

Statement Made by H.E. Mrs ASKALU Menkerios, Minister of Tourism of the State of Eritrea on the Occasion Commemorating the National Day Of Eritrea at Yeosu Expo 2012 - Republic of Korea on May 29, 2012

Distinguished Participants
Excellencies, and
Colleagues and Compatriots

It is a great honour and privilege for me to extend our profound gratitude and appreciation for the kind invitation and support extended to our country by the Government of the Republic of Korea to participate in the Yeosu Expo under the theme of “Living Ocean and Coast”.

Eritrea is participating with a high level delegation in this historic global movement of solidarity and cooperation because with a main coastline of 1000 kms, it has major maritime endowments and interests. Indeed, numerous economic activities in the country and the livelihood of a segment of our population are associated with the sustainable exploitation of the resources and opportunities that accrue from proximity to the Red and Mediterranean Seas and the Indian Ocean maritime routes.

Due to the long years of struggle for independence, Eritrea’s coastal areas and archipelagos are considered relatively pristine and eligible as potential candidates to the world heritage for their biodiversity.

We hope the presence of Eritrea and our high level delegation in this important Expo shall highlight and show-case the need and requirement for concerted efforts to address vital development issues in the oceans and coastal areas with appropriate emphasis on their preservation and sustainability for posterity. For its part, Eritrea has articulated since 1995 an overall framework that would serve as a basis for the laws, rules, regulations, guidelines and institutional structures that govern the sustainable management of the coastal areas without compromising the interests of future generations.

Unlike most oceans of the world, the Red Sea is characterized by a lesser upwelling phenomenon and lack of permanent streams that flow into the sea. The Eritrean coastal area is best known for its highly favourable ecosystem for the development of fisheries. Essential reef areas, extensive surface and numerous shelters of the Dahlak archipelago and the aggregate islands, contribute to the bright prospect of a prosperous fishing industry. The convergence of the Indian

Ocean and the Red Sea at its southern tip further enhances this opportunity in a rather unique manner.

Let me revert to our main theme and stress that we are basically here to learn from you. We are of course glad to share our humble experiences. Having said that, let me seize this opportunity and say a few words on this auspicious day of the celebration of Eritrea's 21st independence anniversary at our pavilion in this Expo.

In the past twenty years since independence, our bilateral ties have grown steadily despite the barriers of geography. It is also/indeed appropriate to recognize the role Korean companies have played in the rehabilitation and rebuilding of Eritrea after the long war of independence came to an end in 1991. Thank you for the active support and sharing of your experiences in this particular time. Korea has become synonymous to national building and shared mutual good experience in Eritrea now.

Without much ado, let me now give way to the Eritrean Cultural Troupe, who are here today to add flavor and colour – with Eritrean beat and sound – to the National Day of Eritrea and the EXPO Event.

Thank you again for the warm welcome and hospitality. And on behalf of the delegation, cultural folkloric group and myself, let me wish success and all the best to Yeosu Expo 2012. It is again a great honour to be part of this global movement addressing “living ocean and the coast”.