



## **President Isaias Afwerki's Interview With Local Media**

*In an interview with local media conducted on 9 February 2014 in the Port City of Massawa, President Isaias gave extensive briefings on national development programmes, and the current situation in Eritrea and the Horn of Africa Region.*

### **Some highlights from the interview:**

#### **On Food security**

President Isaias Afwerki said that Eritrea's food security program is guided and measured by the amount of basic food items in reserve and stock. In this connection, he pointed out that adequate reserve of basic food items for 2014 is secured, and irrigation projects and farming activities are being expanded and intensified on a larger scale.



#### **On Housing Construction**

The President elucidated that a comprehensive national residential housing program that benefits the general public has been designed and is ready for implementation. He underscored that the primary beneficiaries of the housing projects will be those selfless citizens who have dedicated and are dedicating their time and energy for the development and protection of the nation. To this end, construction companies have been consolidated and necessary machinery purchased. Moreover, pilot residential housing projects have already been launched in the environs of Asmara.

#### **On Infrastructure Projects**

President Isaias said that apart from extensive construction of asphalt and gravel roads that will be implemented this year in the different Regions, new electric power supply projects will be built in various parts of the country. All infrastructure projects are designed on the basis of sustainability, connectivity regional integration and complementarity. In this respect, he cited the cross-border electricity and road connectivity projects that are implemented and are being undertaken between Eritrea and Sudan.

#### **On the Situation in South Sudan**

Identifying corruption and lack of adequate governmental structures as the main causes of the current problem in South Sudan, President Isaias called on all internal and external parties to refrain from portraying the ongoing conflict as ethnic based. He called on all local, regional and international stakeholders to express and strengthen their support to the legitimate and internationally recognized central Government of South Sudan. The President underlined that additional bloodshed and humanitarian disaster must be avoided.

In addition, President Isaias gave detailed briefings regarding the expansion of basic services such as health, restructuring of regional administrative organs, strengthening the role of the People's Front for Democracy and Justice, and ensuring the participation of the people in all political and development activities of the country.

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## Foreign Minister Delivers President Isaias' Message to President Yoweri Museveni

Foreign Minister Osman Saleh delivered, on 12 February, President Isaias Afwerki's message to President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda. The President's message mainly focused on bilateral and regional issues.

Upon receiving the message, President Yoweri Museveni lauded President Isaias' commitment to enhance the existing relations between the two countries as well as for the promotion of peace and

### Eastern Africa Region Held a Farewell Reception for Ambassador Girma Asmerom

On 11th February 2014, Ambassadors and Diplomats of the Eastern Africa Region based in Addis Ababa organized a farewell reception in honor of Ambassador Girma Asmerom, Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the African Union and UNECA.

On the occasion, H.E. Mr. Mull S. Katende Ambassador of Uganda and Dean of the Eastern Africa Region and H.E. Prof. Joseph Nsengimana, Ambassador of Rwanda and Deputy Dean presented a token gift to Ambassador Girma on behalf of the Region.



Moreover, H.E. Mr. Hamadi Meimou, Ambassador of Mauritania and the Chairperson of the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) of AU, H.E. Dr. Andrew Mtetwa, Ambassador of Zimbabwe and Dean of the Southern Africa Region; H.E. Mr. Andrew G. Bangali, Ambassador

of Sierra Leone and Deputy Dean of the Western Africa Region also graced the farewell reception with their presence .



Amb. Girma meeting with H.E. Erastus Mwencha

On the 4<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of February 2014, Ambassador Girma met with H.E. Mr. Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission and Dr. Carlos Lopes, Executive Secretary of UNECA, respectively, and thanked them for the cooperation they showed him and the Eritrean Permanent Mission to the AU and ECA.

Having completed his tour of duty as Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the African Union and UNECA, Ambassador Girma Asmerom left Addis Ababa on 14 February 2014. He will soon assume his new post as the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations in New York.



### Turkey and Eritrea Sign Bilateral Civil Aviation Agreement

On 11 February 2014, Representatives of the Governments of Turkey and Eritrea signed bilateral Civil Aviation Agreement in Asmara. H.E. Firat Sunel, Turkish Ambassador to Eritrea indicated that the Agreement will pave the way for Turkish Airlines to start scheduled flights to and from Asmara.

### Eritrean Athletes Win Three Races in Spain

World Half Marathon record holder Eritrean Zersenay Tadesse and his fellow countryman, Amanuel Mesel, won first and second places at the Grand Prix de Caceres Cross Country held in Spain on 09 February 2014.

A week before that, on 2<sup>nd</sup> February, Kidane Tadesse (Zersenay's younger brother) won the 55<sup>th</sup> Marathon Competition held in Madrid, Spain reaching the finish line ahead of last year's winner José and Alvaro Lozano.

Another Eritrean athlete, Samuel Tsegai stood first in the 10,000 meters race that took place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February in Valladolid, Spain.

### **Ancient Temple and Artifacts Uncovered in Adulis**

Archaeological excavation in the ancient Port City of Adulis, situated in the Northern Red Sea region of Eritrea about 45 kms south of Massawa, uncovered a 5<sup>th</sup> century AD Byzantine Temple as well as gold, bronze coins and other ancient artifacts.

For centuries Adulis served as a gateway of trade to the Eritrean hinterland and the Horn of Africa Region.



### **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Permanent Mission of the State of Eritrea to the United Nations in Geneva**

### **Eritrea's National Report Under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Adopted**

The Permanent Mission of the State of Eritrea to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva has the pleasure to announce that the UPR National Report of Eritrea has been adopted on 6 February 2014 during the 18th Session of the UPR Working Group.

The Permanent Mission thanks the Presidency of the Council, all the delegates and the Troika for their constructive participation in the extensive interaction process that followed in the sequel of Eritrea's presentation of the report. The proceedings have once again underscored Eritrea's commitment to the UPR as the most viable process for dialogue, engagement and cooperation on fundamental human rights issues. On this occasion, Eritrea reiterates its commitment to further strengthen this process.

In essence, the interaction has amplified that many of the recommendations are along the country's efforts that aim at furthering the advancement of human rights. The wider appreciation of Eritrea's achievements and constructive recommendations from numerous delegates are clear attestations of the GOE's dedication to promote basic human rights and fundamental freedoms.

There were also unbalanced stances from the usual countries which unfortunately opted to completely ignore efforts made, achievements gained as well as the challenges faced. This approach is not consistent with the UPR mechanism that stresses constructive and objective dialogue.

Naturally, challenges remain in some areas. This is the case with other countries as well as with other dimensions of the domestic nation building process. On this occasion, Eritrea reaffirms again its commitment to further its efforts in the protection and promotion of human rights in tandem with its vigorous pursuit of the noble cause of nation building. In this context, it is important to recognize that Eritrea's unequivocal call to the Human Rights Council to terminate and rescind country-specific resolutions on Eritrea and instead focus on strengthening engagement, dialogue and institutional linkage within the UPR framework as both timely and legitimate.

The proceedings have also highlighted the challenges and deleterious consequences of continued occupation of sovereign Eritrean territories by Ethiopia as well as the unjust and illegal UN sanctions on the full enjoyment of human rights. These challenges are part and parcel of the reality that the country is facing. In this context, Eritrea once again reiterates the sanctity of the UN Human Rights Council principle that underlines the interconnectedness of peace and security, human rights and development. This poses a challenge on the responsibility of the Human Rights Council to play its pivotal role in the respect of the right of the Eritrean people.

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