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Eritrea Reiterated its Call for the Ending of the Illegal Occupation of its Territories, the Lifting of the Unjust and Unfair Sanctions, and Fundamental Reform of the UN



Addressing the General Debate of the 69th Session of the UN General Assembly, on 30 September 2014, the Eritrean Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Osman Saleh, said that while the world has changed, the United Nations has remained stuck in the past. In Africa, in the Middle East and in all continents, extremism, terrorism and intolerance is spreading. Quoting the Secretary-General, he said it is a "terrible time for the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter". Restoring the relevance and credibility of the United Nations meant fundamentally restructuring the Organization. This has been clear since efforts to impose a "unipolar" world had been unsuccessful.

The Minister stated that Eritrea's perspective is informed by its history. The Eritrean people had been denied the right to decolonization because of United States' interests in the East Africa and Red Sea region. When the Eritrean people embarked on a 30-year armed struggle for national liberation, the superpowers supplied arms to their client states to crush Eritrea's right to self-determination, and the United Nations ignored Eritrea's plight.

Minister Osman underscored that the United Nations has failed to uphold an internationally endorsed final and binding border decision, and imposed unjust sanctions on Eritrea. All this has damaged not only Eritrea but the entire Horn of Africa region.

The Minister called on the UN Security Council to take concrete measures to end the illegal occupation of sovereign Eritrean territory, and to unconditionally and immediately lift the unjust and unfair sanctions imposed on Eritrea.

During his stay in New York, Minister Osman Saleh met and held talks with Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations; Mr. Sameh Shoukry, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt and several other Government Representatives.

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Foreign Minister Osman Saleh Addressed the UN Climate Summit

In a Statement he delivered at the UN Climate Summit held in New York on 23 September 2014, Minister Osman Saleh underscored that climate change requires global solution and local actions. In this regard, he pointed out that Eritrea has been working on forward looking actions that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and strengthen climate resilience.



Eritrea, within its means and resources, has been mobilizing grass root communities, women, students, the army, civil society organizations and religious leaders to actively work on environmental restoration, such as soil and water conservation, afforestation, smart agriculture and proper utilization of natural resources. He added that innovative energy efficient stoves have been invented and introduced, and more investment are made on renewable energy as a commitment of the government to sustainable development.

Minister Osman highlighted that climate change must be addressed with a sense of urgency that it deserves. He called on developed state parties, the private sector and civil society to take into account the special circumstances of vulnerable countries, particularly Africa, the least developed countries (LDCs), and small island states in their effort to promote ambitious and nationally determined contributions to the global agreement by 2015. Finally, the Minister emphasized that the new global agreement to be concluded in Paris must be ambitious and meaningful.

The National Union of Eritrea Women held its 7th Congress

The National Union of Eritrea Women (NUEW) held its 7th Congress in Asmara from 15 to 17 September 2014, under the theme “*Justice is our Motto Equality is our Goal.*” The NUEW which has about 300,000 members is this year celebrating its 30th Anniversary.

President Isaias Afwerki, in his remarks at the opening of the Congress, underlined the laudable role that Eritrean women played in the liberation struggle. He further emphasized that the role of women today and in the future needs to be reinforced.

Representatives of Governments and women’s associations from Sudan, South Africa, China, Zimbabwe and Tanzania as well as the UN conveyed their messages of solidarity.

The Congress reviewed the challenges and achievements of the Union over the past 10 years, elected a new Chairperson of the Union and members of the Central Council, as well as adopted several resolutions.

The resolutions adopted by the Congress include the strengthening the participation of NUEW members in national affairs, reinforcing members’ activities in the effective implementation of the Land Proclamation, stepping up efforts to promote female nationals’ capacity and participation in the economy, and ensuring their access to educational opportunities and health services. Moreover, the Congress underlined the need to enhance efforts in organizing the youth.

ECOSOCC Sensitization and Motivation Campaign Held in Asmara

A Sensitization and Motivation Campaign for the Second General Assembly of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) of the African Union, organized by the Government of Eritrea and the African Union Commission (AUC), was held in Asmara, on 25 September 2014.



The Session was conducted by a five-person AUC Delegation led by Ambassador Lazarous Kapambwe, Advisor to the Chairperson of the AUC.

The purpose of the campaign is to ensure the participation of Eritrean national associations in ECOSOCC, and to encourage them to apply for membership in the Council.

Speaking on behalf the National Associations, Mr. Tsegai Mogos, Deputy General Secretary of the National Confederation of Eritrean Workers (NCEW), said that Eritrea is a land where genera-

tions fought to affirm the African values of freedom, human dignity, respect and genuine cooperation and solidarity.



Ms. Elsa Haile, Director for Regional and International Organizations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated that Eritrean national associations at home and abroad have a long and proud history of standing for equality and social justice. She also reaffirmed the readiness of the Eritrean government to provide the required support.

The AUC Delegation also made a courtesy call on Mr. Yemane Ghebremeskel, Director of the Office of the President of the State of Eritrea.

The press release issued by the AUC on the event can be accessed at: <http://pages.au.int/ecosocc/events/au-sensitization-and-motivation-campaign-eritrea-2nd-ecosocc-general-assembly>

International Symposium on Women Empowerment and Peace held in Asmara

On 15 September 2014, an International Symposium on Women Empowerment and Peace was held in Asmara. The Symposium was organized by the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW) in collaboration with UNDP and UNFPA.

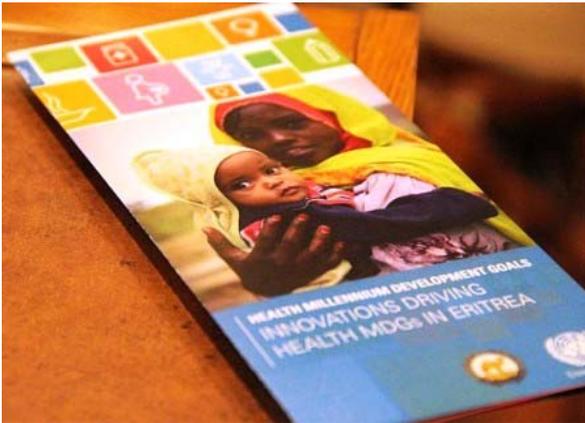
The Symposium which was attended by representatives from several African countries, aimed at contributing to the global movement of post-Beijing and to creating a platform to share experiences.

President Isaias met with the representatives of the women's associations who participated in the Symposium.

During the occasion, the President pointed out that thanks to the struggle that both men and women waged in the armed struggle for independence and the common sacrifices they endured, Eritrean men and women enjoy equal rights.

Eritrea Shared Lessons from its Health Sector Successes at the UN

Eritrea has achieved impressive progress on health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), members of the United Nations and the Government observed in an event organized during the UN General Assembly on 26 September, at the UN Headquarters under the theme **“Innovations Driving Health MDGs in Eritrea.”**



The discussion was moderated by the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations, Ambassador Girma Asmerom, and the UN Resident Coordinator in Asmara, Ms. Christine Umutoni; with the Foreign Minister of Eritrea, Mr. Osman Saleh and Ms. Yoka Brandt, the Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF as keynote speakers.



In more than twenty years since independence, the Eastern African country reduced child mortality by two thirds, decreased the maternal mortality ratio from 1,700 to 380 per 100,000 live births, and maintained exceptionally low HIV and tuberculosis prevalence rates. Around 98 percent of all children are now immunized, as compared with 14 percent only at independence.

“Eritrea has emerged from 30 years of a devastating war, with non-existing infrastructural, institutional and human resources capacity,” said Minister

Osman Saleh. “It has been able to make real progress in all areas of social, economic and political development,” he added.

Eritrea’s concerted efforts, bold policies and considerable investments are considered responsible for the dramatic changes in the health sector.

“What we see as development partners, what is responsible for this success is community participation, the enabling environment, leadership, strong mechanisms for prevention, value for money and coordinated inter-sectoral approaches,” said Ms. Christine Umutoni. She added that community and women’s involvement were key to tackling health challenges.



Ms. Umutoni also pointed out that the country has put into place a number of innovations to accelerate change. These include temporary maternal clinics, mobile medical units, as well as knowledge of migration patterns and remote areas.

Generating statistics, sustaining funding, partnerships with the private sector and human resource capacity were identified as priorities.

Participants agreed that success on MDGs 4, 5 and 6 should serve as lessons for all other goals and targets, and inform priorities for the post-2015 development agenda in Eritrea.

Keynote addresses were followed by technical presentations delivered by Prof. Abraham Kidane, Economic Advisor, Ministry of National Development; Dr. Andeberhan Tesfazion, Director General of Public Health, Ministry of Health; and Dr. Usman Abdulmumini, WHO representative in Eritrea.