

## PRESIDENT ISAIAS AND PRESIDENT EL-SISI STRENGTHEN BROTHERLY TIES IN AN OFFICIAL CAIRO MEETING



Upon his official visit to Egypt, President Isaias Afwerki and his host, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, held extensive talks in Cairo on Monday on bilateral, regional, and international issues of mutual importance.

The two leaders agreed to elevate the historical and brotherly

ties of friendship and cooperation between the two countries to a higher level.

In this respect, President Isaias Afwerki and President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi agreed to launch concrete programs in the sectors of marine resources, port infrastructure development,

and maritime transport, within the overall economic, political, and diplomatic frameworks and agreements reached in the past.

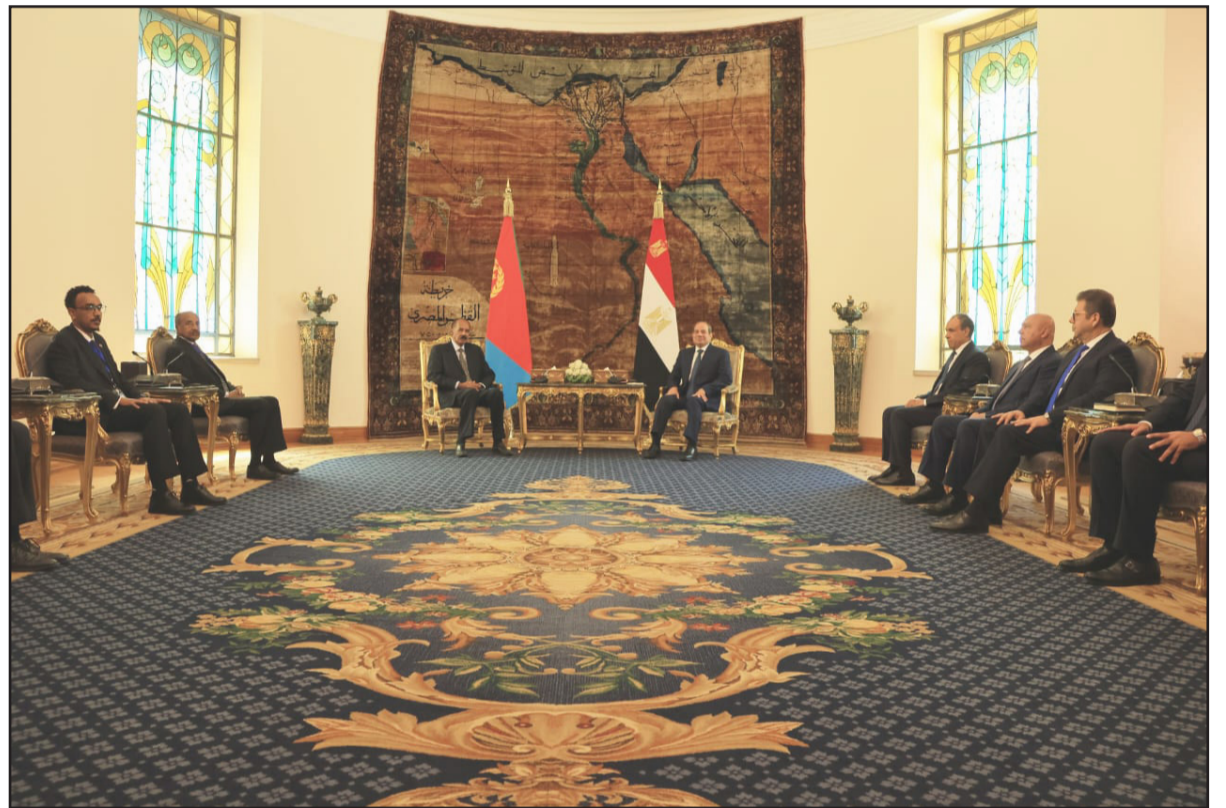
The two leaders also discussed, in greater detail, the economic, political, diplomatic, and security

dimensions of developments and trends in the Red Sea, the Middle East, the Horn of Africa, and other international matters of mutual interest.

Foreign Minister Osman Saleh and his Egyptian counterpart,

Dr. Badr Abdelatty, subsequently discussed the implementation details of the agenda items outlined during the extensive consultations between the two Heads of State.

President Isaias left for Egypt on Sunday, 7 June, for an official visit.



## WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY OBSERVED AT NATIONAL LEVEL

World Environment Day was commemorated at the Barka Secondary School Conference Hall in Asmara on 6 June, under the theme: "Inspired by Nature; For Climate, For Our Future!" The event was attended by Government and PFDJ officials, representatives of UN offices in Eritrea, and invited guests.

Speaking at the event, Mr. Tesfai Gebreselasie, Minister of Land, Water, and Environment, called on youth and students to fully understand the consequences of climate change, work earnestly to mitigate its impact, and become advocates for ensuring environmental safety.

Noting that the prevailing climate

change worldwide is mainly the result of human activity, Minister Tesfai called for a strengthened role and contribution from society, especially the youth.

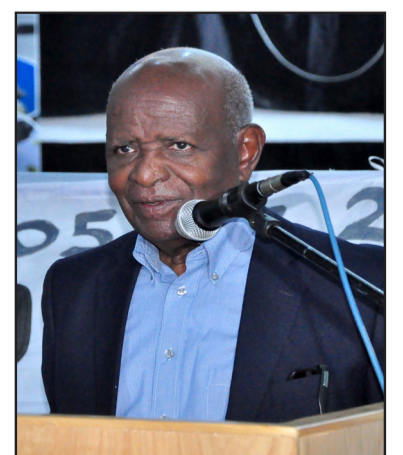
Ms. Nashida Sattar, representing the United Nations Development Program, and Mr. Seium Teame, representing the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, said that Eritrea has shown strong commitment through afforestation, soil and water conservation, and community-based natural resources management, demonstrating how nature-based solutions can restore ecosystems, support livelihoods, and build resilience.

At the event, research papers

were presented that focused on the progress and contributions of students' summer work, as well as the consequences of climate change and the imperative for collective action. A video presentation on waste management was also featured.

The event also featured cultural performances reflecting the day's theme, as well as the presentation of awards to the winners of the general knowledge competitions held among high school students.

World Environment Day has been observed internationally since 1973, following a resolution of the UN General Assembly in 1972.



## ERITREA PARTICIPATES IN EASTERN AFRICA REGIONAL TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE CONFERENCE



Eritrea participated in the 8th Eastern Africa Regional Technical Advisory Committee Conference, organized by the Africa CDC Eastern Africa Regional Coordinating Center and convened in Nairobi, Kenya, from 3 to 5 June.

Addressing the conference, Mr. Beyene Russom, Eritrea's Ambassador to Kenya, noted the experience and progress Eritrea has registered in primary health care and gave a detailed briefing on the progress made in enabling

citizens in remote areas of the country to become beneficiaries of health care services; ensuring maternal and child health; providing prenatal and postnatal treatment; constructing maternity waiting rooms to enable pregnant women to deliver at health facilities; and organizing training programs related to maternity care.

Ambassador Beyene indicated that the Government of Eritrea

**C**ontinued on page 4

# SpotLight

## Between Fact and Narrative: Eritrea's ECOSOC Election

By: *Shabait Staff*

Last week, Eritrea was elected by the United Nations General Assembly to serve a three-year term on the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the principal body responsible for coordinating the economic and social work of the United Nations system. Receiving 164 votes, Eritrea was among the 17 countries – and five African states – elected to the Council. Its term will officially begin on January 1, 2027, and run through 2029.

Understandably, the announcement was welcomed by many Eritreans at home and abroad and was also acknowledged positively by the African Union. Yet, bewilderingly, the election has drawn criticism from a number of anti-Eritrea commentators and activists. Their reaction is notable not only for its intensity, but because it reflects a deeper discomfort with a development that complicates long-standing efforts to portray Eritrea as internationally isolated, diplomatically marginalized, and lacking credibility on the global stage.

To begin, ECOSOC consists of 54 member states elected by the General Assembly for staggered three-year terms. Seats are allocated according to

geographical representation, with 14 reserved for African states, 11 for Asia-Pacific states, six for Eastern European states, 10 for Latin American and Caribbean states, and 13 for Western European and other states. Eritrea's election is therefore part of a well-established and representative process designed to ensure broad regional participation in one of the United Nations' principal organs.

More importantly, ECOSOC – and indeed other organizations within the broader international system – benefits from diverse membership and perspectives. Countries with different histories, development trajectories, and policy experiences contribute valuable insights that enrich discussions and strengthen collective efforts to address shared challenges. The exchange of experiences, lessons learned, and best practices is a central feature of meaningful international cooperation.

As one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, ECOSOC plays a leading role in advancing sustainable development in all its dimensions. In this regard, Eritrea has much to contribute and offer. Though it remains a young developing nation (it marked 35 years of independence two weeks ago), it has made notable progress in several sectors, including health, education, environmental stewardship, and infrastructure development, often under difficult circumstances. Its experiences and progress, despite confronting challenges ranging from climate change and resource constraints to external aggression, sanctions, and coercive measures, has generated valuable lessons in resilience, adaptation, and long-term planning.

While development models vary across countries, Eritrea's experience offers an alternative perspective that is increasingly relevant in a changing global environment marked by shifting economic realities, growing debt burdens, and declining levels of international assistance. Its efforts to pursue development through the mobilization of domestic capacities and resources provide useful insights for broader discussions on sustainability and national ownership.

Moreover, Eritrea's commitment to international cooperation,

constructive engagement, and partnerships grounded in mutual respect, sovereign equality, and shared benefit aligns closely with the principles that underpin ECOSOC's work. Far from being at odds with the Council's mandate, these positions complement its objectives of fostering dialogue, cooperation, and sustainable development among nations.

Taken together, these considerations demonstrate why Eritrea's election should be viewed as neither surprising nor controversial. Rather, it reflects recognition by the international community that Eritrea has experiences, perspectives, and contributions that can enrich ECOSOC's work. The overwhelming support it received in the General Assembly suggests that many states see Eritrea as a constructive participant in international affairs and a country capable of contributing meaningfully to global discussions on development and cooperation.

Against this backdrop, the intensity of the backlash warrants closer examination. If Eritrea's election is both procedurally unremarkable and substantively justified, the criticism cannot be explained simply as a good-faith disagreement over ECOSOC membership. Rather, it points to long-standing efforts in some quarters to portray Eritrea in a negative light.

Specifically, for years, Eritrea has been the target of sustained politicized campaigns built on misinformation and disinformation. In recent times, certain actors – both regional and their aligned networks in parts of the West – have sought to portray Eritrea in a persistently negative light. These efforts are not incidental, but part of a broader attempt to sustain a negative and inaccurate narrative about the country. The reaction to Eritrea's election to ECOSOC is therefore highly revealing: it reflects the discomfort of those for whom this outcome complicates a long-standing portrayal. In practice, these efforts serve clear political purposes, including deflecting attention from crises in Ethiopia and that government's continued efforts to advance its expansionary, irredentist agendas in the Horn of Africa.



Ultimately, Eritrea's election to ECOSOC – secured with 164 votes from UN member states – should be viewed in its proper context: a routine but significant expression of confidence by the United Nations membership in accordance with

established procedures. It reflects participation in a system that values diverse perspectives in addressing global economic and social challenges. Attempts to overstate controversy around the outcome do little to change this basic reality.

### From Social Media



Yemane G. Meskel  
@hawelti

This week, Eritrea was elected by the UN General Assembly to serve in ECOSOC for two years; (2027 -2029).

This is indeed a normative event.

And, in any case, Eritrea has both the track record and requisite credentials in regard to the main pillars and pronounced objectives of ECOSOC, i.e. sustainable development, partnership and cooperation.

But, bewildering as it is, this seems to have rattled feckless Potemkin Party minions and hired foreign lobbyists beyond measure. Because it pokes another big hole in their manufactured narrative of portraying Eritrea in pejorative labels.

Eritrea's principled and robust positions/track-record on nurturing global and regional cooperation and partnerships on the basis of symmetry and political independence; its rejection of debilitating dependency and/or act as a surrogate and pliable errand boy for extraneous forces; its commitment to pursue sustainable development – that is anchored on social justice – through the judicious leveraging of its comparative and competitive advantages are otherwise too well-known to merit elaboration here.

[x.com/Eritrea\\_UN/sta...](https://x.com/Eritrea_UN/sta...)

12:22 PM · Jun 7, 2026 · 13K Views



Eritrea at the UN  
@Eritrea\_UN

#Eritrea has been elected by the General Assembly to serve as a member of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (#ECOSOC) for the term 2027-2029.

#Eritrea congratulates the newly elected members of the Council, and looks forward to working together with all member states to realize the shared objectives of sustainable development, partnership and cooperation.

#Eritrea #ECOSOC

8:08 PM · Jun 4, 2026 · 9,410 Views



### ERITREA PROFILE

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# Development

## A Drop of Humanity to Save Lives

*Bana Negusse*

In a few days, countries around the world will observe World Blood Donor Day (WBDD), a global event dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of safe blood donation and recognizing the millions



of voluntary donors whose generosity saves countless lives. The occasion highlights the continuing need for a reliable blood supply, encourages more people to become regular donors, and celebrates those who donate without expecting payment or reward. In Eritrea, the day also provides an opportunity to reflect on the remarkable progress made in building a strong culture of voluntary blood donation.

World Blood Donor Day was created through the joint efforts of four international organizations: the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Federation of Blood Donor Organizations, and the International Society of Blood Transfusion. The first official celebration was held two decades ago, and since then, the event has become one of the most important annual campaigns promoting voluntary blood donation worldwide. Beyond honoring donors, the day serves as a platform for countries to showcase achievements, share experiences, and address challenges related to blood collection and transfusion services. It also reinforces a vital public health message: safe and sufficient blood supplies depend on regular donations from healthy volunteers.

Blood is a unique medical resource that cannot be manufactured artificially. For this reason, healthcare systems rely entirely on people's willingness to donate. An adequate blood supply is essential for delivering quality healthcare and responding effectively to medical

emergencies. Yet many countries continue to face shortages that can delay treatment or place lives at risk.

According to WHO estimates, nearly 120 million blood donations are collected each year globally. However, the

distribution of donations remains highly uneven. A significant proportion of donations comes from high-income countries, despite these nations representing only a small share of the world's population. Donation rates in wealthier countries are several times higher than those in low-income countries, underscoring the ongoing need to expand donor participation across the developing world.

The importance of blood donation extends across virtually every area of modern medicine. Blood transfusions are often critical for women experiencing severe bleeding during pregnancy or childbirth, patients undergoing major surgical procedures, victims of traffic accidents and natural disasters, and individuals receiving cancer treatment. Children suffering from severe anemia also frequently depend on transfusions. At the same time, patients living with inherited blood disorders such as thalassemia and sickle cell disease may require regular blood support throughout their lives.

While the primary purpose



of donation is to help others, donors themselves can also benefit. Before every donation, individuals undergo a brief health assessment that includes checks of blood pressure, pulse rate, body temperature, and hemoglobin level. These routine evaluations provide useful information about a person's general health and may help identify issues that warrant further medical attention. In addition, every donated unit of blood is screened for infectious diseases, contributing to greater health awareness among donors.

Research has also suggested that regular blood donation may offer certain health advantages. Maintaining healthy iron levels through periodic donation may support cardiovascular health in some individuals. Equally important are the psychological benefits. Many donors describe a strong sense of fulfillment and pride, knowing that a simple act on their part could mean the difference between life and death for someone in need.

This year's World Blood Donor Day will once again be observed throughout Eritrea, where voluntary blood donation has become an increasingly important public health success story. The National Blood Transfusion Center (NBTC) estimates that the country's annual blood requirement ranges between 12,000 and 15,000 units. Over the past two decades, remarkable progress has been achieved in meeting this demand through voluntary contributions.

For instance, in 2004, voluntary donations totaled approximately 5,000 units. By 2019, the figure had nearly doubled to around 10,000 units. Growth has continued in subsequent years, surpassing 15,000 units in 2023 and exceeding 16,000 units in 2024. Even more significant is that Eritrea now meets its national blood requirements entirely

through voluntary donations, a major milestone reflecting sustained public commitment and effective institutional support.

A key contributor to this achievement has been the National Association of Voluntary Blood Donors (NAVBD). Through awareness campaigns, community mobilization, and donor recruitment efforts, the association has helped foster a nationwide culture of blood donation. Today, its membership includes nearly 12,000 active donors, while roughly 70 institutions – ranging from private companies and government institutions to civil organizations – participate regularly in blood donation activities. Together with numerous community groups and individual volunteers, they form



the backbone of Eritrea's blood supply system.

Equally important has been the effort to make blood donation in Eritrea convenient, safe, and accessible. The NBTC and NAVBD have worked closely to simplify procedures and encourage broader participation. Donations can be made at numerous locations nationwide, and donors can complete the entire process in about an hour, with the actual blood collection taking only a few minutes.

Upon arrival, donors are welcomed by trained healthcare professionals and guided through a straightforward process. A brief medical screening is conducted to confirm eligibility, including measurements of weight, blood pressure, temperature, pulse rate, and hemoglobin level. Donors also complete a health questionnaire covering medical history and other relevant factors. Once approved, the donation is performed using sterile, single-use equipment under strict infection prevention protocols. Following the donation, individuals are invited to rest briefly and enjoy

refreshments before returning to their normal activities.

Public confidence in the blood donation system depends heavily on safety, and Eritrea's blood services maintain rigorous quality standards. Every donated unit undergoes comprehensive testing to ensure its suitability for transfusion. The effectiveness of these safeguards is reflected in the exceptionally low rates of infectious diseases detected among donors. In 2023, HIV prevalence among blood donors was recorded at 0.08 percent, while hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and syphilis were identified at rates of 0.32 percent, 0.1 percent, and 0.07 percent, respectively. These figures represent continued improvement and underscore the strength of Eritrea's screening

and quality assurance measures. (It should be noted that these statistics relate specifically to blood donors and should not be interpreted as representing infection rates within the general population.)

Overall, blood donation remains one of the most meaningful ways individuals can contribute to the well-being of others. A single donation can save multiple lives, support families during medical crises, and strengthen the resilience of healthcare systems. Eritrea's experience demonstrates how public awareness, community participation, and institutional commitment can work together to achieve lasting results.

As the world prepares to mark World Blood Donor Day, we recognize and celebrate the thousands of voluntary donors whose generosity makes life-saving treatment possible. Their selfless contributions remind us that one simple act can have an extraordinary impact. Through the gift of blood, they offer something priceless: hope, health, and a second chance at life.



# AS“MARARA” THON: “Rejoice, We Are Victorious”

By: Kidane Shimendi

“Rejoice, we are victorious!”

This timeless exclamation echoed through the historic, tree-lined streets of Eritrea on Sunday, June 7, 2026, as the seventh edition of the Asmara Marathon concluded in magnificent style. It was a day of profound national pride, as Eritrean athletes swept the top three ranks in the Men’s Marathon, raising the national flag high and sending the national anthem echoing across East Africa.

A major milestone further elevated the event’s color, energy, and prestige: the Asmara Marathon and the Massawa Half Marathon were officially awarded International Measurement Certificates by World Athletics. This elite world certification guarantees that the racing routes are precision-measured to global standards, ensuring that future records broken on Eritrean soil are formally recognized worldwide. These triumphs on the asphalt are deeply reflective of Eritrea’s ongoing, vibrant nation-building process, shining brightly on the global stage.

The atmosphere across Asmara on Sunday morning was nothing short of electric. From early dawn, tens of thousands of passionate fans lined the main avenues, transforming the city into a sea of red, blue, and green. Vuvuzelas, traditional music, and thunderous applause greeted elite competitors arriving from across the region, including athletic delegations from Kenya, South Sudan, and Uganda.

The Men’s Elite Marathon delivered an absolute grandstand finish. In a dramatic, down-to-the-wire final sprint that brought the home crowd to its feet, Nahom Ermias of the Gash-Barka Regional Club dug deep to capture the gold cup with a stellar time of 2 hours, 16 minutes, and 22 seconds. This historic win marks Nahom’s third

Asmara Marathon title, solidifying his dominance after previous championship runs in 2023 and 2025.

The battle for the podium was decided by mere seconds. Nahom crossed the line just five seconds ahead of Olympian Oqbe Kibrom of the Central Region Club, who claimed the silver medal at 2:16:27. They were closely followed by fellow Olympian Oqbay Tsegay of the Ministry of Defense’s Denden Club, who secured third place at 2:16:45. The razor-thin margin between the top three finishers highlighted a fierce, world-class domestic rivalry that kept spectators captivated until the very last meter.

The 2026 event also featured a major leap forward in women’s sports infrastructure with the highly anticipated Women’s 21 km Half



Marathon.

Olympian Nazareth Woldu, representing Gash-Barka, showcased her tactical brilliance, breaking away from the lead pack to win the crown in 1 hour, 16 minutes, and 11 seconds. Fellow Olympian Dolci Tesfu and rising star Simret Merhawi, both competing for the Denden Club, filled out the podium in second and third place, proving that Eritrea’s women are ready to match the men’s global dominance.

The spirit of inclusivity and raw



human determination took center stage during the Para-athletics races, which saw fierce competition across two specialized categories. The crowds roared with admiration as these exceptional athletes crossed the line, topped by:

•Group 1: Tedros Aregay (1st), Yonas Hailu (2nd), and Petros Samuel (3rd).

•Group 2: Tesfahiwet Tekle (1st), Ibrahim Mohammed (2nd), and Dirar Okbamariam (3rd).

The event also featured a massive 3 km public “mass sport” run. High-ranking government officials, regional elders, thousands of local youth, and visiting members of the global diaspora ran, jogged, and walked side by side, creating a beautiful display of collective joy and community solidarity.

According to Greek legend, “Rejoice, we are victorious” (Nenikēkamen) were the last words spoken by the messenger Pheidippides in 490 B.C. After running non-stop for roughly 25 miles (40 km) from the Battlefield of Marathon to the assembly in Athens to deliver news of the Greek victory over the Persian army, he collapsed and died from exhaustion. To honor his historic sacrifice, the marathon was introduced as a core sport when the modern Olympic Games were revived in 1896.

While the historic roots of the race belong to Greece, the modern era of

the sport is indisputably dominated by East African runners—among whom Eritrean athletes stand at the absolute forefront.

Eritrea’s athletic history is filled with podium finishes on the global stage. In 2009, the legendary Zeresenay Tadesse secured a fiercely contested silver medal in the 10,000-meter event at the World Championships. In 2015, Ghirmay Ghebreslassie captured an unprecedented moment of glory by winning gold in the marathon at the Beijing World Championships, later securing a stellar fourth-place finish at the 2016 Rio Olympics. These historic milestones are a testament to the deep well of raw, untapped athletic potential that continues to thrive within the country.

To systematically cultivate this local talent, the Eritrean National Athletics Federation launched a major restructuring and standardization process of the regional road races in 2017. Originally established as the “Maekel Marathon” by the Central Region administration, the event was officially elevated and renamed the Asmara Marathon in 2019. That inaugural international edition drew elite runners from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, South Sudan, and Ethiopia. Though subsequent iterations were temporarily suspended due to global COVID-19 restrictions, the event made a triumphant return in 2023.

This year’s iteration marked the seventh running of the event, showcasing a comprehensive lineup that included the Men’s Marathon, the Women’s Half Marathon, Para-athletics, and a vibrant mass sports public race. In the elite men’s category, Eritrean runners achieved a clean sweep of the podium, exclaiming, “Rejoice, we are victorious.” This dominant performance beautifully mirrors the core values of Eritrean national identity: resilience, self-reliance, unity, and an unwavering national spirit.

Globally, the marathon represents the ultimate test of human endurance, covering exactly 26.2 miles (42.195

km). In Eritrea, however, the Asmara Marathon has evolved into something far greater than a standard athletic competition.

The word Asmara itself signifies unity, and the marathon provides a beautiful backdrop for celebrating a peaceful, cohesive society. The event brings together citizens of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds, showcasing “Unity in Diversity” as a driving engine for sustainable peace. This social harmony flows naturally through Asmara’s historic avenues, defined by an architectural legacy that has earned it the title of “Africa’s Modernist City,” where traditional craftsmanship and performing arts regularly fill the capital’s historic theaters and cinemas.

Ultimately, the Asmara Marathon is a vivid reflection of the high national consciousness, robust resilience, and deep comradeship shared by the Eritrean people. As the nation continues to stride forward, the spirit of “Rejoice, we are victorious” remains a guiding light, steering Eritrea toward an era of sustained development, self-reliance, and enduring liberty.

## NEWS

### ERITREA PARTICIPATES IN ...

*Continued from page 1*

has played a significant role in ensuring child health and expanding vaccination coverage through national vaccination programs and coordinated intervention. He also said that since public health is interlinked with education, water, agriculture, food, and housing, the Government of Eritrea is conducting integrated efforts in these sectors.

The conference, in which representatives of member countries, regional institutions, health professionals, and development partners participated, focused on strengthening health security, disease control, and epidemic preparedness, as well as improving maternal and child health, expanding vaccination programs, and promoting primary health care.

Eritrea also expressed its support and readiness to advance regional health priorities through partnership and collective action.





# The Inward Journey: Eritrea's Domestic Tourism and the Path to Growth

By Irdi Issaias

Eritrea is a nation of profound diversity, encompassing a vast spectrum of climates, cultures, and ecosystems. While international travelers are often drawn to the country's UNESCO-listed architectural landmarks and breathtaking vistas, domestic tourism represents something deeper for Eritreans: an introspective journey through their own history, multifaceted identity, and shared heritage.

The nation is increasingly recognizing that a robust internal tourism industry is a vital pillar of both economic development and national pride. As is the case in many popular global destinations, relying exclusively on foreign visitors can create a seasonal and unpredictable burden on resources, ultimately compromising the long-term sustainability of the tourism sector. By prioritizing domestic tourism within the national policy framework, the government can ensure a more balanced and resilient approach to growth.

Beyond its economic significance, domestic travel offers a unique opportunity for citizens to explore and engage with the nation's rich historical legacy, from ancient civilizations and colonial-era architecture to the country's complex, multifaceted modern history. This intimate connection to the past fosters a deep sense of identity, enabling Eritreans to appreciate the nuanced layers of their own background and develop a more profound understanding of their place in the world.

At the same time, domestic tourism offers a chance to connect directly with a diverse living heritage, from colorful, lively traditional markets to rich and varied regional customs. By exploring these aspects of their own nation, citizens gain a deeper appreciation of their shared values



and ways of life, which ultimately enrich personal experiences and foster meaningful community relationships across the country.

This diverse heritage is beautifully showcased through time-honored traditions. Every August 11, the ancient monastery of Debre Bizen draws thousands of visitors. The steep trek offers a blend of physical challenge and spiritual fulfillment, culminating in a feast that celebrates the country's deep-rooted faith and history.

Similarly, the nation's sacred holy waters are a treasured destination for those seeking purification and peace. Notable among these is May-Wiuy, a revered site located about 6 miles north of Gahtelai. Renowned for its therapeutic hot springs, May-Wiuy is a true geological marvel and a place of healing for those seeking relief from rheumatic ailments and other physical challenges.

Eritrea presents a captivating blend of natural landscapes, characterized by rapid transitions between climate zones—often described as “three seasons in two hours.” Travelers can journey from the cool, mist-shrouded highlands to the tropical heat of the Red Sea coast, where the air is warm, and the sea is inviting. For locals, these microclimates provide a refreshing respite; highland residents escape to the coast during the cooler months, while lowlanders seek the

crisp air of the plateau during the sweltering summer.

For the more adventurous, the Green Belt (Filfil Solomona), a rare tropical mixed evergreen forest, offers rich opportunities for wildlife spotting and outdoor exploration. This lush ecosystem is a haven for birdwatchers, with an array of native species calling it home, and it provides winding trails for hikers and nature enthusiasts.

Meanwhile, the “Pearl of the Red Sea,” Massawa, remains a premier destination, attracting visitors with its seamless blend of history, culture, and natural beauty. Whether it is relaxing on the sun-kissed beaches of Gurgussum, exploring the Ottoman-era architecture that still stands tall, marveling at the ancient Sahaba Shrine, or camping on the remote Dahlak Islands, the coast offers a captivating escape for locals.

Locals and tourists alike flock to the port city on weekends to indulge in water sports, enjoy fresh seafood dinner parties, and take evening strolls under the starry night sky. While more adventurous visitors head to the nearby Green Island to try snorkeling, the wider archipelago has become a coveted experience for locals, who are captivated by the pristine beaches, crystal-clear waters, and rich marine heritage.

A significant pillar of Eritrean domestic tourism is the pilgrimage to sites of the liberation struggle. The town of Nakfa, nestled in the rugged northern mountains, holds immense symbolic weight. Its extensive network of underground trenches and bunkers, which served as the base for the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), stands as a living open-air museum. Visiting these outposts is often seen as a moral obligation—a meaningful way to honor the unwavering resilience and the tremendous cost of the journey toward independence.

Keren, a city rich in history and culture, is another popular destination for domestic tourists, who are drawn to its storied heritage, including the famous Debresina and Mariam Dearit shrines, as well as historic World War II battlefields. The city is a major draw for local religious pilgrimages. Additionally, the surrounding areas, such as the Elabered Estate, offer tourists a unique opportunity to experience the region's rich agricultural heritage, characterized by large-scale farming operations, lush greenery, and the opportunity to purchase fresh produce directly from local farmers.

Tourism also extends to the intellectual and social spheres. Organized student visits to national museums, historic infrastructure projects, and archaeological sites such as Adulis, Qohaito, and Metera help foster a sense of national ownership. These landmarks serve as a testament to Eritrea's enduring cultural legacy and underscore the importance of preserving a shared heritage for future generations.

While the grand summer National Festival held in the capital is a massive draw for local visitors, the country's rich culture is also celebrated through numerous smaller regional festivals. These intimate events highlight the unique traditions, customs, and warm hospitality of the Eritrean people, making them a vital component of the fabric of domestic tourism. Crucially, these gatherings provide opportunities for people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds to come together and celebrate their shared identity.

The seasonal arrival of diaspora visitors further boosts this internal ecosystem, driving demand for hospitality, food, and transportation services. This influx of capital stimulates the growth of local businesses and creates lucrative opportunities for local hospitality investors.

Ultimately, developing domestic tourism can have a transformative impact on the country's sustainable development. Fostering a culture of self-reliance and ownership among its citizens helps build a strong sense of identity and national pride. Moreover, promoting internal travel cushions the hospitality sector, minimizing the seasonal risks associated purely with foreign inbound tourism. By empowering citizens to explore their own backyard, Eritrea unlocks fresh opportunities for resilient economic

growth.

To ensure this growth is sustainable, the focus must remain on infrastructure, capacity building, and private sector excellence. This includes developing eco-friendly resorts, improving transportation links to remote destinations, upgrading tourist facilities, training local tour operators, and encouraging private firms to prioritize efficiency in hospitality. By cultivating this internal landscape, Eritrea can create a resilient, self-sustaining tourism economy that supports long-term national stability.

## Vision for Berhan Ayny . . .

Continued from page 8

Sometimes, the global networks and connections we possess abroad are among our greatest strategic assets as a people. If we can successfully build a bridge that leverages those international networks to directly benefit domestic infrastructure, which is where the real transformation happens. The enthusiasm is completely there; it is just a matter of designing the logistics to make it happen. People often ask me how I manage it, but really, I am just recognizing an opportunity and acting upon it.

There is a very fundamental way I look at this: there is no “we” and “them.” If you approach your homeland with that divided mindset, you instantly become a guest in your own home. I refuse to see it that way. This is home. Every single Eritrean has a responsibility to roll up their sleeves and contribute wherever improvements can be made. It is simply a matter of taking what exists, refining it, and elevating it to the next level.

Ultimately, I have absolutely no doubt that we will soon witness the rise of Reverse Medical Eye-Care Tourism right here in Eritrea. We are on a definitive, highly coordinated path to establish the Berhan Ayny Ophthalmic Hospital as a premier regional Center of Excellence—fully equipped with state-of-the-art modern technology and fully staffed by top-tier, homegrown specialists.

*Thank you, Dr. Mengis. We wish you the absolute best in these endeavors.*





## Vacancy announcement# 002/2026

VACANCY- Programme Specialist, SRH&RR - UNFPA, Eritrea

Official Job Title:	Programme Specialist, SRH&RR	Duty Station:	Asmara
Grade (Classified)	NO-C		
Contract Type	Fixed Term Appointment		
Post Number:	32722		
Post Type:	<input type="checkbox"/> Rotational	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Rotational	
Duration	One Year		

### 1. Organizational Location

The Programme Specialist is located in Country Offices (CO) and reports to the UNFPA Assistant Representative, under the overall supervision of the Country Representative.

### 2. Job Purpose

The Programme Specialist, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights (SRH&RR) plays a leadership role in coordinating and managing comprehensive integrated programmes on SRH&RR including maternal health, family planning, HIV prevention and harmful practices affecting the health and wellbeing of women and girls. The Programme Specialist supports national efforts to achieve universal access to comprehensive SRH&RR by promoting policy, financing, programmatic and accountability commitments. S/he oversees UNFPA SRH&RR programmes and projects formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation focusing on strengthening Eritrea's primary health care delivery systems. The staff member provides technical support to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of joint programming initiatives with sister UN agencies. S/he leads the SRH&RR programme team and collaborates with the CO's operations/administrative support staff for effective and efficient use of SRH&RR programme resources.

### 3. Major Activities/Expected Results

#### Overall Responsibilities:

\* In collaboration with Government counterparts, sister UN agencies and other partners, the Programme Specialist oversees the formulation, design and delivery of the country programmes and projects on SRH&RR in line with Government's priorities, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperative Agreement (UNSDPF) and UNFPA Country Programme Development (CPD) by following UNFPA programme policies and procedures.

- Oversees achievement of SRH&RR programme results through appropriate monitoring and oversight mechanisms and systems.

- Reviews the political, social and economic environment relevant to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, and pursues opportunities for UNFPA assistance and intervention. Assesses implications of new policy developments and strategies on SRH&RR programmes and projects.

- Oversees project implementation, establishing collaborative partnerships with executing agencies, experts, government counterparts and other UN agencies to facilitate timely, efficient and effective delivery of project inputs.

Specific Responsibilities: As a Programme Specialist, SRH&RR, he/she will (1) advance policy dialogue and thought leadership; (2) support national capacity development; (3) lead advocacy, partnerships and mobilise resources; (4) design, coordinate and manage programmes; (5) supervise and manage performance of teams/staff in the SRH&RR unit; and, (6) support knowledge management on SRH&RR more broadly and specifically on family planning, maternal health including emergency obstetrics and newborn care, obstetric fistula, HIV prevention and harmful practices affecting health and wellbeing of women and girls.

#### I. Policy Dialogue and Thought Leadership

- Represent UNFPA in strategic conversations to advocate for the development, financing and implementation of policies, plans, programmes and strategies for accelerating progress towards universal SRH&RR in line with Eritrea's national priorities.

- Engage in discussions on aid effectiveness and UN reforms to enhance UNFPA's effectiveness, impact and value addition.

- Provide technical input to the development of relevant advocacy and policy documents to advance sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.

- Provide input into the development of global UNFPA's policies using in-country experience.

#### II. National Capacity Development

- Support national capacity development in SRH&RR by drawing on and feeding into national and sectoral capacity assessments to ensure capacity building in strategic planning and results based management.

- Support capacity development of Implementing Partners (IPs) to ensure effective and efficient implementation of integrated SRH&RR programmes in accordance with organizational policies and procedures to strengthen the Eritrean primary health care delivery systems.

- Lead programme and project implementation, guide and orient partner agencies and programme personnel through effective modalities and best practices.

- Regular follow-up and support to Implementing Partners to ensure timely-implementation, and financial and programmatic reporting.

#### III. Partnerships, Communication and resources mobilization

- Contribute to the country office strategic communication and resource mobilization strategy by analysing information on potential donors, preparing evidence-based briefs and project proposals in line with donor priorities, creating feedback mechanisms and providing information on progress of donor funded projects.

- Represent UNFPA at UN inter-agency meetings for health and government-led technical committees including Development Partner Groups to promote change and enhance effectiveness and impact of working groups to ensure full inclusion and monitoring of SRH&RR including harmful practices affecting health and wellbeing of women and girls.

- Effectively network with partners seizing opportunities to build strategic alliances with institutions and individuals relevant to UNFPA's mandate and strategic priorities.

- Sensitizes UN partners, donors and government authorities to the Fund's strategic priorities, identifying areas for joint efforts.

#### IV. Programme Management and Coordination

- Provide substantive leadership and inputs into the design, formulation and delivery of programmes and projects translating UNFPA's mandate and strategic priorities into local interventions, and responding to Government priorities, UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and UNFPA Strategic Plan and Country Programme Document.

- Advise and report on achievement of SRH&RR programme and project results by proactively measuring changes and ensuring effective utilization of financial and human resources using appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and tools.

- Achieve results by effectively monitoring, evaluating programmes and projects and managing the projects' resources. Identify and document best practices and innovative approaches and support their application at scale.

- Guide and manage innovative and responsive programming for the effective implementation of SRH&RR programmes.

- Work closely with UNFPA Operations Staff members to ensure that activities are implemented within the allocated budgets and in-line with policies and procedures.

#### V. Knowledge Management

- Share information and knowledge on cross cutting dimensions related to SRH&RR with key partners including government and donors to ensure full integration of issues into capacity development processes and health sector institutional reforms through a rights based approach.

- Support the generation of strategic information and evidence to inform national policies and strategies for improving SRH&RR.

- Perform any other duties as assigned by the supervisor and senior management from time to time in consultation with the Representative.

### 4. Work Relations

The Programme Specialist oversees the work of the SRH&RR programme team as well as of consultants, advisors, and experts and establishes and maintains collaborative relationships with government counterparts, multi-lateral and bilateral donor agencies and civil society to address emerging issues. S/he must effectively influence counterparts from diverse backgrounds to contribute to achieving UNFPA's mandate.

# ADS

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## 5. Job Requirements

### Education:

Master's degree or equivalent in medicine, and public health or related social science discipline.

### Knowledge and Experience:

- At least Five years of increasing professional experience in the field of development and population activities, with experience in programme/ project management.
- Demonstrable technical expertise in SRHR including GBV and harmful practices.
- Demonstrated results orientation, with proven experience in results-based management.
- Proven experience in coordinating/managing a team of staff, experts and consultants.
- Proven strategic communication skills in communicating technical and/or complex issues to different types of audiences.
- Demonstrated ability to write robust proposals and mobilization of resources.
- Demonstrated experience in networking, coordination and liaison with government counterparts, NGOs, UN agencies, and other development partners.
- Possess excellent interpersonal, negotiating, intercultural communication skills, and political acumen.
- Experience using Microsoft Office software packages and web based Cloud applications;
- Strong analytical orientation and sound judgment, initiative, culturally sensitive and resourceful.
- Dedication to the United Nations principles and demonstrated ability to work harmoniously in team and with persons of different nationalities.

### Values:

- Exemplifying integrity
- Demonstrating commitment to UNFPA and the UN system
- Embracing cultural diversity
- Embracing change

### Core Competencies:

- Achieving results
- Being accountable
- Developing and applying professional expertise/ business acumen
- Thinking analytically and strategically
- Working in teams/ managing ourselves and our relationships
- Communicating for impact

### Managerial Competencies:

- Providing strategic focus
- Engaging internal/ external partners and stakeholders
- Leading, developing and empowering people/ creating a culture of performance
- Making decisions and exercising judgment

### Functional Skill Set:

- Advocacy/ Advancing a policy-oriented agenda
- Leveraging the resources of national governments and partners/ building strategic alliances and partnerships
- Delivering results-based programme
- Internal and external communication and advocacy for resource mobilization.

### Languages:

Fluency in oral and written English.

### Compensation and Benefits:

This position offers an attractive remuneration package including a competitive net salary plus and other benefits as applicable.

### DISCLAIMER:

UNFPA does not charge any application, processing, training, interviewing, testing or other fee in connection with the application or recruitment process. Fraudulent notices, letters or offers may be submitted to the UNFPA fraud hotline <http://www.unfpa.org/help/hotline.cfm>

### How to Apply:

UNFPA utilizes an electronic application management system. All prospective candidates are required to submit their applications through the below link :

[https://estm.fa.em2.oraclecloud.com/hcmUI/CandidateExperience/en/sites/CX\\_2003/job/33996](https://estm.fa.em2.oraclecloud.com/hcmUI/CandidateExperience/en/sites/CX_2003/job/33996)

It is highly recommended that candidate profiles are meticulously updated to reflect accurate employment history, academic credentials, and linguistic proficiencies. Applicants must include a formal cover letter, an updated Curriculum Vitae, and copies of academic qualifications, ensuring that contact telephone numbers are provided.

Candidates lacking reliable internet access may personally visit the UNFPA office at 5 Hiday Street (adjacent to EXPO), Asmara, Eritrea, to facilitate the submission of their online application.

Note: All applications must be received within ten (10) business days from the date of the vacancy announcement.

Important Notice: UNFPA does not levy any fees at any stage of the recruitment process. Furthermore, the organization does not solicit medical information regarding HIV or AIDS status and maintains a strict policy of non-discrimination.

**CANDIDATES SHOULD PROVIDE EVIDENCE OF COMPLETION / EXEMPTION FROM NATIONAL SERVICE**

## NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the public that the shareholders of New Eritrean Builders P.L.Co in their extraordinary general meeting held in the head office on the day of 20/05/2026 have unanimously decided to adjust the shareholding of the members to 2031 shares each and also to add the following business activities.

- ✓ To engage in the aluminium extrusion works
- ✓ To engage in Wood, metal and aluminium works
- ✓ To engage Manufacture of cement products
- ✓ And any kind of manufacturing

**NEW ERITREAN BUILDERS P.L.CO**

## NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the public that "Bana Industry Plc" has conducted an extraordinary general meeting on March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2026 and resolved that Mr. Ghirmai Kidane Tesfazion is appointed as the new General Manager of the Company for unlimited duration.

**Bana Industry Plc**



# Vision for Berhan Ayny: Dr. Mengis Bairu on Eritrea's Path to Medical Self-Reliance

Sabrina Solomon

*You have enjoyed an exceptional global career, from orchestrating multi-billion-dollar biotech deals to serving as an adjunct professor. What personal motivation drives you to dedicate your time and expertise to public health initiatives here in Eritrea?*

I am asked this question frequently, and my answer always traces back to my roots—specifically to the lessons I absorbed from my parents. Long before we ever open a textbook, we as Eritreans learn from the actions of our elders. I watched how deeply my parents cared for their neighbors and our community. That upbringing instilled in me a lifelong desire to serve my fellow citizens rather than focus narrowly on personal gain.

As physicians, our clinical training teaches us to treat and heal patients one at a time. However, as your career evolves, you naturally begin to think about public health on a macro level—shifting your focus toward creating a sustainable, systemic impact on a much larger scale.

*The Cure Blindness Project has performed thousands of sight-restoring surgeries in Eritrea, including the country's first corneal transplant. Could you share a specific moment or milestone from these medical missions that has left a profound impact on you personally?*

Most of us take our vision completely for granted; you only understand its true value once it is gone. In our clinics, we routinely encounter patients who have been blind for 12 or 15 years. They undergo a highly specialized surgery that takes less than 12 minutes and costs under \$100. The raw emotion the morning after the operation, when the bandages are finally removed, is second to none.

Nothing else in the medical field provides the instant gratification and deep human satisfaction that you get from ophthalmology, particularly with cataract reversals. One of my most cherished memories involves a mother who had not seen her children in over 14 years; witnessing the sheer explosion of joy on her face the moment she saw them again was unforgettable.

It is staggering to realize that nearly 18 million people worldwide remain needlessly blind, and our absolute mission is to reduce that number to zero. Crucially, these

*Eritrea is forging a definitive path toward self-sustainability in specialized healthcare by transforming its domestic medical residency programs. Through a strategic partnership between the Ministry of Health, Orotta College, and the global Cure Blindness Project, top international ophthalmologists are arriving as visiting faculty to train and mentor local physicians on-site.*

*Leading this bridge between international innovation and domestic self-reliance is Dr. Mengis Bairu, an Eritrean-American physician, biotech entrepreneur, and philanthropist with over 30 years of global executive experience. In this exclusive interview, Dr. Mengis discusses the emotional reality of sight restoration, the deep-rooted cultural values driving his work, and his bold blueprint to establish the Berhan Ayny Ophthalmic Hospital as a world-class Center of Excellence.*



interventions go far beyond clinical success. There is a direct correlation between blindness and poverty. By restoring sight, we are not just healing an individual—we are directly accelerating the Sustainable Development Goals and lifting up the entire society.

*A key pillar of your mission is sustainability. The residency program at Orotta College is actively training Eritrea's next generation of eye surgeons. How do you ensure this knowledge transfer is effective, and what has been the response from the local students and their mentors?*

This concept of self-reliance is deeply woven into the historical fabric of Eritrea; sustainability is nothing new for us. I was fortunate to visit most of the liberated areas back in 1986, with a particular focus on the Sahil Orotta hospital. Seeing those fully functional underground hospitals was incredible. Even the origins of the Azel Pharmaceutical Company were in Sahil, manufacturing the majority of their own medications and IV infusions under the most challenging conditions. That principle of self-reliance was forged during the liberation struggle and naturally transitioned into today's ministries and government frameworks.

Our organization simply contributes to a blueprint that the country already has in place. The residency program is the critical engine of that plan. Just a few years ago, Eritrea did not have an independent ophthalmology residency program. We launched a partnership with three initial residents at the college and the Ministry of Health, and they are

graduating shortly this year. As more classes join the pipeline, Eritrea will be blessed with eleven new homegrown ophthalmologists within the next two to three years. Our job through the Cure Blindness Project is to ensure these doctors receive world-class training and have access to premium medical products, allowing us to advance at the exact same speed as global technology.

The visiting international faculty we send have been deeply impressed by both the residency curriculum and the local staff. We are working with people who are genuinely hungry for knowledge. When you bring in top-tier professors from institutions like Stanford University, our local doctors are receiving the finest training from the best minds in the world. The response from the residents has been exceptionally positive. The distinct advantage of this model is that they learn on-site and immediately apply those skills. They are already performing complex, specialized surgeries that would have been unimaginable without direct, hands-on mentorship from our visiting faculty. I see that same incredible drive across the

Public health has always been the absolute foundation of Eritrea's medical infrastructure. This strategy traces its roots directly back to the liberation movement and the historic "barefoot doctor" model. The philosophy is simple: you do not wait for the patient to come to the clinic; you proactively send your healthcare providers out to the villages and remote rural areas.

The specialized services we provide are structurally integrated into this national framework managed by the Ministry of Health. The main difference is that we operate on a targeted, regional level to bolster the extensive national eye care program already in place.

Furthermore, a robust public health system provides the exact infrastructure needed to effectively combat sudden pandemics. Look at how the COVID-19 outbreak devastated many highly industrialized Western nations, including the United States. Eritrea's defense wasn't built on reactive mass vaccination by design; instead, the country relied on a highly aggressive, foundational public health protocol



board—from the medical staff to the leadership teams within Orotta College and the Ministry of Health.

*Beyond ophthalmology, Eritrea has made remarkable strides in public health, such as achieving exceptionally high vaccination coverage and reducing malaria mortality by over 99 percent. From your perspective, what has enabled these massive successes, and how do specialized eye care programs fit into this broader national healthcare strategy?*

centered on patient identification, swift isolation, community-level tracking, and targeted treatment. This proactive public health mindset is one of Eritrea's greatest national assets.

*Beyond fundraising and coordinating medical missions, what is your central message to other Eritrean professionals in the diaspora? What practical first steps would you advise for someone who feels a deep connection to the homeland but doesn't quite*

*know how to translate that into meaningful action?*

A massive blessing we share as Eritreans is this fierce, unbreakable bond with our country and our people, no matter where we reside globally. There is an incredibly strong, collective desire to return to Eritrea and actively participate in its development journey. Almost every professional in the diaspora dreams of contributing, whether through private enterprise or public service.

To help channel this energy in the medical field, we founded the Eritrean-American Healthcare Association a few years ago. Our team meets regularly and maintains direct communication with various ministries, particularly Orotta College and the Ministry of Health. Together, we work to identify the most effective paths for structural interventions, teaching modules, and equipment deliveries before we arrive.

My primary advice to the diaspora is simple: just get engaged. Do not be discouraged by not knowing where to start. Many of us travel back home frequently; reach out to established networks, share experiences, and support one another so we can work collectively. The doors are wide open, the opportunities are vast, and our local embassies are always ready to help facilitate these connections. We are steadily building a formula that works, and it is a beautiful work in progress.

*You have achieved remarkable corporate and clinical success on the global stage, yet you consistently dedicate your time to coordinating these local clinics. What does the word "home" mean to you today, and what long-term legacy do you hope to leave behind in Eritrea?*

I view myself simply as someone who has been blessed with the opportunity to participate in this incredible journey. There always have been, and always will be, exceptional Eritreans and international friends of Eritrea who step forward to make a massive impact. My contribution is just a very small piece of a much larger puzzle.

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