

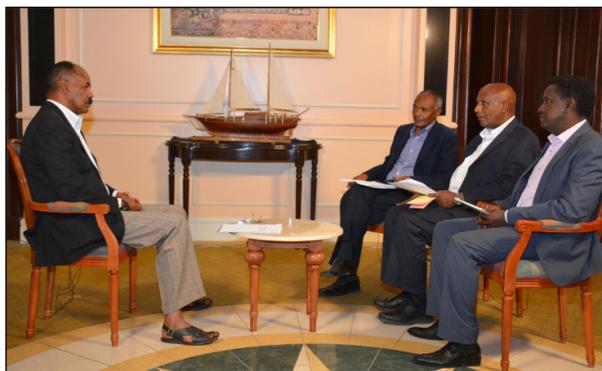


Bi-Weekly Newsletter
Permanent Mission of the State of Eritrea to AU
and UNECA
Press Section



President Isaias Elaborated on Eritrea's Developmental Plan and Position on Key Regional and Global Issues

In a two-part live interview with national media outlets held on 27 and 28 January 2017, President Isaias Afwerki explained in detail the development projects planned for 2017 and Eritrea's position and perspective on important regional and global issues.



Some highlights from the interview:

Human Capital Development

President Isaias stated that human capital development has always remained a crucial objective of government intervention in the past years. In this respect, the Government of Eritrea (GoE) will continue to funnel substantial investment in education and health to ensure equity, greater access and better services to the public.

Salary Increments

President Isaias also explained the rationale behind the phased salary increments to the Civil Service. The overriding objective was to ensure priority in the first phase to those at the lowest rung in the army and the Civil Service (new entrants from the Institutions of Higher Education) while documentation that must take into account seniority, job complexity and other vital parameters are worked out for the subsequent phases.

Political Processes

President Isaias described the broad contours of the constitution drafting process underway and associated efforts to strengthen the PFDJ.

Power Generation

Provision of adequate and reliable power supply for domestic, industrial and agricultural consumptions constitutes the GoE's priority both in terms of its overall impact for investment and to ameliorate the quality of life, President Isaias explained. The Hirgigo power plant that was built in the mid-1990s has been grappling with a variety of maintenance and functionality problems resulting in frequent power outages in recent years. For 2017, concrete programmes that will be implemented in this sector include installation of 200 Mega Watt power generation plants that use fossil fuel (gas) and solar energy respectively.

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President Isaias Elaborated on Eritrea’s Developmental Plan *(Contd. from page 1)*

Water Supply

President Isaias underlined that the GoE has been channeling substantial investment for the construction of dams in all three development zones in the country in the past two years. The Gahtelai dam in the Eastern Development Zone, is slated for completion in 2017. The aggregate volume of water harvested in these dams so far has reached around 250 million cubic meters, and taking the infrastructural works underway into account, it is expected to reach around 300 million cubic meters by the end of the year.



Transportation

Government priorities for this year will be focused on addressing the challenges and paucity of air and sea transport facilities that the country is facing. Road transport maintenance and ensuring increased access to affordable transport to the public will remain areas of government priority, President Isaias stated.



Housing

President Isaias also described in greater detail current urban housing problems and the GoE’s planned schemes that are aimed at addressing, incrementally, the prevailing acute shortages in the capital and other urban centers.

Regional and International Issues

President Isaias explained in depth the various conflagrations that have erupted in the past 25 years in the Middle-East, North Africa, the Horn of Africa and other flashpoints of war and conflict. Misguided policies anchored on domination and hegemony in a uni-polar global order were largely the causes of these costly upheavals, President Isaias underlined. Eritrea has also been ensnared in this whirlwind and compelled to face unwarranted border wars, sanctions and harassment under the spurious pretext of “human rights violations”.



In regard to the political crisis in Ethiopia, President Isaias stated that the spontaneous and extensive public protests were spurred by dangerous policies of institutionalized ethnicity and fragmentation pursued by the TPLF regime and its backers so as to monopolize power by fomenting division. The regime’s futile attempts to attribute the crisis to external scapegoats and blame Egypt and Eritrea was disingenuous and largely meant to deflect attention from the quagmire of its own making.

President Isaias also spoke about the elections in the US as well as emerging trends in Europe describing these events as a “phenomena” linked to imbalances and inherent flaws of a unipolar global order.

Senior Eritrean Delegation Conducted a Visit to the Russian Federation

Senior Eritrean delegation headed by Foreign Minister Osman Saleh conducted a visit to the Russian Federation from 29-31 January 2017.

During its stay in Russia, the delegation handed over President Isaias' message to President Putin and held wide-ranging discussions with Mr. Sergei Lavrov, Russian Foreign Minister.

Minister Osman Saleh expressed that Eritrea believes a strong Russian Federation under the leadership of President Putin can play an important global role in the interest of peace, stability, sustainable economic development as well as fighting terrorism.

Minister Osman further underscored Eritrea's desire to develop comprehensive and mutual cooperation with the Russian Federation in the areas of investment, trade, mining, higher education as well as sharing of skills in the fields of engineering, energy, technology and medicine.

Minister Lavrov on his part said that Russia values its relations with Eritrea and reiterated that both countries share similar views on many global and regional issues. He also expressed his country's readiness to develop cooperation with Eritrea in the sectors of trade, investment, education and other areas of development.



The Delegation also met Agriculture Minister and Vice-Minister of Education and heads of Trade Ministry and heads of various companies. In the meeting with Mr. Alexander Tkachov, Minister of Agriculture, the delegation discussed on reinforcing technical cooperation in the agricultural sector. Minister Tkachov commended Eritrea's principled positions and support to Russian position in a number of regional and global issues and reiterated his country's readiness to enhance cooperation with Eritrea.

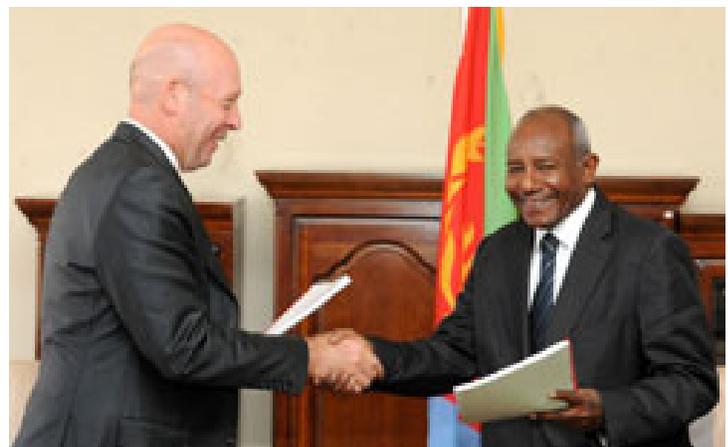
In a briefing they gave to media outlets, Minister Osman Saleh and Minister Sergei Lavrov underlined that the recent visit of the Eritrean delegation to the Russian Federation is expected to strengthen the existing ties of cooperation between the two countries which has been growing over the past years.

Eritrea and Colluli Mining Company Sign Agreement

The Ministry of Energy and Mines of Eritrea and Colluli Mining Share Company (CMSC), on 31 January 2017, signed an agreement to engage in potash mining operations in the Bada area of the Northern Red Sea Region.

The agreement was signed by Minister of Energy and Mines, Gen. Sebat Ephrem, Minister of Finance, Mr. Berhane Habtemariam, representing the Eritrean National Mining Company (ENAMCO), and Mr. Seamus Cornelius, Chairman of the Australia-based Danakali Mining Company.

Gen. Sebat Ephrem commended CMSC for its unwavering determination to partake in mining operations in Eritrea and affirmed that the Governm-



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Eritrean Delegation Participated at the 28th AU Summit

An Eritrean Delegation headed by Ambassador Araia Desta, Permanent Representative to the African Union and UN Economic Commission for Africa, participated in the 28th Summit of the AU held from 22 to 31 January in Addis Ababa.

The Eritrean Delegation shared Eritrea's position and perspectives on the various issues discussed at the Summit.

Regarding peace and security, the Delegation underlined that the recent proliferation of terrorism in Africa came in the wake of regime-change exercises by external powers resulting in State failures; and underscored the need for strong cooperation for the restoration of the statehood of the affected countries, and to resist the recurrence of such destructive interventions.

The Eritrean delegation also reaffirmed Eritrea's commitment to contribute its share for the promotion of peace, security and cooperation in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea Regions, and across the African continent.

The Summit adopted reform plan aimed at focusing the activities of the AU on important issues, to bring about structural changes and to reduce dependence on external financing in the implementation of the work of the Union.



The Summit elected Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Foreign Minister of Chad as Chairperson of AU Commission replacing the outgoing Chairperson Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma. New Deputy Chairperson and Commissioners were also elected.

Morocco which had withdrawn its membership in 1984 has been accepted as 55th member of the AU.

Eritrea and Colluli Mining Company Sign Agreement (Contd. from page 3)

ent of Eritrea and the Ministry would extend strong support in all its activities.



Mr. Cornelius praised the strong support given to the project by the Eritrean Government. He also expressed his desire for the company to engage in operations that serve the interests of all parties to the agreement.

Mr. Alem Kibreab, Director General of the Mining Department at the Ministry of Energy and Mines, underlined that proximity to sea routes and shallowness of potash deposits gives the project unique commercial advantage relative to other projects.

CMSC is jointly owned by ENAMCO and the Danakali Mining Company.

Eritrean Mining Sector : A Model to African Countries

This article was published on the January 2017 issue of Hommes d’Afrique Magazine.

Received ideas are having a hard time. And a lie has numerous versions, especially when someone denies it. The truth, on the contrary, has only one version. It may shock us, but it is neutral by nature. The person who told the truth and the subject of that truth merely confirm this sole version. Listen to this:

“For me, the visit was a real eye-opener. The Bisha Mine is a modern, well-run facility that currently employs 1400 people, of whom 90% are Eritrean. 20% of the employees are women and the Bisha facility is creating employment opportunities for people in neighboring towns and villages, who otherwise would never have opportunities to work in the wage economy.” Whose words are these? Where is this beautiful mine in Bisha?

Let’s continue to listen: *“Most people in neighboring towns and villages are subsistence farmers and herders. One woman, who began as a cleaner at the mine, is now driving one of the heavy Caterpillar trucks (American made!) that carries copper ore to the crushing plant. That is what I call creating opportunity!”* That’s not all.

“The mine also pays some of the highest wages in the country and employees at the mine have Western protective gear and safety rules equaling anything you would find in Canada or the USA.”

These are the words of Louis Mazel, [former] Head of the US Mission in Asmara, Eritrea, the country where this admirable mine is found. This evidence, which you don’t expect to come from the mouth of a Yankee official speaking about Eritrea, proves that despite the tornado of propaganda, the truth never dies.

The truth is that the Eritrean mining sector in many respects is a model, which many African countries should emulate. That’s why this edition of our magazine, Hommes d’Afrique, has zoomed in on this sector of the Eritrean economy.

In Eritrea, mining is governed by a set of four texts:

The Mineral Proclamation N°68/1995, The Mining Proclamation 165/2011, the Proclamation of taxes on mining revenue and the Regulations on Mining Operations N° 19/1995.



Here are a few key elements of the contents of these four texts:

- There is no tax in Eritrea on dividends in the mining sector.
- A tax of only 0.5% is applied on the import of mining equipment.
- Freedom of repatriation of the benefits.
- Possibility to have accounts in different currencies in Eritrean banks.
- One Stop licensing system to undertake mining activities, from establishment to operations.
- All mining resources in Eritrea belong to the State.
- Possibility for a mine with foreign capital operating in Eritrea to open an account in a bank overseas.
- The need to protect the environment.

You never hear this version of the truth about Eritrea. Why not? The answer can be summed up in one word: propaganda. What is its aim? To weaken a target, to organize chaos not only in its mind, but also as much as possible in the surrounding territory. “The organization of chaos” is precisely the title of the first chapter of a book published in 1928, by the pioneer in the study of propaganda, Edward L. Bernays, which he simply called “Propaganda”.

Many African countries are victims of the propaganda dumped by the media which dominate the world, western media. In Africa all they see is misery, corruption, war and famine. Don’t let’s worry any more. They’re used to it. It’s up to us, just like this mining enterprise in Bisha, to concentrate on what we have to do for the good of our continent, Africa.

Indian Ocean Newsletter: Peddling False News on Eritrea

Fake News is the daily staple, the bread and butter so to speak, of the Indian Ocean Newsletter in its periodic “news stories” on Eritrea and the region as a whole.

The Newspaper has also the habit of packaging its fabricated stories as “factual events” emanating from “knowledgeable” intelligence sources. This is a simple ploy to imbue credibility to its false stories that are mostly based on innuendos and/or deliberately floated at times for the purposes of pure disinformation.

In keeping with this pattern, the Newspaper alleges in its edition of 27 January 2017 last week (No 1443) that the Director of Sudan’s Intelligence and Security

Services, Gen. Mohamed Abbas, “conducted a secret lightening visit to Asmara”, on 10 January this month, to meet with his Eritrean counterpart in “Khartoum’s efforts to persuade Eritrea, at the bidding of Saudi Arabia, to break with Iran and the Houthis”.

This story is glaringly at odds with the actual facts, current realities, and the political dynamics of the region. But the Indian Ocean Newsletter is not in the business of publishing validated and verifiable stories and will continue, as ever, to churn out patently false news.

Ministry of Information
31 January 2017
Asmara

Status of the Harvest this Year

Annual precipitation levels in Eritrea, and the Horn of Africa region in general, are not always plentiful. The main rains tend to be erratic both in terms of spatial distribution and frequency particularly in cyclical years when the overall volume is below or near normal. There are also years when the region is struck by severe, even if localized, droughts.

The ecological fragility of the region thus makes it incumbent on governments to funnel public investment on water infrastructure for irrigation, pursue multi-layered programmes and packages of food security as well as engage in purposeful and planned storage/prepositioning of supplies for lean years.

These considerations have indeed prompted the GoE to chart out, especially since 2005, a comprehensive and long-term programme of food security to ensure, at the minimum, adequate/surplus food supplies both at the house-hold and national levels in normal years and to mitigate the effects of drought in bad years. This coherent and multi-faceted strategy has helped the country offset crop shortfalls in a couple of years in the past decade when the harvest was essentially poor.

Nonetheless, the harvest in Eritrea has been bountiful



this year for a variety of reasons. The Bahri (eastern escarpment) rains in autumn 2015, the short rains in the highlands in the Spring of 2016 and, more importantly, the main Kremti rains between June and September 2016 were abundant in terms of geographical distribution, frequency and timing. These tallied well with crop harvesting cycles and patterns contributing to almost a bumper harvest.

In the event, it is baffling to see grossly inaccurate and bleak projections and reports of the food situation in the region that also portray a “severe crop shortfall in Eritrea”. Benign concerns are of course always welcome. But there are also reasons to believe that this seemingly innocuous campaign may have been conceived by certain quarters for malicious ends.

Ministry of Information
2 February 2017
Asmara

