"Eritrea stands number one in effective community participation."** Dr. Odallo stressed that once a project is approved and funds are allocated, it is normal for the partners and the beneficiaries to relax and reap the fruits of their efforts. He underscored that **"accountability is not a problem in Eritrea"**. **He further noted that Eritrea should be rewarded for the validated achievements and not punished.**

During the question and answer session, representatives from Kenya, South Africa, Somalia, Cameroon, Italy and other states and organizations commended Eritrea for its achievements in the empowerment of women. They further underlined Eritrea's experience should be shared with and emulated by others.

The side event on the empowerment of women was the second side-event organized by the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the UN and the UN Country Team. In September 2014, a side-event was organized to share Eritrea's experiences in the successful achievement of the three health related Millennium Development Goals (4, 5 and 6).