

A new Era: Eritrea – Ethiopia in Peace

Documentation

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Introduction

By Hans-Ulrich Stauffer, Afrika-Komitee, Basel

20 years after the outbreak of war between Eritrea and Ethiopia, 18 years after the armistice and 16 years after the arbitrable judgment, an unforeseen development put an end to a period of “no war – no peace”. Both countries and their peoples had suffered for years. But today hope prevails.

On July 9, 2018, Eritrea and Ethiopia announced a joint declaration of peace.

Both presidents Ahmed Abiy of Ethiopia and Isayas Afeworki of Eritrea share the will to overcome the past. President Abiy’s visits to Asmara and president Afeworki’s visit to Addis Abeba have mobilized hundreds of thousands, in Addis even one million of jubilating people. The peace process has gained momentum.

Quite a lot of problems still remain to be solved. But the important first steps have been done and more will follow.

This documentation collects some recent articles to get a better understanding of these thrilling days in June and July, days that changed the political map at the Horn of Africa. The documents have been taken from news agencies and official newspapers. The selection is not based on a scientific research but aims to give an overview on the development.

Basel, Switzerland, July 30, 2018

Timetable of the developments

5 June 2018

The Ethiopian government declared that it will accept and implement fully and without any precondition the Algiers Agreement and the EEBC ruling.

20 June 2018

The Eritrean government announced that will send a high level delegation to Addis Abeba to gauge current developments directly and in depth as well as to chart out a plan for continuous future action.

8 July 2018

Prime Minister Abiy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia arrived in Asmara for a two day visit.

9 July 2018

Eritrea and Ethiopia announced a Joint declaration of Peace.

14 July 2018

President Afewerki arrived in Addis Ababa after twenty two year to pay an official visit.

18 July 2018

Ethiopian Airlines makes historic first Flight from Addis Abeba to Asmara.

Ethiopia's PM says ending war, expanding economic links with Eritrea key for regional stability

africaTech, June 6, 2018

By Aaron Maasho

ADDIS ABABA, June 6 (Reuters) - Ethiopia's prime minister said on Wednesday that ending war and expanding economic ties with neighbouring Eritrea is critical for stability and development in the impoverished Horn of Africa region.

Abiy Ahmed's remarks followed the announcement on Tuesday by his ruling coalition that Ethiopia would fully implement a peace deal signed in 2000 and meant to end a two-year war that devolved into a stalemate resulting in huge military build up by both countries.

The pledge would entail ceding a disputed town to Eritrea. There was no sign on Wednesday that Ethiopia had begun withdrawing its troops from the town of Badme.

It is one of many policy shifts announced since the 41-year-old took office in early April, moves that could reshape Ethiopia's relations with its neighbours and have equally dramatic impacts inside the country of 100 million people. Whether the new measures, including liberalisation of the state-controlled economy, end up addressing critical challenges from high youth unemployment to rising government debt remain to be seen. But they are shaking the country up.

"All that we have achieved from the situation of the last 20 years is tension," Abiy said. "Neither Ethiopia nor Eritrea benefit from a stalemate. We need to expend all our efforts towards peace and reconciliation and extricate ourselves from petty conflicts and divisions and focus on eliminating poverty."

Ethiopia's move is a "drastic departure" from its longstanding – and failed – policy, said Ahmed Soliman, Ethiopia analyst at Chatham House, a London-based thinktank. "To see some movement is extremely positive. This is the most important latent conflict within the Horn and its resolution is important for peace and security in the region."

No Comment from Eritrea

Eritrea used to be a part of Ethiopia and waged a 30-year struggle for independence. The war on their shared border between 1998 and 2000 killed tens of thousands of people, caused significant displacement and the splintering of families.

Eritrea's government has not responded publicly to Addis Ababa's offer of an olive branch late on Tuesday. The two nations cut ties during the war. Asmara's Information Minister told Reuters on Tuesday evening he had not seen the Ethiopian government's statement so could not immediately comment. He did not respond to phone calls on Wednesday.

Eritrea has long said it wants Ethiopia to pull its troops out from the disputed territory before normalizing ties, citing a decision by a boundary commission at The Hague which awarded the village of Badme to Eritrea in 2002.

Asmara has long felt betrayed by world powers, who they say failed to force Ethiopia to abide by the commission ruling.

Ethiopia says the row over border demarcation can only be resolved through a negotiated settlement.

On Tuesday, an Ethiopian foreign ministry official told Reuters that there were “at least 61 attempts” to mediate between the two nations, but that Asmara had rejected all requests.

Russia, the European Union, and Qatar were among those that proposed to mediate in the last two decades, he said.

Abiy said Ethiopia needed to resolve what he seemed to view as a costly and pointless dispute. Putting an end to this situation and finding peace is necessary beyond anything else not just for Ethiopia but for the wider Horn of Africa,” he said in a speech in Addis Ababa.

“Every Ethiopian should realise that it is expected of us to be a responsible government that ensures stability in our region, one that takes the initiative to connect the brotherly peoples of both countries and expands trains, buses and economic ties between Asmara and Addis Ababa.”

Diplomats say punitive measures taken against Eritrea may prevent an immediate conclusion to the dispute.

The U.N. Security Council imposed an arms embargo on Eritrea in 2009 on charges that Asmara provided political, financial and logistical support to militant groups in Somalia. Eritrea has long dismissed the claims, saying they are concocted by Addis Ababa in a bid to isolate the country and divert attention from Ethiopia’s reluctance to hand over the disputed areas.

“The Eritrean government has always proclaimed its innocence and will demand that the sanctions are promptly lifted. This could be a sticking point for now,” said a Western diplomat in Ethiopia.

(Additional reporting and writing by Maggie Fick; Editing by Toby Chopra)

Eritrea – Ethiopia: Once Bitten, Twice Shy

TesfaNews, June 11, 2018

By Anonymous

A paraphrase of a famous cliché goes like this: *“To err is human, to forgive divine, to repeat the same mistake foolishness!”*

In the first week of June 2018, reports came out from within the Ethiopian state mechanism that Ethiopia would accept all the terms of the Algiers Treaty signed by Eritrea and Ethiopia in 2000 to bring a semblance of normalization between the two countries.

One of the items agreed upon in Algiers was to refer the border issue to an International Border Commission tasked with determining where the border between the two countries should be and that its decision would be final and binding. The “guarantors” of the Algiers Agreement were the UN, the United States and the European Union as well as the OAU (the current AU) under whose auspices the Agreement was implemented.

Fast forward two years after the signing of the Agreement and the Border Commission delivered its verdict awarding some territory to Eritrea that it had claimed as its own and some that it never lay claim to and the same with Ethiopia. However, the border-village of Badme, which was supposedly the spark that ignited hostilities – if one is to believe that the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand was the spark that started World War I – was rightfully awarded to Eritrea!

This was unpalatable to the minority Tigrean-led Ethiopian government which would have to account for the thousands of lives lost over this small, inconsequential village which it turns out had belonged to Eritrea after all.

The brazen government led by the smooth-talking late premier, Meles Zenawi, the very next day reneged on the agreement and decided that Ethiopia would not accept the ruling after all but would prefer to sit around and discuss the situation with Eritrea.

Eritrea refused to move the final and binding decision of the Algiers Agreement away from the agreement and to the negotiation table as that would, in all senses, make the decision null and void, a point not lost on the Ethiopian government nor its American and European backers. Fortunately, too, not lost on the Eritrean government which till this day has stood its ground.

The rest, as they say, is history.

Fast forward sixteen years and we come to June 2018. Ethiopia is on the brink of disaster. It has just gone through three years of turmoil; the double-digit economic growth has benefitted the few – mostly those in government and from a specific ethnic group, the Tigreans – the majority Oromo ethnic group whose fertile lands were forcibly seized and their populace forced to leave their home regions – had had enough!

Demonstrations erupted all over the country and in typical fashion, the TPLF-led government tried to quell these by force. Soon after, the Amharas followed suit and the country was brought to a standstill through the mostly peaceful demonstrations. The economy staggered; the TPLF had no answer to the

problems; the Prime Minister, Hailemariam Dessalegn – a Vichy-like puppet – had enough and tendered his resignation.

The United States and other Western allies of Ethiopia were at a loss as to what to do and how to resolve the situation. Africa's second-most populous country and the West's darling and "key ally in the war against terror" – a euphemism for "we'll turn our backs at the atrocities you commit as long as you label the victims terrorists" – was on the verge of breakup. Something had to be done. The question was, what?

Suddenly news came out that a successor prime minister had been selected. In an eerie resemblance to the trajectory that Vladimir Putin took to the Kremlin, a young, former Security Intelligence Head, who was a member of the ruling EPRDF to the bone, was selected. The country needed time and he knew what the people wanted to hear and the fact that he spoke all three major languages of the country meant he could pacify the large swathes of the disgruntled population and buy time.

Reforms were promised; criticism of the previous government's policies (of which he was part and parcel) were aired in public; dissidents were released as well as journalists whose only crime was to write blogs criticizing the government and who were labeled terrorists and sentenced to life and long-term prison sentences, were released. Things were looking up. Hope has been restored and the people of Ethiopia await the promised concrete reform steps.

There was, however, a big elephant in the room that needed to be addressed. This was the Eritrean issue.

When the whole of the country had risen against the minority Tigrean-led establishment, the latter had figuratively and literally withdrawn into their province and were busy shipping their ill-gained wealth overseas (speaking of wealth, was it mentioned that despite over a decade of double-digit economic growth, the country suddenly found itself short on foreign exchange? Could the two events be linked somehow i.e. the stashing of the wealth overseas and the scarcity of funds?)

Facing the wrath of the people of Ethiopia whom it had blatantly embezzled, imprisoned and humiliated for over two-and-a-half decades, the Tigrean clique was cornered within its own province. Sure, they had moved the air force from its original base in Debre Zeit (Oromo territory) to Tigray region and fears were mounting that if pushed too far they might do a Ceausescu as a last-ditch effort of survival. They still might do, by the way.

Before you know it, suddenly the Ethiopian government announces that it will abide fully with the decisions of the Algiers Agreement and hopes that Eritrea will follow suit. Positive news indeed for the peoples of the two nations while at the same time, begging the question "how many lives would have been spared on both sides had Ethiopia made this decision sixteen years ago. Is this "Peace at last" or is it more a case of Neville Chamberlain's "Peace in our times"? We will probably find out in the very future.

At the time of writing, the Ethiopian Parliament had not debated over the issue and so has not yet endorsed it. Eritreans should remember that this very parliament – living up to its rubber-stamp status – declared war on Eritrea back in 1998 even while various envoys were shuttling between Asmara and Addis trying to find a diplomatic solution.

The fact that this announcement was not debated in parliament – even if it is a parliament comprising 100% of the ruling EPRDF party – makes one wonder if the announcement will be followed by concrete steps such as pulling out of occupied Eritrean sovereign territories.

While “hope flows eternally” and the two peoples pray that it comes, a few days after the announcement was made, an interview by the VOA’s Tigrigna service conducted with a Tigray Regional Government executive has flagged how elusive that peace might yet be, as the interview unashamedly declares that the Tigray Regional Government doesn’t accept the announcement made by the government!

Since the announcement, the interviews have been flying left and right and opponents of the Eritrean government have weighed in with their two-cents worth on the subject – mostly confining themselves to criticizing the government of Eritrea for not issuing a statement welcoming the Ethiopian announcement. Some have even gone as far as criticising it for not congratulating the newly-selected Ethiopian premier on his selection.

Others seem to have latched on to a new phrase claiming that the ball was now in Eritrea’s court. Nothing could be far from the truth in this regard. The ball has been in Ethiopia’s court for over a decade and a half and it has refused to play it. Last week it announced that it is finally going to play it but so far hasn’t touched it.

The laws of logic and physics dictate, therefore, that the ball is still where it was. When it is played by the Ethiopian authorities – whomever that might be: TPLF, Parliament or the Executive – then Eritrea will come forward and fulfil its obligations under the Algiers Agreement which it had already accepted right after the border decision was announced.

So, there is really no need, at this juncture, for the Eritrean government to make any statement regarding the recent announcement, seeing as nothing has changed in real terms. Former Ethiopian Prime Ministers have been saying one thing (mostly for foreign consumption) but doing either nothing or the total opposite of what they say. How do we know this one will be any different? Wasn’t it Meles who kicked out thousands of Eritreans simply because he could? This after the EPLF took him by the hand and brought him into power in Addis. Wasn’t it Meles whom, at the behest of his western paymasters, attacked and vilified his own African brothers and sisters and vowed to implement regime change? Wasn’t it Meles and his EPRDF that made it their crusade to see the end of Eritrea as a sovereign nation? What has changed between Meles and the new Prime Minister? Don’t they belong to the same party? Haven’t they both made their political fortunes through this party? Is the new Prime Minister a wolf in sheep clothing or is he genuine? Is he indeed the Gorbachev that he portrays to be or the Putin that is biding his time? Will he walk the walk or is it just talk? History has taught Eritrea that it is best to wait and see before taking any decisions, lest it regret doing so should the wolf shed its skin? As the Amharic saying goes: “early adoration makes later criticism difficult” (አስቀድሞ ማመስገን ኋላ ለሃሜት ያስቸግራል).

Worthwhile to remember that one of the major criticisms that the government of Eritrea faced when hostilities began in 1998 was “how could you trust the TPLF after what history both recent and distant had taught us?”

Eritrea paid and continues to pay dearly for that misplaced trust. The cautionary step that the Eritrean government is now taking in waiting to see what will really aspire, shows that it has learnt its painful lesson from the past.

As they say, “once bitten, twice shy”!

President Isaias' Speech on Martyrs Day, June 20, 2018

Shabait.com, 20 June 2018



Distinguished Participants

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first thank all those who organized various activities – candle light vigils, seed planting, sport and cultural shows –so as to enable all Eritreans inside the country and abroad, including children and the old, to pay homage, on this sacred day, to our Martyrs who paid the ultimate price with heroism to secure our national liberation and to defend the sovereignty of the country.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The current year (2018), as well as the previous year that heralded the beginning of the second quarter of our independence, represent periods of epochal change and transition.

These events cannot but imbue additional significance to Martyrs Day that we are commemorating today.

The Eritrean people, but also the Ethiopian people, have lost an opportunity of two generations for over half a century due to policies designed to promote external global agendas. When they achieved their respective liberations in 1991 through a common struggle, they embarked, with earnestness, on a new chapter. This was prompted by the desire to advance their complimentary bilateral interests as well as to enhance collective growth in the entire Horn of Africa region. Unfortunately, this promising beginning was rolled back by the resurgence of misguided global policies. The devastations, sacrifices and loss of opportunities that ensued were very heavy indeed.

The philosophical global order that the previous three US Administrations enunciated – in the aftermath of the abrupt collapse of the former Soviet Union - entailed huge economic losses to the United States worth trillions of dollars in the last 25 years. The decline is much graver when seen through the prism of soft power and influence. The imbalance and destruction that it wrought in our region has also been substantial. The Trump Administration, which has been in Office for the past year and a half, is essentially the byproduct or outcome of past failures. As such, it has been sending various signals that attest to its desire to change the defunct policies behind those losses. The resistance that it is confronting, above and beyond campaigns of disparagement, has not been negligible. Although it may still be premature to accurately gauge its ultimate intentions and capabilities, we shall continue to work together with our partners, in accordance with our policy choice of active engagement and without any reservations and prejudgment, to prompt the current US Administration to rectify previous misguided policies in our region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The events and developments that have unfolded in our region in general and in Ethiopia in particular in the recent period warrant appropriate attention. Needless to stress, it is the Ethiopian people – forced as they were into adversarial ties of vertical polarization - who were the primary victims, and who have borne the main brunt, of the destructive policies of the TPLF regime and its paymasters. The second, relatively bigger loss, stemmed from the TPLF's ability to derail and frustrate the positive bilateral and regional all-rounded growth that could have been achieved through the complimentary resources and capabilities of the Ethiopian and Eritrean peoples. Twenty seven years is a long interval. The losses incurred and time wasted are thus huge in terms of this yardstick.

But as the damage inculcated on the Ethiopian people became increasingly unbearable, it spurred the wrath and a rebellion in the people who said "enough is enough". This in turn precipitated the end of the TPLF's shenanigans; which was aptly described as "Game Over". Ethiopia is now at a turning point or transition. What is the destination? How will this be achieved? These are timely questions that must be raised. But although it will require time and efforts to remove the TPLF's toxic and malignant legacy and to bring about a congenial climate, the positive direction that has been set in motion is crystal clear.

The TPLF clique, and other vultures, are dumbfounded by the ongoing changes. And, as they know full well that their game has come to an end, they will not refrain from concocting various machinations to obstruct any change and to mollify their wayward appetite. One of the worn-out tricks that they will try to wield to prolong their dwindling power and to impede positive change is to work for the perpetuation of tension with Eritrea and to preserve the illicit sanctions. This is best illustrated by their ambivalent public pronouncements of “yes...but” in these past days. This is designed to prevent a durable solution to the senseless border conflict that they unleashed in the first place without any justification. But their principal preoccupation and ill-will is to avert and frustrate any positive change in Ethiopia.

As it is the case with Eritrea, the people of Ethiopia also relish peace and harmony with their neighbor. There is nothing novel in this fact. The positive signals issued in these past days can be seen as an expression of this popular choice. The complimentarity of both peoples and countries, their common bilateral interests and prosperity, are sacrosanct objectives to which we have toiled and paid sacrifices for two generations. As such, it remains a priority for which we will be actively engaged. For this reason, and outside myopic considerations of public relations stunts and advantages, we will send a delegation to Addis Abeba to gauge current developments directly and in depth as well as to chart out a plan for continuous future action.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our assessments of global and regional realities and trends have significant impact on the policies we formulate; and especially on our domestic cohesion and power; and, the economic growth and prosperity of our country to which we attach paramount importance and priority. In this perspective, it is natural that we see our various sectoral developmental programmes in relation to our neighbours in general and with Ethiopia in particular. The precious sacrifices that we have paid both during the struggle for liberation and later to protect our sovereignty were driven by these objectives. Our commitment to advance these objectives now with great vigour is a tribute to our Martyrs.

Glory to our heroic Martyrs!

Victory to the Masses!

‘Selam’ at Last!

Eritrea and Ethiopia join in peace after two decades of hostilities

Eritrea Profile, Vol. 25 No. 38, July 11, 2018

Billion Temesghen

After twenty years of conflict the Eritrean and Ethiopian people are now officially at peace as President Isaias Afwerki and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed join hands in brotherhood. As such, Sunday, July the 8th, became a historic day for Eritrea and Ethiopia. The two countries agree to work together for peace and development.

For the first time in almost a quarter of a century, Eritrea’s and Ethiopia’s national anthems, echoed from Asmara International Airport, Sunday 8th, at 9:00 AM.

Prime Minister of the Federal Government of Ethiopia, Abiy Ahmed, arrived in Asmara at an invitation of President Isaias Afwerki. The senior Ethiopian delegation accompanying the Prime Minister was formed by Ms. Mufteriat Kamil, Speaker of the House of Peoples’ Representatives, Ms. Keria Ibrahim, Speaker of the Ethiopian House of Federation, Werkneh Gebeyehu, Foreign Minister, and Mr. Haj Seyum, President of Afar Regional State

When the Ethiopian plane landed, President Isaias greeted Dr. Abiy with a tight hug. Directing his Ethiopian counterpart while holding his hand, President Isaias, led Dr. Abiy to greet Eritrea’s high delegation, religious leaders and invited guests.

Once in their car, on their way out of the airport, President Isaias took notice of veteran Eritrean footballers and national sports stars, among which, Olympian Zeriesenay Tadesse and young international star cyclist Merhawi Kudus. The leaders stepped down to salute the sports men.

Meanwhile, since early in the morning, communities from different parts of Asmara gathered in Semaetat Avenue and peacefully marched through Harinet Avenue and Bahti Meskerem Square shouting slogans of love both in Tigrigna and Amharic.



On the news of the Ethiopian’s landing in Asmara International Airport, hundreds of thousands of people sprinted to stand on both sides of the avenues starting from the airport to the center of city. Citizens and foreigners of all ages flocked in the streets. It looked like nobody was left at home. But

not only homes, the churches as well must have been emptied. Clergies had decided to take Sunday mass out to the streets to honor the guests.

The Eritrean people welcomed Dr. Abiy Ahmed and his message of peace, from the Ethiopian people, with utmost respect and sense of companionship. The Eritrean and Ethiopian flags were waving gloriously in the skies of Asmara. People wore shirts with pictures of both of the leaders and had their faces painted in the colors of the Ethiopian and Eritrean flag. Scarfs and head bandanas representing the flags were common too. Slogans of memorable catch phrases of both leaders, such as “Game Over” and “Love Wins” were pending from all sided.

Eritrean mothers, as crafty as they are, were busy coming up with traditional folk songs and rejoicing, dancing to them. It’s astonishing how fast they were composing folk songs highlighting the event. Some of the folk songs referred to Abiy Ahmed as “morning sunshine” and Isaias Afwerki as “Hub of Patience”.

The ride to the presidential palace, the final destination for the morning schedule, was slow as people were running after the motorcade. The leaders’ car had its windows down giving a chance for the people to shake hands with the leaders who made a longstanding dream come true.

Eritrea’s war disabled came out to the streets when the motorcade approached the area of Denden Camp. The people’s cheers reached the skies once the leaders bowed in respect.

The motorcade approached, Fiat Tagliero, an architectural marvel, and the number of people coming to the streets r rose notably. Young and old, literally, run after the motorcade to the center of the city like children in a big playground.



Starting from Shida, to the City Park and the Cattedrale, people didn’t have enough space to stand on both feet. The streets were crowded and the motorcade was plainly surrounded by people of all ages.

Asmara’s icon, Cattedrale, cheered the news of peace when the motorcade approached it with its colossal bells ringing, adding melody to the glorified roars of Eritreans. The flow was the same while the motorcade toured the city until it reached and entered the presidential palace.

Meanwhile, outside in the streets, the merriments continued with heightened spirit as the crowds danced and screamed in joy. Everyone was celebrating in different ways, tone and languages but one thing the hundreds of thousands of individuals had in common were tears of joy. People cried and comforted one another in each other's hugs.

I stepped out of the presidential palace to talk to people and conduct interviews with a special focus on young people, but I couldn't get a decent conversation. People pulled me in their hugs and dances, and for a while, I stopped being a journalist and celebrated the news of peace and the thought of being a free young Eritrean identically to fellow young Eritreans.

A group of young men in their early thirties attracted a big crowd. These young men, members of the eighth round to Sawa, dressed to impress in suits and traditional clothes for the day. They had made an appointment to meet in Harinet Avenue to pay tribute to their friends who didn't make it alive from the war. While they cried in a mix of painful memories, replaced by joy, they put their fallen martyr friends, comrades, to finally rest in peace.

Streets were blocked. Cars and people roamed mindlessly through the city to the glory of peace till late in the afternoon. Happy would be too little of a word to explain the situation. It was actually a blissful euphoria that dominated Asmara. Simultaneously, all major cities and small towns of Eritrea were in the same state of jubilation. In Massawa and Assab, the Eri-Ethio flags, dashed from civilian boats through the waves of the Red Sea.

In the afternoon, following a short break at Asmara Palace Hotel, the Ethiopian delegation made its way to the Presidential Palace. President Isaias offered, then, a spontaneous invitation to his house. He took the guests to his house where they caught his family in pajamas rejoicing in the typical Sunday family day afternoon coffee ceremony. Welcoming guests with what you have is a tradition Eritreans are known for.

Hospitality is a norm. Likewise, the President's family and his neighbors hosted the Prime Minister, Eritrean ministers and the Ethiopian delegation to their humble family living room. Minister Askalu Menkerios made her way to the kitchen and helped with setting the table. While, the youngest, Dr. Abiy, handed snacks that traditionally are served side by side the coffee ceremony, typical, of Eritrean and Ethiopian families. As the guests made their way out, President Isaias's neighbors gathered in the president's house's yard, door step, to greet the unexpected guest next door, with flowers and snacks.

In summer a taste of the seasonal fruit, Beles, is mandatory. Therefore, the delegation's next destination was down the roads to Massawa right outside of Asmara.

In the evening hours a state dinner was organized in honor of Dr. Abiy. The event was highlighted by fraternal speeches from the leaders directed at both the Eritrean and Ethiopian people. In his speech, President Isaias, applauded Dr. Abiy's bravery in coming forth with peace, referring to the unrestrained and enthusiastic emotions of Eritreans out on the streets as the true meaning of what Eritrea is all about. Dr. Abiy, on his part, expressed Asmara's and Addis Ababa's readiness for greatness. He also expressed deep sorrow for the humanitarian damages the war brought upon Eritrean families.

That night, bars and clubs of Asmara were packed more than ever. Countless partiers paused their parties for a while and cheered Dr. Abiy on his way to his hotel after the state dinner. He was greeted, once more, in the morning, as the motorcade headed to Denden State Hall.

On July 9th, the people of Asmara held their breath as Ethiopia and Eritrea signed a joint declaration of peace and friendship. The two countries agreed to sail towards development, peace and stability at regional level. Moreover, according to the joint agreement, diplomatic relations are to be restored between the two countries as trade, communication and transport will resume and embassies will be opened.

President Isaias Afwerki and Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed discussed issues of collaboration, regional stability and harmony as well as economic advancements. The leaders also shared visions to the interest of the Eritrean and Ethiopian youth in their academic and professional endeavors.

After an intense welcoming ceremony and a cherished sojourn Prime Minister Dr. Abiy left for Addis Ababa at midday July 9th. President Isaias Aforki, higher officials and religious leaders saw the Prime Minister and his delegation off.

The past couple of days were genuinely emotional to the people of Eritrea. A huge burden has been lifted from the two people who have missed each other dearly and now can see in each other's eyes past feelings of hatred or resentments.

On the same day, telephone lines between Ethiopia and Eritrea were opened. Families in both sides made the lines busy for the first time in more than twenty years. But new friendships were being made across both countries... I was packing to leave the office at around midnight. The office's phone rang out of my expectation. I picked the phone to hear a group of people screaming merriments in Amharic. I roughly understood their greetings, but still, replied in my language. We were using the little we know of our respective languages to say peace –selam and love you. And just like me, many more Eritreans have been getting random calls from Ethiopian people and vice-versa.

Eritreans have been referring to this day as the second 24th of May. Congratulations to us all. Patience and resilience pays off greatly.

Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship between Eritrea and Ethiopia

July 9, 2018



Conscious that the peoples of Ethiopia and Eritrea share close bonds of geography, history, culture, language and religion as well as fundamental common interests;

Recognizing that over the past decades, they were denied the opportunity to build a bright future for their peoples on the basis of their common heritage;

Determined to close this very costly chapter, which also had a detrimental role in the Horn of Africa, and to make up for lost opportunities and create even bigger golden opportunities for their peoples;

The governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea have reached the following joint agreement which reflects the desires and aspirations of their peoples:

1. The state of war between Ethiopia and Eritrea has come to an end. A new era of peace and friendship has been opened.

2. The two governments will endeavor to forge intimate political, economic, social, cultural and security cooperation that serves and advances the vital interests of their peoples;
3. Transport, trade and communications links between the two countries will resume; diplomatic ties and activities will restart;
4. The decision on the boundary between the two countries will be implemented.
5. Both countries will jointly endeavor to ensure regional peace, development and cooperation.

Both governments express their gratitude to all friends of Eritrea and Ethiopia and call on them to redouble their solidarity and support.

Done in Asmara, July 9, 2018

For the State of Eritrea

President Isaias Afwerki

For the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed Ali

“Yes Peace, No War.”

Eritrea Profile, Vol. 25 No. 38, July 11, 2018

Dr. Fikrejesus Amahazion

A famous and often-cited quotation of Harold Wilson, the former British Prime Minister, reads: “A week is a long time in politics.”

Indeed, there are decades where nothing happens; and there are weeks where decades happen.” After years of stalemate and tension between Eritrea and Ethiopia, things are certainly happening and moving rapidly. On Sunday July 8, 2018, Ethiopian Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, accompanied by a small Ethiopian delegation arrived in Asmara, Eritrea, where they were warmly welcomed at Asmara International Airport by the Eritrean President, H.E. Isaias Afwerki, alongside high-level government officials and ministers, as well as religious and other representatives. As PM Abiy Ahmed, who took office in April, disembarked from the plane, the two leaders smiled and warmly embraced on the red carpet. Soon after, the two leaders, surrounded by a large military band, stood side-by-side as the flags of both Eritrea and Ethiopia were raised and their respective national anthems were played. The leaders then traveled across the capital in a large motorcade. Across Asmara, shops were closed, and the streets, overflowing with citizens, were filled with excitement and joy, as Eritreans came out in their tens of thousands to show their unreserved support for the ongoing initiatives toward peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia.



Ethiopian PM Abiy Ahmed’s visit to the Eritrean capital for peace talks marks just the latest step in a recent series of significant positive developments between the two countries. Weeks ago, Ethiopia announced that it would abide by the Algiers Agreement and Eritrea Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) boundary decision. The EEBC, formed in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Algiers Peace Agreement of 2000 and composed of five prominent and highly respected lawyers, unanimously delivered its final and binding delimitation and demarcation decisions in April 2002 and November

2007, respectively. While Eritrea fully accepted the decision, hoping that the final determination of the border would open doors for lasting peace and development between the two countries and the region as a whole, Ethiopia's position has continually shifted, with it effectively refusing to accept the 2002 ruling of the UN-backed boundary commission and continuing to occupy Eritrean territories. After PM Abiy Ahmed's statement of full acceptance of the EEBC last month, on June 26, 2018, a high-level Eritrean delegation, including Presidential Adviser Mr. Yemane Gebreab and Foreign Minister H.E. Osman Saleh, travelled to Addis Ababa, the first time in more than two decades that a top-level delegation from Asmara had visited Ethiopia. During the historic visit, the delegation delivered a message from President Isaias Afwerki to Ethiopian PM Abiy Ahmed, and also held extensive discussions with the PM and other senior Ethiopian officials on current relations and the prospect of ties between the two countries.

Also on Sunday, in several towns throughout southern Eritrea, near Ethiopia, such as Adi Keih, Senafe, Adi Quala, Mai Mne, and Tsorona, throngs of Eritreans gathered to demonstrate their support for peace with Ethiopia. Large Eritrean and Ethiopian flags were held aloft proudly, colorful banners proclaiming "peace" were waved, both young and old people sang and danced cheerfully, elders shed tears of joy, and the slogan "Yes peace, no war!" was loudly and excitedly chanted.

As an African and an Eritrean, it is quite difficult not to be touched or moved by this momentous occasion. History weighs heavily on Africa. As put by Young (1996), "If we journey backwards to the hour of African independence...we may summon from remote corners of our collective memory, perspectives and visions of radically different content" (Young 1996: 2). For too long across the continent, our countries have been synonymous with conflict and war. We have often acted like crabs in a bucket, pulling each other down and ensuring our collective demise, rather than working cooperatively to raise ourselves up collectively. In few areas of the continent has this mentality been more tragically apparent than the Horn of Africa, where relations between the various countries have been characterized by stalemate, bitter rivalry, antagonism, tension, and conflict.

While these are still early days, and despite the fact that certain (albeit small) elements within Ethiopia appear to be set against the ongoing developments toward peace, the signs are highly promising and very encouraging. Both countries are faced with a number of significant challenges, and thus an end to the costly – and largely unnecessary – conflict and tensions will allow the two to better focus their attention on addressing their various and considerable challenges (as I have discussed in prior articles). With peace and stability, vital human and fiscal resources can be used to combat poverty, improve education and human capital, or promote development, rather than having to be diverted toward defense and national security.

Observing the ongoing developments, it is also important not to overlook what peace will mean for the young peoples of the two countries. Although Eritrea and Ethiopia are dramatically different in terms of the size of their respective populations (approximately 4.5 million in the former, and 100 million in the latter), both have very young populations. Peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia can present the youth of both countries with a renewed sense of optimism and hope. They can both look ahead to the future with great excitement and enthusiasm, instead of being weighed down or greatly burdened by a dark past.

As a final point, it is notable and quite interesting that the ongoing peace initiatives between Eritrea and Ethiopia are largely being led and carried out by Eritreans and Ethiopians themselves. Of course, while the support and commitment of the international community and various other partners is vital, tangible solutions have to involve and be led by local actors. Simply, if you formulate your own solutions to your problems, you have every reason and incentive to see them work. Historically,

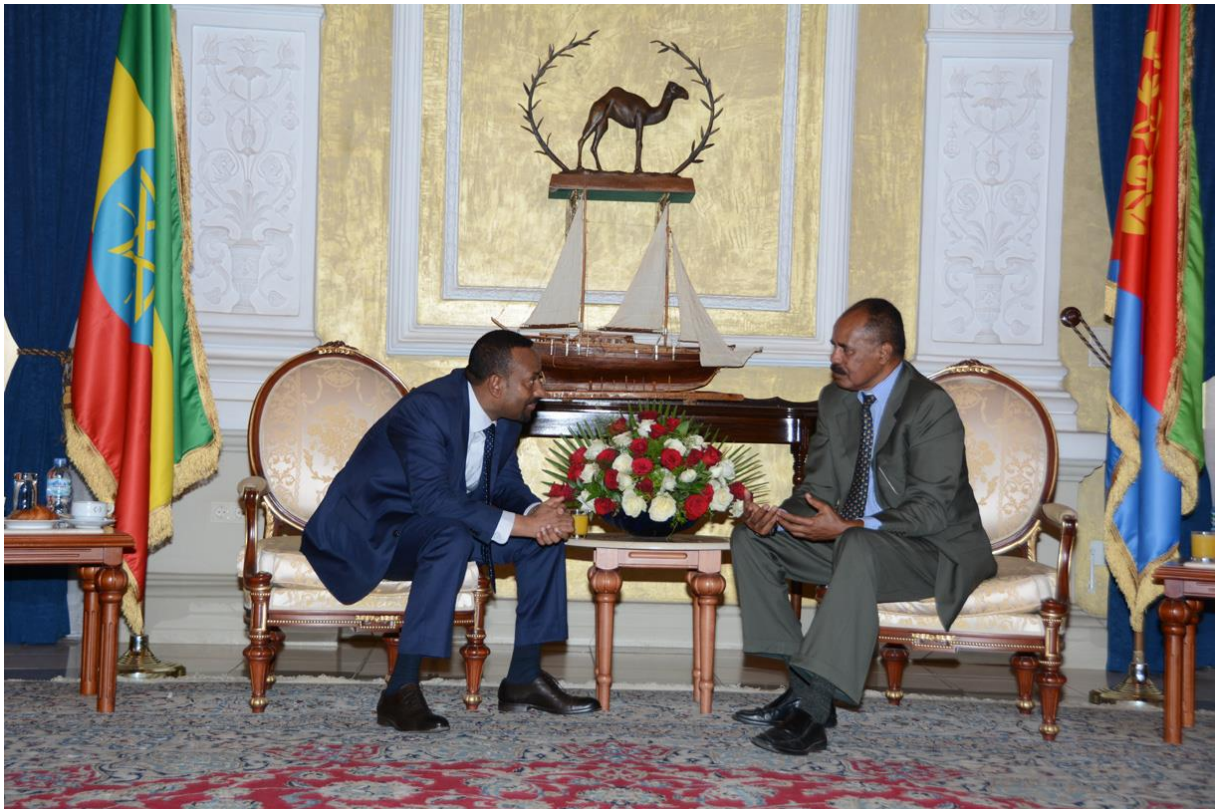
external or foreign solutions were often not viable in Africa since they were either “imported” or “dictated” to Africans. Ultimately, in order for sustainable peace to stand any chance, those affected by — and involved in — conflict must own and identify with the responses and solutions to it.

Eritrea and Ethiopia: Recap and Brief Commentary on Recent Developments

Eritrea Profile, Vol. 25 No. 39; July 14, 2018

Dr. Fikrejesus Amahazion

The following is a brief recap and commentary on the recent massive and rapid developments toward peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia.



1. These are truly momentous and exciting times. On Friday July 13th, H.E. President Afwerki gave a keynote address to the latest round of youth graduating from the Warsay Yikealo Secondary School, located in Sawa, where he announced that he will lead a delegation and pay official visit to Ethiopia on July 14th. Commenting on Twitter, Eritrea’s Minister of Information, Yemane Gebremeskel, stated “the visit will cement further [and] add momentum to the joint march for peace and cooperation set in motion by both [President Isaias and Ethiopia’s PM Dr. Abiy Ahmed].” Also commenting on Twitter,

the Ethiopia's Chief of Staff of the Prime Minister's Office, Fitsum Arega, stated, "The visit will strengthen the friendship [and] ties [between] Ethiopia and Eritrea. We thank H.E. President Isaias for honoring us with a visit [and] we welcome him warmly!"

The news follows the announcement from earlier in the week, on Monday, where Ethiopia and Eritrea declared their "state of war" over and agreed to open embassies, develop ports, and resume flights. The announcement on Monday came after Ethiopian Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, accompanied by a small Ethiopian delegation, arrived in Asmara, Eritrea, a day earlier to engage in historic talks with the Eritrean President, H.E. Isaias Afwerki. The *Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship between Eritrea and Ethiopia*, signed by the two leaders in Asmara on Monday morning, states that:

1. The state of war between Ethiopia and Eritrea has come to an end. A new era of peace and friendship has been opened.
2. The two governments will endeavor to forge intimate political, economic, social, cultural and security cooperation that serves and advances the vital interests of their peoples;
3. Transport, trade and communications links between the two countries will resume; diplomatic ties and activities will restart;
4. The decision on the boundary between the two countries will be implemented.
5. Both countries will jointly endeavor to ensure regional peace, development and cooperation.

The agreement is only the latest step in a series of encouraging and significant developments between the two countries, after years of tension. It promises to present numerous and significant benefits for both nations, which are faced with a broad array of considerable challenges. Moreover, a normalization of relations between the two countries will undoubtedly help promote peace, security, and stability throughout the general Horn of Africa region, which has long been plagued by conflict and poverty.

Also on Monday, the Secretary General of the United Nations (UN), Antonio Guterres, who was visiting Addis Ababa, said that he believed the need for UN sanctions against Eritrea will no longer exist following its peace deal with Ethiopia. Speaking to reporters in the Ethiopian capital, Guterres stated, "The sanctions were motivated by a number of events that took place, (but) it is my belief that those events will no longer exist...If the reasons that led to the sanctions will no longer exist...they will naturally become obsolete." Then the next day, the United Nations Security Council described the Joint Declaration, signed by the leaders of Eritrea and Ethiopia, as "a historic and significant" move with "far-reaching consequences" for the whole Horn of Africa region and beyond.

In a press statement on July 10th, US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo stated, among other things, "Peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea will further the cause of stability, security, and development in the Horn of Africa and Red Sea.". These expressions were broadly resonated in other similar statements issued by various countries – some at the level of Head of State or Government – in Africa and elsewhere as well as by international and regional organizations.

2. The benefits from peace should be significant. Both countries are faced with a number of significant challenges, and thus an end to the costly – and largely unnecessary – conflict and tension will allow the two to better focus their attention on addressing their various and considerable challenges. For instance, with peace and stability, vital human and fiscal resources can be used to combat poverty or promote development, rather than having to be diverted toward defense and national security. Indeed, both countries, and especially Eritrea, will have enjoy the political latitude to review,

significantly reduce and reconfigure their defense and security architecture as the regional climate shifts from a perpetual state of belligerence to one of enduring peace and close cooperation.

3. Another important consideration is how peace and stability will significantly help promote investment, socio-economic growth, poverty reduction, and general development in Eritrea (and Ethiopia). Until the emergence of the conflict in 1998, Eritrea and Ethiopia enjoyed strong economic, cultural and security relations. Prior to the war, Ethiopia was Eritrea's top export partner. Furthermore, Ethiopia had been using the Eritrean ports at Assab and Massawa at symbolic rates and without any hindrance, while even during the war, Eritrea offered the use of its ports to transport humanitarian aid to Ethiopia.

Simply, peace and stability between the two can reignite once-thriving cross-border trade and economic activities. Furthermore, the reopening of the Assab and Massawa ports to Ethiopia will immensely benefit both countries. For Ethiopia, this will provide it with the opportunity to diversify its port-outlets – mainly through Djibouti at this time -and reduce costs where applicable.

Moreover, peace and stability can help promote a number of high-potential sectors for Eritrea and Ethiopia. In this regard,, both sides will need to focus on economic sectors of complementarity to augment the dividends to both countries in a fair and sustainable manner.



4. The developments in relation to the removal of sanctions against Eritrea are also particularly interesting. Specifically, they underscore the fact that the sanctions against Eritrea (which were imposed in 2009, and then broadened several years later) were never really or truly about Eritrea's alleged support for terrorism. Beyond the considerable issue of the dubious legitimacy or basis for the original adoption of sanctions against Eritrea, recall that the pretexts for the sanctions have long been non-existent, with a long series of UN Somalia Eritrea Monitoring Group (UN SEMG) reports consistently concluding that they have found "no evidence of Eritrea's support for Al-Shabaab." The fact that they are now being questioned, as Eritrea and Ethiopia work toward forging peace and

normalizing relations, illustrates how they were less about terrorism than other factors. Furthermore, consider the recent comments posted on Twitter by Ambassador Idd Mohamed, a Somali diplomat, who commented that, “As Former Alternate Ambassador of Somalia to the UN who participated all discussions and meetings between UN SC and IGAD member states, I can confirm the sanction imposed to Eritrea on behalf of Somalia by UN SC was politically motivated than factual or evidence based.”

Carl von Clausewitz, the great theoretician of modern warfare, defined war as the continuation of politics by other means. In the case of Eritrea, the sanctions and international politics essentially became a case of war by other means. The removal of sanctions thus is a key development, since not only did they unjustly hurt the people of Eritrea, their removal will help promote the country’s image (e.g. as an unstable political risk, which can deter investors) and encourage investment.

5. Finally, writing days ago, as Ethiopia Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed arrived in Eritrea, I pointed out how the ongoing encouraging developments between the two countries would present both populations, particularly the youth, with a renewed sense of optimism and hope. Since then (as well as in the weeks prior), I have regularly and extensively discussed the ongoing and general developments at length with Eritreans, especially youth, from across the country. Invariably, the responses to the developments toward peace with Ethiopia have been positive and forward looking.

For example, according to Filmon Tesfalem, a young college student, youth mentor, and budding author originally from Mai Mne, a small town in southern Eritrea, located near the border with the Ethiopia, “This is very exciting. Peace is the fountain of development and prosperity, and it will impact all of us positively and in every which way.” Similarly, Estifanos Ghirmay, a successful artist, youth volunteer, and college student currently studying at the College of Arts and Social Sciences (CASS), located in Adi Keih, commented, “These initiatives are great. Working together [with Ethiopia] we have so much potential – in arts, education, economy, security, development... everything. Of course, challenges remain, but this is a great step.” Last, Ms. Hermon Tesfamariam, a college student and impressive scholar at CASS, who is originally from Asmara, happily commented, “I am so pleased. Peace is always good... the best is yet to come.”

President Isaias arrives in Addis Ababa

Shabait.com; July 14, 2018



Asmara, 14 July 2018 - President Isaias Afwerki arrives in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in the morning hours of today, July 14 for official visit at an invitation of Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia.

Upon arrival at the Bole International Airport, President Isaias was accorded warm welcome by Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, senior Ethiopian officials, religious leaders and a number of Addis Ababa residents.

Following the official visit of Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed to Eritrea, the meeting of the two leaders after 20 years is historic visit that will herald a new era of peace and cooperation. Thousands of Addis Ababa residents flocked to the streets of the city to accord warm welcome to President Isaias Afwerki and his delegation.

The senior Eritrean delegation encompasses, Mr. Osman Saleh, Foreign Minister, Presidential Advisor Mr. Yemane Gebreab, Ms. Fozia Hashim, Minister of Justice, Ms. Askalu Menkorios, Minister of Tourism, Maj. Gen. Humed Karikare, Commander of Eritrean Navy, Maj. Gen. Romodan Awelai, Governor of Central region, Brig. Gen. Abraha Kassa, head of National Security Agency, Dr. Gergis Teklemicael, Minister of National Development, Mr. Tesfaselasie Berhane, Minister of Transportation and Communication, and other officials.

During his stay in Ethiopia, President Isaias will hold extensive discussion with President Dr. Mulatu Teshome and Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed and with other Ethiopian officials on strengthening the prevailing peace and mutual cooperation between the two countries.

Eritrean, Ethiopian leaders call new peace example to Africa

By Elias Meseret; AP 15-7-2018



ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (AP) — Official rivals just weeks ago, the leaders of Ethiopia and Eritrea embraced warmly to the roar of a crowd of thousands Sunday at a concert celebrating the end of a long state of war.

A visibly moved Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki, clasping his hands over his heart, addressed the crowd in Ethiopia's official language, Amharic, on his first visit to the country in 22 years.

"Hate, discrimination and conspiracy is now over," the 72-year-old Isaias said to cheers and people chanting his name. "Our focus from now on should be on developing and growing together. We are ready to move forward with you as one. No one can steal the love we have regained now. Now is the time to make up for the lost times."

The Eritrean leader repeatedly praised the "able leadership" of Ethiopia's reformist new Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who in his own speech thanked Isaias for his "courageous gesture" in accepting the offer of peace.

The concert highlighted the end of hostilities between the arch-foes in East Africa, who fought a bloody border war from 1998 to 2000 that killed tens of thousands and left families separated. The antagonism ended last month when Abiy announced that Ethiopia was fully accepting a peace deal originally signed in 2000 and Eritrea swiftly responded.

“The reconciliation we are forging now is an example to people across Africa and beyond,” the 42-year-old Abiy said.

Jubilant Ethiopians, some of whom have compared the dramatic developments to the fall of the Berlin Wall, found themselves putting aside the World Cup final to watch live coverage of the concert.

Isaias arrived in Ethiopia on Saturday, reciprocating the Ethiopian leader’s trip to Eritrea last weekend that led to the restoration of diplomatic, telephone and transport ties. He was greeted by Abiy in a red-carpet welcome, with people dancing at the airport and thousands of residents of the capital, Addis Ababa, lining the streets to see Isaias’ motorcade.

Some chanted songs criticizing the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front, which was Ethiopian ruling coalition’s strongest political party and hostile to Eritrea until Abiy came to power at the beginning of April and introduced a breathtaking series of political and economic reforms.

“Nothing can stop the ongoing reforms in Ethiopia,” Abiy told the crowd Sunday. “But we need to protect the democratic rights we are regaining now.”

The embrace of the peace deal, which hands key disputed border areas to Eritrea, was the boldest of the changes as Ethiopia moves away from years of anti-government protests that demanded wider freedoms in Africa’s second most populous country with more than 100 million people.

Now attention shifts to Eritrea, one of the world’s most reclusive nations, which has been ruled by Isaias since it gained independence from Ethiopia in 1993. The state of war with Ethiopia kept the country of 5 million in a constant state of military readiness with a system of compulsory conscription that sent thousands of people fleeing the country toward Europe and elsewhere.

Eritrea also has faced years of U.N. sanctions over alleged support to extremists, which the government has denied, and Abiy already has called for them to be lifted.

The sight of the Eritrean leader speaking Amharic to reach out to Ethiopians surprised even his longtime acquaintances. “I have known him for more than 40 yrs. Never heard him speak Amharic,” the Eritrean ambassador to Kenya and Tanzania, Beyene Russom, said on Twitter, describing the crowd’s shouts of joy.

The United States and others have praised the end of the state of war between the countries as a welcome development for the strategic Horn of Africa region and beyond.

Ethiopia’s leader has been quick to promote economic development as a shared goal of the new friendship, giving Isaias a tour of an industrial park and pursuing deals for his landlocked nation to use Eritrea’s ports on the Red Sea along one of the world’s busiest shipping lanes.

The Eritrean leader’s visit to Ethiopia continues Monday as Isaias is expected to re-open his country’s embassy.

President Isaias Afwerki's Official Visit to Ethiopia

Eritrea Profile, Vol. 25 No. 40, July 18, 2018



President Isaias Afwerki returned home on July 16 concluding a three-day official visit in Ethiopia from July 14 to July 16 upon invitation of Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

President Isaias left for Ethiopia in the morning hours on Saturday July 14. Upon arrival at Bole International Airport, President Isaias was accorded warm welcome by Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, senior Ethiopian officials, religious leaders and a number of Addis Ababa residents. Following the official visit of PM Dr. Abiy Ahmed to Eritrea, the meeting of the two leaders after 20 years marked a historic day that heralded a new era of peace and cooperation. Thousands of Addis Ababa residents flocked to the streets of the city to welcome President Isaias Afwerki and his delegation.

The senior Eritrean delegation included, Foreign Minister Osman Saleh, Presidential Advisor Yemane Gebreab, Ms. Fauzia Hashim, Minister of Justice, Ms. Askalu Menkorios, Minister of Tourism, Maj. General Humed Karikare, Commander of the Eritrean Navy, Maj. General Romodan Awelilai, Governor of the Central region, Brig. General Abraha Kassa, Head of National Security Agency, Dr. Gergis Teklemichael, Minister of National Development, Mr. Tesfaselasie Berhane, Minister of Transportation and Communication, and other officials.

The Ethiopian President, Dr. Mulatu Teshome hosted State Lunch in honor of President Isaias Afwerki and his delegation at the National Palace.

The State Lunch was attended by Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, senior Ethiopian officials, as well as Dr. Negaso Gidada, former Ethiopian President, Mr. Hailemariam Desalegn, former Ethiopian Prime Minister, members of the diplomatic corps and other invited guests.

Speaking at the event, President Isaias expressed deep appreciation for the warm welcome he and his delegation was accorded. President Isaias went on to say that the exchange of the visits has created the opportunity for the peoples of Eritrea and Ethiopia to express their true feelings.

During his stay in Ethiopia, President Isaias held discussion with President Mulatu Teshome and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and other Ethiopian officials on reinforcing the prevailing peace and mutual cooperation between the two countries.

A Historic visit reciprocated with Peace and Friendship

Eritrea Profile, Vol. 25 No. 40, July 18, 2018

After rapid positive developments of relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia, filled with a series of initiatives, President Isaias Afwerki paid a three-day visit to Ethiopia. Thousands of people gathered in the streets of Addis Ababa to welcome the President Isaias and his delegation.

These developments took people with surprise. Dr. Mulatu Teshome, president of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, presented a silver to honor President Isaias and said “I have never thought these developments would be possible in the near future and at such a quick pace”. Artist Debebe Eshetu, 70 years old, said that “I never have expected to see this in my life time”. These are some of the feelings shared by many Ethiopians and Eritreans alike.



Following the heart-touching welcoming ceremony of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmad by the people of Asmara, the media outlets of Ethiopia expressed their appreciation of the peace-loving people of

Eritrea and have been calling upon the people of Ethiopia to welcome President Isaias in the same manner. But they never expected that it would happen only a week after Prime Minister Abiy's visit.

Following the official visit of Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed to Eritrea, the meeting of the two leaders has been described as historic that will herald a new era of peace and cooperation.

On 14 July, President Isaias arrived at Bole International Airport and was accorded a warm welcome by PM Abiy Ahmad, regional administrators, religious leaders, renowned artists, and a number of dancers who represent different ethnic groups.

Starting from the early morning hours people turned out in their thousands to stand on the road side extending from the airport to the state palace, Meskel Square and other places. Waving the flags of Eritrea and Ethiopia, hundreds of thousands of people chanted the names of both leaders. PM. Abiy d "this kind of warm welcome ceremony to any foreign leader is unprecedented in the history of Ethiopia".

In his visit, President Isaias was accompanied by Foreign Minister Osman Saleh, Presidential Advisor Mr. Yemane Gebreab, Minister of Justice Ms. Fouzia Hashem, Minister of Tourism Ms. Askalu Menkerious, Naval commander Maj. Gene. Humed Karikare, Central Region administrator Maj. Gen. Romodan Osman Awliyay, Minister of National Development Dr. Giorgis Teklemichael, Minister of Transportation and Communication Mr. Tesfaslasie Berhane, and deputy of the National Security Bri. Gen. Abraha Kasa. Upon arrival they were sprayed with water as a sign of good wish. Cannons were fired in honor of the president and his companions. The friendly hugging in Asmara last week was repeated in Addis and the national anthem of Eritrea was heard at the airport after more than twenty years.



After the welcome ceremony at the airport, President Isaias and the high level Eritrean delegation headed for the national palace in a motorcade escorted by traditional horsemen as thousands on the street cheered waving Ethiopian and Eritrean flags.

President Isaias delivered a speech at the special occasion organized at the Millennium Hall in honor of the peace and friendship agreement reached between the two countries. Thanking the people of Ethiopia for their warm welcome, President Isaias said on the occasion that “this is a historic day for all of us”. The gathering was attended by more than 25 thousand including Ethiopian Government officials, religious leaders, members of the diplomatic corps and residents of Addis Ababa.

In the first day of his visit President Isaias and the Eritrean delegation visited Hawassa Industrial Park, 300 KM away from Addis Ababa, and in the afternoon hours of July 15, they visited various infrastructure facilities in the city of Addis Ababa. In the morning hours of 14 July, President Isaias, accompanied by Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, was accorded a warm welcome upon arrival in Hawassa by the residents of the city as well as officials of the State of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples.



At the dinner reception hosted at Haile Resort in honor of President Isaias and his delegation, President Isaias and his delegation were presented with a variety of gifts. The event was made colorful by cultural performances of various ethnic groups.

Speaking at the event, President Isaias expressed deep appreciation for the warm welcome he and his delegation were accorded. The President went on to say that the exchange of visits have created an opportunity for the peoples of Eritrea and Ethiopia to express their true feelings. “Both nations will work together to safeguard the newfound peace for the sake of our culture and our historic benefit, we forsake the hatred and revenge of the past and we have decided to go forward for our mutual development and for mutual benefit. We will not allow anyone to break our relationship, our development and our growth and to create conflict between us”. At the event President Dr. Mulatu

Teshome handed over gifts to President Isaias. The Oromia regional state also gave President Isaias a fully decorated horse as a gift.

On the third day of the official visit President Isaias Afwerki and Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed re-opened the Eritrean embassy in Addis Ababa. The two leaders jointly raised the Eritrean flag as a military band played the Eritrean national anthem.

Pawlos Netabay

Compiled by Habtom Tesfamichael

Eritrean Embassy in Addis Ababa Reopens

Eritrea Profile, Vol. 25 No. 40, July 18, 2018

President Isaias Afwerki officially reopened the Eritrean Embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on July 16. During a ceremony held at the Embassy compound, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia handed over the key to the Embassy to President Isaias. The two leaders jointly raised the Eritrean flag as a marching band played the Eritrean national anthem. As the two leaders toured the Embassy compound, they both congratulated the Eritrean and Ethiopian people.

Peace in the Horn: An Idea Whose Time Has Come

Eritrea Profile, Vol. 25 No. 40, July 18, 2018

Dr. Fikrejesus Amahazion

Victor Hugo, a poet, novelist, and dramatist who was among the most important of the French Romantic writers, put it well when he noted, "Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come." In the Horn of Africa, which for decades has been plagued by conflicts and tension, the idea of peace appears to be quickly taking over.

After what has been a whirlwind several weeks, filled with a series of rapid and momentous developments, the President of Eritrea, H.E. Isaias Afwerki, visited Ethiopia this past weekend for three days of meetings. The visit comes just a week after Ethiopia's Prime Minister, Dr. Abiy Ahmed, who took office in April, travelled to Eritrea and signed a historic agreement with President Isaias on resuming ties, including opening embassies, developing ports, restoring telecommunications links, and restarting direct flights, a move that ended a near 20-year military standoff after a destructive two-year border war. During his visit to Ethiopia, President Isaias, who was accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising ministers, advisers, and other high-level officials, held extensive discussions with PM Dr. Abiy Ahmed, Ethiopian President Dr. Mulatu Teshome, and other Ethiopian officials. He also visited various sites, including the Hawasa Industrial Park, attended a lunch held in his honor at the National Palace, and delivered a speech at Ethiopia's Millennium Hall in which he conveyed "the message of peace, love, and good wishes of the people of Eritrea," congratulated the Ethiopian people for their "successful and historic changes," and expressed his "wholehearted support to Dr. Abiy."

Although much has been written about what the current developments may ultimately mean for Ethiopia, Eritrea, and the broader region, here I would like to further discuss an important point that I only briefly touched upon within a previous article.



Specifically, it has been both highly notable and quite interesting that throughout much of the ongoing peace developments between Eritrea and Ethiopia – and in contrast to the narrative being peddled by some – the initiatives have been largely led and carried out by Eritreans and Ethiopians themselves. Underscoring this point, Ethiopia’s Prime Minister, Dr. Abiy Ahmed, during his speech on Sunday at Ethiopia’s Millennium Hall in front of a large, excited crowd of thousands of people, noted how the recent agreement and peace initiatives between Eritrea and Ethiopia were made “without the involvement of a third party.”

Historically, external or foreign solutions were often not viable in Africa since they were either “imported” or “dictated” to Africans. A major irony of general African history is that many of the theories, policies, and solutions employed across the continent have frequently come from outside the continent. Quite simply, no other region of the world has been so dominated by external ideas and models. It is also important to recall that while the solutions have often been completely externally-derived, western policy has also frequently assumed that African problems were solely the responsibility of Africans, even though, historically, many states were negatively impacted by a variety of harmful external influences or effectively run by western governments, multilateral organizations, multinational companies, and international NGOs.

Additionally, those voices, albeit only a few, seeking to diminish or deny the courageous, forward looking role and initiative undertaken by Eritreans and Ethiopians within the unfolding historic developments reflect the enduring general notion that the “Third World” has “needs” and “problems” but few choices and no freedom or capability to act. They illustrate a troublingly condescending,

paternalistic attitude and perpetuate hegemonic ideas of foreign superiority. By rejecting the agency and initiative of the local actors, these voices starkly reveal a residual attitude from 19th century racism and colonial times when, as discussed by Edward Said, “the peoples of the empire were a subject race, dominated by the more powerful, the more developed, the more civilized, the higher, who know them and what is good for them, better than they could possibly know themselves.” It is almost as if they cannot bear to concede that Africans, for whom they have been accustomed to speaking for and directing, are choosing to grab the reins and take complete ownership of their own destinies. Bronwyn Bruton, Director of the Africa Center at the Atlantic Council, may have put it best in commenting, “Honestly - it’s embarrassing.”

Of course, this is not to argue that the support and commitment of the international community and various other partners is not needed. The reality is, in fact, quite the opposite. Their support is valuable and absolutely vital, and they have historically often played a critical role in promoting positive changes. Moreover, the current developments have received important support from a variety of different actors. However, the broader point is that tangible, sustainable solutions have to involve and be led by local actors. Simply, if you formulate your own solutions to your problems, you have every reason and incentive to see them work. Furthermore, solutions and approaches that are grounded in local realities and contexts often prove to be far more beneficial than solutions that have been imported from other parts of the world. Ultimately, in order for sustainable peace to stand any chance, those affected by – and involved in – conflict must own and identify with the responses and solutions to it. To borrow from Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim, former Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa, it is only when African leaders can stand together that, “we, as Africans, indeed become the midwives of our own destiny.”

Finally, as developments toward peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea continue to quickly unfold, it is quite puzzling that regional “experts”, who have long promoted highly flawed, error-ridden, biased, unobjective, and otherwise problematic narratives and analyses (which are so clearly being revealed as abjectly wanting by current developments), now turn to condescendingly pontificating or directing what the next steps for Eritrea and Ethiopia ought to be. While they are, of course, entitled to their opinion, however flawed or mistaken, this approach appears rather arrogant and presumptuous. Instead, it would be much more appropriate – and they would likely be much better served – if they genuinely considered the perspectives, accounts, views, and aspirations of local actors.

Ethiopian Airlines Makes Historic Flight to Eritrea

TesfaNews, July 18, 2018

Roses and champagne have been given to passengers on the first commercial flight between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 20 years.

The first flight in 20 years from Ethiopia to Eritrea landed safely in Asmara on Wednesday, to be greeted by traditional dancers waving flags and flowers, cementing a stunning reconciliation between the Horn of Africa foes.

Relatives and friends are expected to be reunited for the first time since a 1998-2000 border war between the two nations shut air and road travel.



"I am in cloud nine I'm going back to the place where I grew up. I'm really happy," flight captain Yosef Hailu told the BBC.

It's the first flight in what will be a daily service by Africa's biggest airline.

Former Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn and Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church was among the passengers on this historic flight. Mr. Desalegn told the BBC reporter that he was emotional about making the trip. "It's a golden moment for the two countries and the two people," he said.

Ethiopian Airlines Chief Executive Tewolde GebreMariam took to the onboard intercom as the flight crossed into Eritrean airspace. "This is the first time that this is happening in twenty years," he said, to applause from the 315 passengers on board. Demand was so huge that a second flight left within 15 minutes, AFP news agency reported. "We're very excited not only for the business part of it but the emotional attachment of the two people," GebreMariam said by phone from Addis Ababa. "The route will allow Ethiopian airlines to use previously closed airspace to fly to other destinations, with savings on fuel costs incurred through detours over Sudan and elsewhere."

Upon arrival at Asmara International Airport, dignitaries of this historic flights were received by Eritrean Foreign Minister Osman Saleh.

This historic air link was made possible after Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and President Isaias Afwerki made a declaration of peace earlier this month in Asmara and agreed on restoring diplomatic, telecommunications and transport links.

Interview with Former Ethiopian PM Hailemariam Desalgne

By Asmait Futsumbrhan

Eritrea Profile; published by TesfaNews, July 25, 2018



In a month where Eritreans and Ethiopians are enjoying the endless peace celebrations, former Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalgne was one of the dignitaries who came to Asmara with Ethiopian Airlines' maiden flight.

Despite his short stay, Mr. Hailemariam agreed to hold an interview with *Eritrea Profile* to talk about his first visit to Asmara; his first proper meeting with President Isaias Afwerki and the way forward for Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Q : Welcome to Asmara and thank you for your time. What are your first thoughts on your visit?

I am happy to be here and conduct this interview with you; it is an honor for me. First of all, I am grateful to be in Asmara. It has always been my dream to visit, so I would like to pass my gratitude to the Eritrean government and the people for making it a reality.

From the moment we disembarked from the plane, I'm still unable to find exact words to describe how I am feeling. I have walked the streets of Asmara, and people wouldn't let me pass without hugging or kissing me. Also, I just came from a meeting with H.E President Isaias Afwerki and had a two hour conversation for the first time in our lives. All in all, this is a happy day for me.

Q : Mr, Hailemariam. Would you share your thought on what can be done to strengthen the industrial activities of both countries?

The two nations need to develop a strong regional cooperation and strong government unity, which can be significant. It is a fact that both countries hold an enormous amount of resources which they can benefit from. Industrial activities can be attained within both nations. For instance, it can be developed from the ports of one country. Numerous strong industrialized countries including Korea and China begun their industrial activities at their shores which are still growing fast and bigger by the day. I believe that Eritrea and Ethiopia can get an advantage from the shores Eritrea possesses.

Working towards the stabilization of our markets, we need to analyze the demand of the people in both countries. That way, we can provide the people in our respective countries their needs and benefit from each other. Studies should be conducted on what Eritrea and Ethiopia can provide.

Although this is just the beginning, authorities from both countries should put on efforts on this topic. A ground for full economic cooperation should be worked for. Not only do we have to focus on importing and exporting goods, but people should have the opportunity where they could be active freely. That is another essential thing we need to give attention to.

Q : What are the benefits both countries could attain in connection with the Port service?

Over the past two decades, both countries have lost massively in so many ways. The impasse devastated both countries economically. For instance, the northern part of Ethiopia has been using the ports of Djibouti at a high cost. We could have used the nearest port and saved expenses. As a result, the economic activities in those areas have lost massively over the years. The same goes for Eritrea. The country hasn't properly used its ports for years which can be counted as a loss.

Now, the Tourism sector in both countries would get a huge boost. The shores of Massawa are one of the most sanitary shores in the world. Tourists visit many beaches which aren't as half clean as it. Why wouldn't tourists want to be in the clean seas of Eritrea?

Ethiopia has many places for tourist to see such as Lailbela, Aksum, and national parks; now, tourists could proceed from there to visit Eritrea and head to Massawa and finish their vacation in the seas of Eritrea and both countries would benefit from that.

Another sector which both countries could get advantage from is the energy sector. Ethiopia has been able to generate its own hydro-power electricity for a while now, Eritrea could have benefited from this, which in turn could have helped cut its electricity expenses. Ethiopia has big river streams which can generate for the whole year. This could be enough for the whole of Africa let alone the neighboring countries.

However, due to our conflict, we couldn't even do the little things. Now that we are starting all over again, with peace and cooperation, we need to develop a better way of using the ports and work towards all the opportunities the two nations could profit from. We can move forward and aim high. Believing the sky is the limit; if we work hard there is nothing that can stop us from reaching our goals.

Q : The start of Ethiopian Airlines, how is it going to influence the economy, tourism and social advantages for Eritrea and Ethiopia?

Ethiopian Airlines is the largest airlines in the continent. It has started its flight to Asmara, and it will also fly to other parts of Eritrea as well. The flight connections through Cairo, Dubai, and Istanbul were three times expensive. The airlines have resumed its flight, it will reduce the travel expenses which the Eritreans were paying before. It is also beneficial for the Airline.

For years the airlines have been losing USD \$80 million annually since it wasn't allowed to pass through Eritrean airways. The easiest and shortest way to fly to Europe and the Middle East is the Eritrean airspace and Ethiopian Airlines will definitely benefit from that.

Q : In terms of enhancing interaction between both peoples, how will the two governments work towards this end?

We all have seen how the Eritrean people welcomed our Prime Minister, it was indescribable. You can see how much the people carry the love. We all have witnessed how the Ethiopian people reacted when H.E President Isaias Afwerki was in Addis Ababa. This pushes you to reflect on the past two decades. People have clearly shown us that the problem wasn't them. So, we know that reuniting the people is the first thing we should accomplish. We should prepare a platform on how to connect them through cultural exchanges, sports activities, and university connections.

What role is Ethiopian Airlines going to play? How is land transportation going to be? How are Eritrean investors going to work in Ethiopia? And how will the Diaspora of the two nations invest in both countries? All this should be planned. Ethiopian Airlines brought 480 individuals during its first flight; 90% of whom are businessmen. This shows how the Ethiopian business community is ready to work here. Now that we have peace between the two countries, we all should combine our forces and work towards the ultimate development. Not only Ethiopia and Eritrea, but, Sudan, Djibouti, Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda, and Angola can be brought into the fold. We should help out each other. We should work hard to connect with our youth.

Q : You just came from your meeting with the President?

This is my first sit-down with the President of Eritrea. I saw him once in Qatar when I was the Minister of Foreign Affairs and assistant to the Prime Minister. Today, we talked from the heart for more than two hours.

And I understood that we are both alike. If we have had the opportunity to talk before, I understood that we could have accomplished so much together. Today, we talked about how to move forward. There is nothing good that comes out of repeating the past. We have also talked about the economic cooperation of both countries and how to work together in unison.

At the Millennium hall, during the President's visit to Ethiopia, he came to greet me. He asked if that was me and hugged me. I don't think I have words to tell you what I felt at that moment. I have always known that someday that would happen.

"Today, I have met President Isaias Afwerki on a personal level. And I didn't have any idea that he was this humble and respectful. The man is an extraordinary man. He even showed us who he is and what type of person he is when he was in Ethiopia. Now I know that he is a selfless person who works for his people. I am telling you this because I want to tell the world what I saw today."

We are people who can't be away from each other. The two leaders have made that clear when they met each other in both countries. There will be challenges, but we'll work through them together.

Q : Thank you, Sir

Thank you for giving me the chance to express what lay in my heart. I am truly grateful.

US investors urge Asmara to seek readmission to AGOA

Eritrea in New Bid to Woo US Investors

By Kevin J. Kelly; The East African

TesfaNews, July 26, 2018

President of the US Corporate Council on Africa, Florizelle Liser, held a private-sector executives briefing in Washington together with Dr. Woldai Futur, Director of the Eritrean Investment Centre, on July 24, 2018.

Citing a government official at a private-sector executives meeting in Washington, *The EastAfrican* reports that Eritrea is seeking to attract investments from the United States. “There has been a change of heart in regard to opening Eritrea to investment,” Dr. Woldai Futur, the director of Eritrean Investment Centre, said. Dr. Woldai was addressing members of the Corporate Council on Africa, an association representing US businesses active on the continent. He cited agriculture, mining, tourism, fishing, and infrastructure as sectors the Eritrean government sees as priorities for its new policy of enticing US capital. His remarks are the latest signs that the rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea is beginning to bear fruit.

AGOA

The US also excludes Eritrea in its African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) that offers duty-free access to countries in the programme exporting to America. A US investor at the Tuesday meeting said AGOA eligibility was widely viewed as a benchmark of an African country’s suitability as a destination for investment. Dr. Woldai said his country’s exclusion from AGOA in the last 15 years was a political matter. “Eritrea is a very misunderstood country in the United States, in government circles,” he said. “We were out of AGOA for reasons that we do not understand and for reasons that we cannot even accept,” he said.

“They were political reasons. We have no political problems with the United States, but the United States has political problems with us.” Mathewos Woldu, a former advisor to Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki and now a senior economist at the World Bank, seconded that position in his own comments at the Washington session. “During the last two administrations [Barack Obama’s and George W Bush’s] Eritrea was looked at through the prism and lens of Ethiopia and not necessarily on the maximum of US national security interests,” Mr. Mathewos said.

Florizelle Liser, head of the Corporate Council on Africa and previously the top US government trade official for Africa, urged Eritrea to promptly make its case for readmission to AGOA so that it might achieve that certification of good standing by next year.

Insentives

The end of the bloody conflict that killed more than 80,000 people triggered by a dispute over the Eritrea-Ethiopia border in 1998 has been lauded internationally. Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom, whose country holds the presidency of the UN Security Council for July, said recently that she agrees with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres’ view that if the reasons for the sanctions no longer pertain, they should be terminated. UN monitors have been reporting in recent years that there is no evidence of Eritrea supplying aid to Al-Shabaab.

Sources say the Donald Trump administration could restore diplomatic relations with Eritrea after 20 years of recriminations. Both Dr. Woldai and Mr. Mathewos said Eritrea has many incentives to offer US investors. Dr. Woldai, however, said tax breaks will not be part of the incentives on offer. “The Eritrean government does not allow tax incentives,” he said.

The country has a 1,000-kilometre coastline on the Red Sea, a strategic element in a volatile region, Dr. Woldai pointed out. “What people forget,” added Mr. Mathewos, “is that we live in a region that is prone to tribal conflict. “Eritrea is the only country that does not have any religious or tribal conflict in that part of Africa.”

The potential for economic growth in Eritrea is enormous, Dr. Woldai added pointing out that before war erupted in 1998, the economy was growing at an average of 11 percent, one of the highest rates in Africa, following its Independence in 1993. Growth had slumped to about two percent a year in the last two decades because “economically and socially, everything went to defense,” he said.

Statement by Mr. Nebil Said, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations, During UN Security Council Meeting 8322, New York, 30 July 2018

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(...)

Mr. President,

In recent weeks, the Horn of Africa has witnessed developments of historic proportion. Eritrea and Ethiopia have taken a bold step to end the state of war and open a new chapter of peace and friendship. This state of war that prevailed for the past two decades has had devastating consequences beyond the two countries and peoples. It obstructed meaningful cooperation and undermined regional mechanism of conflict prevention and resolution. The agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia puts an end to this distorted regional order of enmity and competitions; and, opens a new horizon for sustainable peace and economic integration. It will strengthen the sub-regional conflict prevention and resolution mechanism.

Moreover, today Eritrea and Somalia signed a Joint Declaration during the historic visit of H.E. Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed to Eritrea. They have agreed to exchange ambassadors, forge political, economic, social, cultural, defense and security cooperation as well as join hands to address the hurdles of regional peace and security.

The positive externalities of these developments to the entire region cannot be overstated.

Mr. President,

It long been evident that the sanction against the people of Eritrea cannot be justified in the name of maintaining international peace and security. The sanction is kept even though the pretexts for its imposition have proven false for years. In so doing, the Council did not contribute to peace and amity; to the contrary, it undermined and derailed regional cooperation for a decade.

Within the emerging regional context, we find it inexplicable that the Council is discussing the sanction on Eritrea today. The most appropriate action should have been lifting the sanctions; thereby, indicating in unequivocal terms its support to the aforementioned positive developments. Eritrea welcomes a call by several countries, including Ethiopia and Somalia, for the lifting of the sanction.

Eritrea finds it unacceptable that few members of the Council continue to set preconditions and change the goalpost. They intend to keep the political pressure on the people of Eritrea for reasons not related to the maintenance of international peace. As in the past, it is clear that whatever Eritrea does in fulfilling its commitment towards the Council's resolutions and despite the changes that the region witnesses, these members are unwilling to lift the unjustified punitive measures.

Mr. President,

The Security Council should not miss another opportunity to contribute positively to regional peace and security in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea. What is at stake is the credibility of the Council in the eyes of the citizens of the region. By lifting the sanction immediately and unconditionally, the

Council can send a positive message that it supports the desire of the citizens of the region to live in peace and economically thrive together. And that the Council is ready to accompany them on their arduous journey to remove the hurdles of regional integration.

The other option for the Council is to maintain business as usual of placing preconditions, changing goalposts and keeping this politically motivated sanction without justification. The message to the citizens of the region will be that the Council is unwilling to walk in tandem with the regional developments and will continue to encourage spoilers seeking to undermine the unfolding peace and integration.

On its part, Eritrea remains committed to double its efforts and join hands with countries of the region to ensure peace and accelerate the socio-economic progress of the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea region.

I thank you, Mr. President.

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