



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



Cabinet of Ministers Deliberated on National Development Priorities for 2017

The Eritrean Cabinet of Ministers held a regular meeting in the port city of Massawa on 8 and 9 of February 2017.

In the opening session, President Isaias Afwerki presented **budgetary priorities for 2017**. The President indicated that the budgetary allocation focuses on national development priorities which includes the ongoing salary increment, supply and sustainability of basic



consumer goods, provision of adequate and reliable power supply, improving the supply of potable water to villages, cities and semi-urban centers both in quantity and quality, provision of educational and health services, ensuring

macro-economic stability, efforts to narrow the gap between import and export, effective tax collection, restructuring of government institutions as well as strengthening of political and development endeavors.

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Following the President’s presentation, the Ministerial Cabinet received briefings and discussed on the Ministries’ activities and priority plans.

In connection with the work accomplishments of the **Ministry of Local Government**, the Ministerial Cabinet heard and conducted discussion on the extent of rainfall in 2016 at national level, efforts to expand agriculture vis-à-vis economic development, administration and land management, community-based awareness raising programs, regrouping of villages as well as the efforts exerted to improve the living standard of citizens and enhance the culture of work and productivity.

resources, expansion of availability of fish across the country, human resources development, researches on aquaculture, and production of salt. On the 2017 action plan, the discussion focused on the development of semi-industrial fishing, and enhancement of service delivery and protection of marine resources.

In connection with the report presented by the **Ministry of Energy and Mines**, the Ministerial Cabinet conducted discussion on the ongoing development endeavors in the sector. The Cabinet of Ministers noted that a number of villages across the country are becoming beneficiaries of power supply and called for the speeding up of efforts to this end. It also conducted



As regards the work plan of the **Ministry of Finance**, the Cabinet of Ministers called on banks to effectively accomplish their tasks, develop human capacity and bring about qualitative change, introduce new technology and take the necessary measures to enhance productivity.

Regarding the **Agricultural Sector**, the Cabinet of Ministers noted the development of agricultural productivity, development of crop seeds and livestock resources as well as fruits and vegetables, the efforts being exerted to preserve indigenous seeds and the action plan for this year.

During its deliberations on the report presented by the **Ministry of Marine Resources**, the meeting discussed the increase in fish consumption, enhancement of the management and exploitation of marine

discussion on the action plan for 2017. Moreover, the Ministerial Cabinet took note of the mining activities being undertaken by the various companies.

As regards the **Transportation and Communications sector**, the meeting focused on the activities to expand land transportation and the projects to develop the communications sector. The Cabinet of Ministers further discussed human resources development, land and mobile telephone services, land and air transportation and the action plan for this year.

In connection with the work plan of the **Ministry of Public Works**, the meeting conducted discussion on the report presented regarding infrastructure, construction of health and educational facilities, stores and laboratories, and that of communication services.

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Cabinet of Ministers Deliberated on ... (Contd. from page 2)

Regarding the **Ministry of Land, Water and Environment**, the meeting discussed the implementation of regulations and policies, the efforts exerted to ensure effective use of water and land resources, as well as programs to develop institutional capacity. It also discussed land management, information gathering pertaining to land usage, and shortcomings encountered as regards land proclamation. It further conducted discussion on the action plan for 2017 and efforts to develop human resources.

In the **Tourism** Sector, the Ministerial Cabinet held discussion on the efforts exerted to develop the sector and its contribution besides the action plan for 2017. The meeting noted the efforts made to ensure quality services on the part of social service rendering institutions, the progress registered in domestic tourism as well as human resource development.

In the **Trade and Industry** sectors, the meeting discussed domestic and foreign trade activities, the development of small enterprises and statistical information gathering.

In regard to the work of the **Ministry of National Development**, the meeting deliberated on bilateral and multilateral cooperation and their contribution. It also discussed the projects mapped out and their progress.

Concerning **Educational Service**, the meeting took note of participation of citizens, professional upgrading of teachers, supply of school materials, the research works undertaken, construction and maintenance of schools and the availability of textbooks.

In connection with the work accomplishments of the **Health Ministry**, the Ministerial Cabinet discussed the availability of basic medical supplies, expansion of health facilities in remote parts of the country, control and treatment of communicable and non-communicable diseases, the sustainable development of health service and the five-year strategic plan.

In the sector of **Labor and Human Welfare**, the meeting discussed nurturing the culture of work and productivity, amicable relationship among employers and employees, as well as training programs for disadvantaged citizens.

Concerning the work of the **Ministry of Justice**, the meeting discussed the efforts being exerted to promote qualitative administration of justice, provision of timely service and the activities made to enhance public awareness as well as organizing training programs.

In its review of the progress registered by the **Ministry of Information**, the Cabinet of Ministers discussed the efforts being exerted to develop programs, media technology advancement, participation of stakeholders, the introduction of modern IT and its five-year roadmap in addition to implementation of digital migration by 2020.

Pertaining to the tasks accomplished by the Ministry of **Foreign Affairs**, the Ministerial Cabinet conducted extensive discussion on activities undertaken to promote and strengthen relations at regional and global levels as well as the role of all round public resistance in foiling anti-Eritrea agendas.

International Film Week Held in Asmara

An International Film Week was held in Asmara from 8-15 February 2017. The opening ceremony, in which the Eritrean film *Milenu* featured, was attended by Government officials, members of the diplomatic corps and artists.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Ambassador Zemed Tekle, Commissioner of Culture and Sports

of Eritrea, noted that the experience acquired from the event would be a stepping stone for the International Film Festival due to be held in the capital in 2018.

Films from Eritrea, China, Germany, Turkey, Russia, France, Italy, Qatar, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, South Korea, and the United States were screened at the event.



IGAD's Inappropriate Submission on Eritrea to the UNSC

1. On 16 December 2016 and at the request of Ethiopia, the Secretariat of the IGAD Security Sector Program (ISSP), presented a briefing to the Security Council Committee, established pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009), concerning Somalia and Eritrea.

2. The briefing was conducted in closed consultation, in an informal setting, on “the multiplicity of serious transnational security threats in the IGAD region”. The IGAD Secretariat circulated a “Confidential Draft” on the subject matter at an earlier date to the United Nations Security Council with the caveat that the circulated report included “preliminary findings only”. We are told that the “full report is scheduled for April 2017”.

3. In the “Confidential Draft”, IGAD announces that it launched in April 2015 a “Transitional Security Threats Initiative (TST) to promote cooperation between Member States, as a first step towards the establishment of a regional TST Centre”.

4. Eritrea welcomes the establishment of the TST Centre as well as its precursor; the IGAD Security Sector Programme (ISSP). Back in 1994, when IGAD was revitalized and its remit broadened to include a robust framework of regional security cooperation to prevent and resolve intra-State and inter-State conflicts, Eritrea was an ardent advocate and proponent of this notion. Eritrea maintained then – as it does now - that the aspirations and associated architecture of regional economic cooperation will remain fragile and unsustainable until and unless Member States create effective mechanisms of preventing and resolving costly conflicts that may arise within and between them. In the event, Eritrea believes that the TST can indeed constitute, under appropriate circumstances, a vital component in the tool box of the envisioned mechanisms that the region has to chart out to deter turmoil and funnel the region’s substantial capacity and endowments in the pursuit of national/regional economic development.



5. Unfortunately, these lofty objectives were and remain compromised due to the short-sighted and harmful policies of the Ethiopian regime. In its dogged desire to “isolate” Eritrea, the Ethiopian

regime continues to violate fundamental tenets enshrined in the IGAD Charter to block Eritrea’s resumption of its activities in the organization. Sadly, IGAD’s rotating chairmanship has been monopolized by Ethiopia since 2008 to serve this selfish purpose and in breach of the normative practices of the organization.

6. Under these anomalous circumstances, it is clear that IGAD’s purview and programmes in general, and the presumptuous contents and recommendations of the Confidential Draft in particular, cannot have any relevance or credence in regard to Eritrea. As a matter of fact, the section on Eritrea contains nothing other than Ethiopia’s usual, worn-out, invective against the country though it is packaged this time, rather disingenuously, in “IGAD’s” garb.

7. Operative Paragraph 7 of the Confidential Draft states that the document was compiled by an “Independent Research and Evidence Team operating under the auspices of the ISSP”. This oblique clause conceals the fact that one of the principal entities involved in the preparation of the Report is SAHAN Research – an outfit founded and directed by Matt Bryden, the former Chairman of the Somalia-Eritrea Monitoring Group (SEMG) who was later discharged from his duties by the UN under compromising circumstances. As it is well-known, Matt Bryden was the principal author of the fabricated SEMG report in 2009 accusing Eritrea for sending 2000 troops to Somalia. This was the primary justification for imposing UNSC Sanctions Resolution 1907 (2009) on Eritrea. Ethiopia is thus trying to bring back to the scene, through the back-door, the discredited Matt Bryden in its desperate attempts to induce the extension of the unwarranted UNSC sanctions against Eritrea.

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IGAD's Inappropriate Submission on Eritrea to the UNSC (Contd. from page 4)

8. For all these reasons, Eritrea strongly objects to the submission and consideration of the Confidential Draft by the UNSC; even in an informal setting.

9. The Draft report is replete with gross misrepresentation of facts and events in its substantive section on Eritrea. While it asserts, in several operative paragraphs of the Draft Report, that the ONLF and Al-Shabab have “tense and hostile ties... given their divergent ideological perspectives”, the authors bend backwards to insinuate Eritrean “proxy support to Al-Shabab using the ONLF as a conduit”. The desperate ploy is transparent indeed. The SEMG has established, for four years in a row, that there is no support to, or linkages whatsoever, between Eritrea and Al-Shabab. Ethiopia’s primary motive of commissioning and submitting, at this point in time, the Confidential Draft to the UNSC under the convenient umbrella of IGAD is thus to cast aspersions on this indelible truth.

10. The Confidential Draft describes activities and operational modalities of several armed Ethiopian opposition movements. Then it proceeds to dub “some of them”, without specifying which ones, as “terrorist organizations” simply because “that is how they are seen by Ethiopia”. This is despite its admission, in the same breath, that “they are not designated as such by the United Nations”. The authors of the Draft do not apparently know, or they have deliberately ignored, the fact that most or all of these groups were coalition partners with the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) party both during the armed struggle against the Mengistu regime or in the subsequent transitional government that they all set up in the aftermath of the fall of the latter.

11. The worst part in this sloppy depiction is the outrageous attempt to associate Eritrea with “the provision of improvised explosive devices (IEDs)” that these groups reportedly employ in their military operations. To dramatize this point, the authors stress: “Eritrea’s propagation of this expertise is therefore of serious concern to the region”. As explained above, literally all of these groups were fo-

rmer comrades-in-arms with the regime in Ethiopia in earlier times. These devices and other methods of warfare are in fact their stock-in-trade. To gloss over these realities in order to weave trumped up charges against Eritrea underscores the ineptness of the authors of the document as well as the inveterate malice of the Ethiopian regime which has and is unscrupulously using the IGAD forum to advance its sinister agenda against Eritrea.

12. The Draft report has a full chapter on Ethiopia. In this chapter, it talks about purported military/terrorist threats that Ethiopia faces. But it does not probe or discuss Ethiopia’s sponsorship or involvement in acts of destabilization against its neighbours. Ethiopia supports several subversive and terrorist organizations against Eritrea, including the Al-Qaeda trained Eritrean Islamic Jihad and other armed groups such as the Red Sea Afar Democratic Organization (RASDO), the Kunama Liberation Front, and the Saho Liberation Front etc. Several of these groups routinely issue press releases and communiqués from Ethiopia on subversive/terrorist acts conducted against soft targets in Eritrea from their military bases in Ethiopia. There is no reference to these matters in the Draft Report on “Transnational Terrorist Threats” in the region. Equally important, the Draft Report is silent on Ethiopia’s continued occupation of sovereign Eritrean territories in violation of international law; its pronounced policy of “regime change” in Eritrea; and, the periodic acts of aggression it commits against Eritrea in spite of their grave ramifications to regional peace and security.

13. Operative paragraph 8 of the Draft Report states that the “Team personnel worked in close consultations with government officials from concerned Member States”. It further reveals that “with the knowledge and consent of Member States, team members travelled to Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.” It even talks about the travel of one member of the Team to Tanzania although the latter is not, and has never been, a member of IGAD. The Team did not however travel to Eritrea although it dedicates a full and invective chapter of its Report to Eritrea.

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IGAD’s Inappropriate Submission on Eritrea to the UNSC (Contd. from page 5)

This act alone speaks volumes on the credibility, impartiality, objectivity and professionalism of the Team and its work.

14. Not satisfied with all these hollow accusations against Eritrea, the Draft Report dedicates three operative paragraphs to Eritrea’s presumed “violations of the UNSC arms embargo”. In the first place, this is not within its purview as there is a full-fledged UNSC body – the SEMG – tasked with carrying out the job. Still, the Draft Report recycles a spurious story to cite the interdiction by a French naval vessel on 20 March 2016 of a “stateless dhow in the Indian Ocean carrying significant quantity of weapons, including 2,000 Kalashnikov-pattern assault rifles, sniper rifles, and general purpose machine-guns and anti-tank guided missiles”. The Draft Report then states: “the French authorities assessed that the weapons originated in Iran and were

likely destined via Eritrea for Somalia and/or Yemen... If so, the shipment constituted a potential violations of resolution 1907(2009) ...”. How is Eritrea responsible for arms that originate from Iran that may be destined to Yemen or Somalia? This is too trite to merit any response and only underscores the fallacy and nefarious motive of the whole report.

15. In conclusion, Eritrea has been the victim, in recent years, of repeated trumped up charges and falsified reports by hand-picked “expert groups” to advance the political agenda of harassment of certain powers. This unwarranted witch-hunting of Eritrea once and for all has to end and Eritrea urges members of the UNSC to terminate the sanctions regime.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
27 January 2017
Asmara

Discussion Forum on "Delivering Together for Eritrea’s Development and Self-Reliance" held in London

A discussion forum hosted by the Embassy of the State of Eritrea to the United Kingdom and Ireland under the theme "Delivering Together for Eritrea’s Development and Self-Reliance" was held in London on 6 February 2017.

The lead presenter, Ms. Christine Umutoni, UN Resident/ Humanitarian Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Eritrea, elucidated that the eight outcomes of the Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework (SPCF) 2017-2021 recently launched by the Government of Eritrea and the UN are directly linked to the 17 SDGs. She also noted that the UN SDGs and Africa’s Agenda 2063 are key international frameworks that the Government and the People of Eritrea can leverage to achieve their national development aspirations.

Ms. Umutoni said, “Eritrea has shown commendable commitment to its development agenda,” and applauded Eritrea's strategic programs which have improved the standard of life of the population despite the harsh environmental conditions in the Horn of Africa.

Towards the end of the presentation the participants were given the opportunity to ask Ms. Christine Umutoni questions, and answers were provided. Participants expressed satisfaction in the presentation, both on content and delivery. They called for continuous engagement in the future between the UN and Eritrean civil society, including the Diaspora.



Representatives from various British Eritrean Community Organizations and Networks, NUEW, PFDJ, YPFDJ, and Information Network were in attendance. Amongst the participants were academics, educators, practitioners, and community leaders.