



ERI-NEWS



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

President Isaias Afwerki's Interview on the Government's Priorities for 2018

In the second-part of the interview with local media on 20 January 2018, President Isaias Afwerki stated that the country has achieved substantial progress in the sectors of education, health, water supply, food security as well as in certain areas of physical infrastructure. Bottlenecks in other critical infrastructure and related factors have however negatively affected growth in manufacturing, tourism and fisheries, whose performance remains far below our aspirations and endowments, President Isaias underlined. Government focus in the medium term will accordingly be geared to the revitalization of these sectors to augment their contribution to the country's economic growth. This will require marshalling the requisite capital investment, technol-



ogy and human capital – which is being undertaken – as well as sober assessment of the experiences of the past years, President Isaias emphasized.

In responding to the question of the Government of Eritrea's priority areas for 2018, President Isaias stated that investment in water infrastructure pursued in the past years will now be supplanted with utilization of the accumulated resources for irrigated agricult-

Contd. on page 2.

Eritrean Delegation Participated at the 30th African Union Summit

An Eritrean delegation led by the Permanent Representative to the African Union (AU) and UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Ambassador Araia Desta, participated at 30th African Union Summit held under the theme 'Winning the Fight Against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation'. The Summit was held from 22-29 January 2018 at the Headquarters of the AU in Addis Ababa.

At the Summit, the President of Guinea, H.E. Alpha Condé handed over the



Chairmanship of the Union to the President of Rwanda, H.E. Paul Kagame.

The delegation expressed Eritrea's views and perspectives on important

Contd. on page 3

Vol 5. Issue 77

05 February 2018

In this issue

**Hungarian Delegation
Conducted a Working
Visit to Eritrea** 2

**British Artist Joss
Stone Performed in
Asmara** 2

**Eritrea and China
Signed an 87 Million
Dollars Loan
Agreement** 3

**Dutch Action is
Unwarranted and
Unacceptable** 4

**Annual Eritrean
Festival in
Australia** 4

**Shannon-Ogbani
Abeda Puts Eritrea on
the Map at the 2018** 5

**Comedian Tiffany
Haddish Connects
With Her Eritrean
Roots** 5

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 **Eritrean Mission to
AU & ECA**

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President Isaias Afwerki's Interview... *Contd. from page 1*

ure in an incremental manner. The Government will also accord high priority to investments in agro-industries, fisheries and education, President Isaias Afwerki underlined.

In regard to salary increments in the Civil Service, President Isaias stated that the scheme – implemented partially for some categories in 2016/17 – will be implemented this year with retroactivity for 2017. In this respect, President Isaias noted that what is of paramount importance is not increment of nominal salary per se, but the eventual purchasing power of the civil servants. To be meaningful, the scheme must therefore be accompanied by appropriate fiscal and monetary policies for controlling inflation, stabilizing the exchange rate, as well as regulating the balance of payments. In terms of housing, President Isaias stated that housing projects implemented in the past years have lagged far behind the substantial demand in all cities and towns. The Government will thus embark

in 2018 on concrete projects to address the housing demand in the coming years in a phased and planned manner.

President Isaias underlined that the illicit migration of Eritrean youth was linked to the subversive agenda of “regime change” pursued by certain quarters. Murky networks, intelligence agencies of certain countries and even some UN institutions have been working in a concerted manner and are implicated in this racket of organized crime. The Government of Eritrea has been urging the UN to undertake an independent investigation of this abominable crime since 2013; and this plea was reiterated last month to the current UN Secretary General, President Isaias stated. The youth – who are victims of this crime – as well as parents and society at large need to be sensitized on the underlying motives and objectives of this subversive campaign, President Isaias stressed.

Hungarian Delegation Conducted a Working Visit to Eritrea

A Hungarian Delegation led by Dr. István Mikola, Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, paid a three-day working visit to Eritrea.



During the visit, the delegation met with the Eritrean Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, Health, Education and Information, and the Head of PFDJ Economic Affairs, and held discussions on issues of mutual concern. The two countries reached agreements to cooperate in the sectors of agriculture and health.

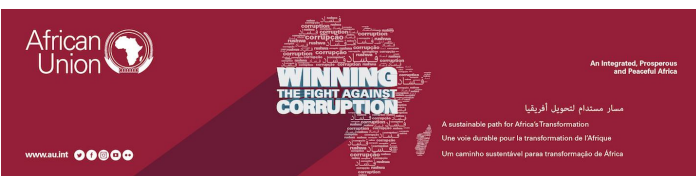
British Artist Joss Stone Performed in Asmara

Joss Stone, the British singer, song-writer and actress, performed at the historic Cinema Asmara on the 23rd of January 2018. Her concert in Asmara was part of her total world tour. Eritrea is her 136th country of performance.



Eritrean Delegation Participated at the 30th African Union Summit... *Contd. from page 1*

issues discussed at the meetings held at the level of Permanent Representatives (15-24 January), Ministers (25-27 January) and Heads of State and Government (on 28 and 29 January).



The report of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights mentioned that Eritrea has submitted its reports on the implementation of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. On its part, the delegation of Eritrea reaffirmed that Eritrea considers the promotion and protection of human rights as the priority of priorities, and that the Government is committed to strengthen constructive engagement with the Commission.

The Delegation of Eritrea proposed for the organs of the Union, especially those with human rights mandates, to be free of dependence on external financial assistance that exposes them to undue interferences, and their budgets to be fully funded by the contributions of member states.

The Delegation underscored that the violations of the immunities and privileges of the members of the Eritrean Permanent Mission to the AU and UNECA

by the Ethiopian Government, and the denial of visas by the host Government to diplomatic staff assigned to the Mission constitutes a flagrant violation of the Host Agreement and decisions of the AU Policy Organs. In this regard, the delegation urged the AU policy organs to take strong measures to stop the violations and resolve the visa denials.

On the sidelines of the Summit, the delegation met with representatives of states and exchanged views on issues of mutual concern and on strengthening bilateral relations.

Through the decisions adopted at the end of its deliberations, the Summit:

- ◆ established a Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM). 23 Member States of the AU have already joined SAATM. A call was made on the remaining countries to join SAATM,
- ◆ decided to adopt the Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA), an Extraordinary Summit to be held on 21 March 2018 in Kigali, Rwanda,
- ◆ adopted 8 Legal Instruments including a Protocol on Free Movement of People,
- ◆ elected ten Member States to serve a two-year term as members of the Peace and Security Council of the AU,
- ◆ decided to cancel the mid-year Summits starting 2019, and to hold only one summit per year in January.

Eritrea and China Signed an 87 Million Dollars Loan Agreement

The Eritrean Government and the People's Republic of China (PRC) signed, on 18 January 2018 in Asmara, an over 87 million dollars loan agreement. Finance Minister Berhane Habtemariam from the Eritrean side and Ambassador Yang Zigang of the PRC signed the agreement.

The loan will be used to construct the first phase of the 29 km long asphalt road connecting Adi-Guaedad with Habela.

Minister Berhane underlined the strong relations



Eritrea and the China share and expressed appreciation on the Chinese cooperation in development of programs in Eritrea. Ambassador Yang on his part said that the agreement is part of the growing economic, political and social cooperation between the two countries.

**Press Statement - Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea
Dutch Action is Unwarranted and Unacceptable**

On 16 January 2018, the Dutch Foreign Ministry expelled Eritrea’s Charge d’Affaires to the country, Mr. Tekhste Ghebremedhin, invoking untenable explanations for its unacceptable act.



relevant information to its citizens in the country.

Needless to emphasize, the Rehabilitation and Recovery Tax Law contains explicit clauses on the penalties that apply for tax evasion. These measures are not

The letter that the Minister of Foreign Affairs sent to the Dutch Parliament on the case indeed illustrates the banality of the whole affair.

On the one hand, the Minister states: "the Cabinet recognizes that no judge has yet recorded proof of wrongful or punishable offenses by the Eritrean embassy office in The Hague". And yet, the Minister alludes to "the broadcast of Argo (Dutch radio station)" and to the "... Motion of two parliamentarians requesting the government to close the Eritrean embassy" to explain and justify this unwarranted and unfriendly act.

Eritrea's levying of 2% Rehabilitation and Recovery tax in the Diaspora, enacted in accordance with the laws of the country in 1994, is a legitimate and sovereign act that cannot be misconstrued, by any stretch of imagination, as a contravention of the Vienna Protocol on Diplomatic Relations. (There are indeed some countries that levy full income tax from their citizens abroad). Tax collection is carried out through normative and appropriate transactional modalities. The Consulate naturally provides ordinary consular services, including the provision of

onerous by any standards. A citizen who fails or opts not to pay the 2% Rehabilitation Tax is entitled to all his/her rights and consular services. But he/she will forfeit business license and land entitlement rights in the home country.

In the event, the designation of Eritrea's Charge d'affaires as persona non grata constitutes an arbitrary and provocative act that has no consonance with the Vienna Protocol of Diplomatic Relations. We must also recall previous unfriendly incidents taken by the Dutch authorities against Eritrea in the past few years.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea rejects the hollow accusations leveled against its Consular Office in the Netherlands. The Dutch non resident Ambassador to Eritrea has been summoned to explain the unfriendly acts of her government. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is naturally considering appropriate reciprocal measures that it will have to take to partially redress the wrong.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Asmara
25 January 2018

Annual Eritrean Festival in Australia

The 18th annual Eritrean Festival in Australia was held in Melbourne from 12 to 15 January 2018. The annual Festival in which a number of nationals, Australian government dignitaries, members of the diplomatic Corps as well as friends of Eritrea took part, featured pictorial exhibition depicting Asmara’s architecture, seminar on the objective situation in the homeland, cultural and artistic performances, workshops on varied topics as well as sports competitions.



Shannon-Ogbani Abeda Puts Eritrea on the Map at the 2018 Winter Olympics

The 21-year-old Alpine skier, Shannon-Ogbani Abeda, made history as the first athlete to compete for Eritrea at the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

The Calgary-based computer science student has been receiving support from Eritrea and the Eritrean community in Canada since 2012 when he decided to represent Eritrea at the inaugural 2012 Winter Youth Olympics in Innsbruck, Austria.

“Eritrea was a country that fought for independence for almost 30 years, and they’re very proud of me for being able to carry on my roots and my heritage,” he told CBC News. “My main goal is to put Eritrea on the map,” he added.

Born in Fort Alta, Canada, Shannon-Ogbani Abeda has visited Eritrea twice and the last visit was in 2014. “Right now my focus is to go to the Olympics, but afterwards I’d like to finish school, do some



coaching and get the Eritrean community on some skis,” he said.

Shannon-Ogbani Abeda will join Nigerian bobsled team and Ghanaian skeleton athlete to fly high the flags of African countries at the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea this month.

Adapted from an article published on: face2faceafrica.com

Comedian Tiffany Haddish Connects With Her Eritrean Roots

Comedian and Actress Tiffany Haddish visited Eritrea, her father’s country of origin, in January. Here are excerpts from an interview she gave about her visit.

“I feel great. So far it has been amazing. When I first got here my whole family came to greet me in the airport; all of these people that I have heard so much about but never had a chance to meet. They greeted me with the typical ‘ilililil’ uproar. I am staying in this real beautiful hotel, the Asmara Palace. It makes me feel like a real princess.”

“My father told me many stories about my extended family. And when I look at them I see my father.”

“We also visited the [Martyrs’] cemetery and that was the most beautiful experience to me. I have been tirelessly around the city. I am happy to see all of the people walking peacefully. Wow, and the food....And then we got to Massawa and stayed in this beautiful hotel, the Dahlak Hotel.”



“By the time I walked in the shores of the Red Sea I got emotional. I finally felt at home. I told myself that this is where I should have been a long time ago. The Red Sea water made me feel great. It felt like my heart was being healed. I have been through so much, and for long I have been trying to figure out who I am. Now I have a better understanding of why I am on this earth and what my purpose is.”

“I see the people and I see myself in them. This place gave me the chance to appreciate the real meaning of life.”

For the full version of the interview: <http://shabait.com/articles/q-a-a/25605-the-last-black-unicorn-is-in-eritrea>