



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



Eritrea's Top Priority is Ensuring the Welfare and Dignity of its People

In a Statement delivered to the 3rd Committee of the UN General Assembly, on 27 October 2016, Mr. Yemane Ghebreab, Advisor to the President, reiterated that as a nation born in the struggle for human rights, Eritrea's top priority remains ensuring the welfare and dignity of its people. The text of his statement is as follows:



Eritrea sees little value in entering into a polemic with the Special Rapporteur. **We prefer an altogether different and positive approach. We wish to explain our situation, point to our modest achievements, describe our challenges, elaborate on our programs, reaffirm our responsibility and commitment, emphasize the importance of solidarity and express our readiness for constructive engagement and cooperation.**

We wish to remind this important gathering that the Commission of Inquiry does not exist as its mandate was terminated at the 31st session of the Human Rights Council last July in Geneva. The Council had considered its report, took note of it and decided to reject its key recommendations, which included astonishingly sending yet another African country, Eritrea, to the International Criminal Court, which is not only unwarranted for Eritrea, but is a gross

insult to Africa, which has made its firm views on the institution very clear.

Eritrea strongly believes that the most appropriate international forum for the discussion of human rights on the basis of universality and equality is the Human Rights Council. Like most UN member states and almost all developing countries, **we oppose double-standards as well as selective, politically-motivated, country-specific approaches** that reject dialogue and cooperation in favour of confrontation and escalation. If it weren't for these short-sighted and ultimately counter-productive approaches, whose first casualty is human rights, Eritrea would not be on the agenda today.

Eritrea, as it will keep stressing, is a nation born in the struggle for human rights. Its number one priority remains ensuring the welfare and dignity of its people. (Cont. on page 2)

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**Eritrea’s Top Priority is Ensuring the Welfare and Dignity of its People...
(Contd. from page 1)**

Eritrea is a safe, peaceful, stable nation with remarkable harmony among its diverse population. Its evolving political system, which has suffered some setbacks, is based on citizenship. It seeks to foster the broadest participation of its citizens, at home and abroad, at all levels and in all affairs of the nation. It is working to build a justice system, based on a body of laws, including the supreme law of the land, at the center of which is broad popular participation, including equitable participation of women, in the form of locally elected community courts.

Eritrea is committed to development, sustained, sustainable and equitable development which supports the material, social and cultural aspirations of the people, and in particular the youth. After years of difficulty, the basis for broad-based growth is being laid lesson by lesson, brick by brick and institution by institution. As many who have partnered with Eritrea will confirm, it makes judicious and effective use of available resources.

Eritrea is an independent, constructive, active and consciously modest regional and global actor. We are strong believers in solidarity between nations and peoples as well as in genuine and mutually-beneficial partnerships. We favor dialogue, engagement and cooperation. Unfortunately, the policy of seeking to isolate and undermine Eritrea has limited our role. It has also deprived the Horn of Africa of the positive contribution we would have been able to make.

National ownership and national responsibility are the pillars of the Eritrean approach to nation building. We first look to ourselves, mobilize our own human and financial resources and only then seek friends and partners. This approach also applies to the important issue of human rights.

Despite hostility and challenges, **Eritrea is working steadfastly to advance the political, civic, economic, social and cultural rights of its people.** The length and quality of life of Eritreans have improved.

We are providing free and universal education up-to the tertiary level, strides have been made in health, women’s and children’s rights are protected. The policies of citizenship, unity in diversity and prioritizing disadvantaged areas and sections of the population have strengthened national cohesion and solidarity. Eritreans also enjoy many civic and political rights and have access to information.

Yet, as Eritrea is first to stress, our achievements are modest, fall far short of our aspirations; and we have a long way to go. **We are never complacent. We are determined to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals ahead of schedule, build a nation worthy of the heavy sacrifices made to bring it to existence and contribute to a peaceful, cooperative and integrated Horn of Africa region.**

As Eritrea carries on with its national agenda, it welcomes and encourages solidarity and partnerships. It is keen to shoulder its international obligations in the areas of peace, development and human rights. It is a willing and proud participant in the Universal Review Process. It is cooperating effectively with the United Nations, UN human rights bodies and other partners to implement the recommendations it has accepted. It is a critical, but also effective participant in the fight against human trafficking and for effective solutions for irregular migration.

You are well aware that over six decades, Eritrea has been treated most unfairly by the United Nations and the international system. The continued occupation of our sovereign territory has been met with deafening silence and detrimental inaction. Sanctions against Eritrea continue although everyone agrees that there is no case and no justification. Eritrea is singled out for attacks on human rights when the grossest violations of others are glossed over.

Yet, **Eritrea does not seek favored treatment. It seeks fairness. It asks for a level playing field. More importantly, it encourages mutual solidarity and support.**



Upholding and Protecting the Rights and Welfare of Children Central to Eritrea's Development Agenda

The Government of the State of Eritrea (GSoE) presented its progress report on the implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child at the 28th Ordinary Session of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) held in Banjul, the Islamic Republic of the Gambia, on October 25, 2016.



The report illustrated the legal and institutional frameworks, policies, and programs that have been put in place to ensure the rights and welfare of the child in Eritrea. It further highlighted the status of program implementation, coordination and monitoring at the national, regional and sub-regional levels.



In its opening remarks, the Eritrean delegation shed light on the concrete steps, success stories, challenges and future prospects. **The delegation emphasized that much progress has been achieved in promoting Children's Rights and Welfare, in spite of the continued occupation of sovereign Eritrean territories, the unfair and unjust UNSC sanctions and other constraints.** It was also stated that **the GoSE takes the rights and welfare of the child as one of the central pillars of its development agenda.** The delegation further noted that the newly issued Codes incorporate new concepts and provisions that uphold the best interest of the child, in line with regional and international standards.

In the social and child protection domain, the delegation underlined the notable achievements of the

Government in the community based reunification of orphans with their extended families, assistance provided to vulnerable children in combating streetism, adoption, provision of care for children with disabilities, the reduction of child marriages and in supporting families of martyrs as well as HIV/AIDS affected individuals. In the awareness raising and sensitization programs, the Convention on the Rights of the Child was translated into Eritrean languages to ensure wide appreciation of the rights guaranteed therein.

On health issues, the delegation pointed out Eritrea's success in achieving the health related MDGs, curbing harmful traditional practices such as FGM, and controlling HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. Furthermore, the delegation provided briefing on the Eritrean health system and the priorities given to maternal and child health.

In the sphere of education, the delegation underscored the substantial increase in equitable access to education all the way from the pre-school to the tertiary level, as well as the big increase in the national literacy rate.

In the interactive dialogue, the Eritrean delegation responded to the questions and addressed the concerns of the members of the ACERWC.

In conclusion, the delegation reassured the Committee that the **GoSE has no greater agenda than upholding the best interest of Eritrean Children in discharging its responsibility.**

Eritrea and UNDP Organized a Side Event on 'Mainstreaming Human Rights through Partnership'

The Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations in collaboration with UNDP Eritrea organized a side event, titled: **“Mainstreaming Human Rights through Partnership”**, on 25 October 2016 at the United Nations in New York. This is the third joint event sponsored by the Eritrean Mission to the UN and the UN Eritrea Country Team.



The event was chaired by Mr. Amanuel Giorgio, Charge d’Affaires, Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations and Ms. Christine Umutoni, UN Resident Humanitarian Coordinator in Eritrea. Mr. Yemane Ghebream, Advisor to the President of Eritrea, Ms. Senait Lijam, representing the National Union of Eritrean Women and member of the UPR implementation Coordinating body and Dr. Mansoor Mirza, UN Policy Specialist in Eritrea as well as key stakeholders were present at the side event.

In his opening statement, Mr. Amanuel Girogio stated that while Eritrea has registered its concerns and disappointments on numerous occasions on states that choose to dwell on double standards, several states have begun to engage Eritrea on concrete sets of actions that embody cooperative approach to the respect of human rights. He announced that Eritrea had signed the UN Eritrea Partnership Program document on the implementation of the Universal Periodic Review and Human Rights; and he further noted that the document has been mainstreamed into the Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework between Eritrea and the UN.

Mrs. Senait Lijam in her presentation, “Eritrea’s strategy in the Promotion of Human Rights”, elaborated Eritrea’s views and activities in the promotion and protection of human rights. She stated that “as a country that emerged out of a long and difficult struggle for human rights, the promotion of human rights has been the linchpin for the policies of the Eritrean government”.

Mrs. Lijam said that while Eritrea continues to take its own initiatives to protect and promote human rights, it is engaging and co-operating with various international organizations and countries, including: UN Agencies in Eritrea, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Office on Drug and Crime, African Commission for Human and Peoples Rights, European Union and European countries, South-South cooperation. She concluded by stating that the cooperation agreement with the UN Country Team on the implementation of UPR also offers a platform for cooperation and partnerships with any country or organization.



Dr. Mansoor Mirza, UN Eritrea Policy Specialist in his presentation, “UN Programme to Support the Government of the State of Eritrea (GoSE) on Implementation of the Universal Periodic Review and Human Rights Mainstreaming”, provided an overview of its programs in Eritrea. He stated that the cooperation agreement aims at accelerating progress in the implementation of UPR recommendations and ensuring timely reporting requirements. *(Contd. on page 5)*

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He stated that Human Rights Working Group and a UPR Coordinating Body consisting of relevant ministries, government bodies and national civic associations have been established. The GoSE has also produced 2 key documents on UPR and human rights mainstreaming – Plan of Action 2016-2017 and Framework for Action 2015-2018. In conclusion, he stated that the project represents a significant opportunity to support vital human rights work in Eritrea and that GoSE remain committed to the UPR process and strengthening human rights in Eritrea

Ms. Chrisitne Umutoni said that the partnership between Eritrea and the UN continues to grow. She stated the driving energy for the UN in Eritrea is the commitment of the government to engage and the “value for money” for its projects. She explained although the UN receives not so large amount of resources for its programs, Eritrea has been able to

achieve health related Millennium Development Goals and was on track to meet the rest. She added “if you spend money for vaccine you get 100 percent coverage.”

Mr. Yemane Ghebreab, in his concluding remarks said that after a very challenging two decades, the people and government of Eritrea are, “more hopeful, more optimistic, but never complacent”, and “not satisfied with where we are, and the very little that we have achieved, we aspire for more”. Mr. Yemane Ghebreab said Eritrea’s peace, stability and the population's ethnic and religious harmony cannot be taken for granted, and that Eritrea wants to rely on its own resources first, but needs to be supported in its development efforts. Eritrea calls for level playing field and continued solidarity in its endeavor to meet the aspirations of its people.

AU Recognizes Eritrea’s Achievements in Improving Maternal and Child Health

The African Union recognized Eritrea as one of the success stories in achieving the health-related MDGs and the Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal, Newborn and Child Mortality in Africa (CARMMA). Eritrea launched CARMMA at the national level in 2010, soon after the campaign was launched at the continental level.



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Eritrea launched #CARMMA in Sept '14 and has recorded tangible improvements in MNCH due to improved strategies... [fb.me/upmj0600](https://www.facebook.com/upmj0600)

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Eritrea is a country that achieved MDG 4 & 5 targets. Its MDR dropped from 880 to 240
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