

ERITREAN DELEGATION VISITS OMAN TO BOOST TRADE AND INVESTMENT



A senior Eritrean delegation, including Mr. Nesredin Mohammed Saleh, Minister of Trade and Industry, and Mr. Hagos Gebrehiwet, Head of Economic Affairs of the PFDJ, has conducted a two-day working visit

to the Sultanate of Oman.

The delegation on 15 October held key discussions in Muscat aimed at enhancing bilateral ties and exchanging views on regional issues

of mutual interest.

The Eritrean officials met with Mr. Qias bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Oman's Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, and Mr. Badir bin Hamad Al Busaidi, the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

In both meetings, the two sides agreed to expand and consolidate investment and trade cooperation in various sectors between the two countries.

The Eritrean delegation also held a series of meetings with other Omani government agencies and several private companies during its two-day visit.

The visit follows a high-level engagement earlier this year: on March 24, 2025, Mr. Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Oman's Minister of Foreign Affairs, delivered a message to President Isaias Afwerki in Asmara from Sultan Haitham bin Tariq of Oman, which focused on strengthening bilateral ties and discussing regional and global matters.

ERITREA COMMEMORATES WORLD FOOD DAY AND POVERTY ERADICATION DAY



Eritrea held a national-level observance on 16 October at Hotel Mai-Nefhi for World Food Day and the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. The event brought together Ministers, senior government and PFDJ officials, members of the diplomatic community, and heads of UN offices in Eritrea.

The observance was held under the respective themes: "Hand in Hand for Better Food and a Better Future" and "Empowering Communities through Climate Change Action and Food Security Initiatives to Eradicate Poverty and Foster Prosperity."

In his keynote address, Mr. Tekleab Misgina, Director General of Regulatory Services at the Ministry of Agriculture, highlighted the particular significance of this year's observance for Eritrea.

He affirmed that Eritrea views food security not just as a national priority but as a cornerstone of its development strategy. Mr. Tekleab stated that the government is working tirelessly to modernize

traditional agricultural practices by introducing new technologies while preserving its heritage. The core focus, he said, is on increasing productivity, diversifying crops, and promoting sustainable farming techniques that safeguard the environment.

Dr. Qu Dongyu, Director-General of FAO, and Ms. Ariella Glinni, FAO Representative in Eritrea, also delivered a video message stating that the FAO's work is guided by the principles of "Better Production," "Better Nutrition," "Better Environment," and "Better Life." They noted these principles align strongly with the Ministry of Agriculture's roadmap for building resilient national agro-food systems.

Dr. Pa Lamin Beyai, UNDP Resident Representative in Eritrea, on his part, expressed readiness to work in line with Eritrea's development priorities. He emphasized that eradicating poverty requires an integrated and collective effort and noted the ongoing introduction of climate-resilient agriculture in various regions of the country.

ERITREAN COMMUNITY IN SOUTH SUDAN TO STRENGTHEN NATIONALISM AND ORGANIZATION

Mr. Romodan Ahmedin, Head of Public and Community Affairs at the Eritrean Embassy in South Sudan, conducted a meeting on October 12th in Juba aimed at enhancing Eritrean nationalism and strengthening organizational capacity among the Diaspora community.

The meeting brought together heads of the Eritrean Community, the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW), and the YPFDJ (Youth PFDJ).

The primary objective was to discuss the basic strategic objectives

of the "Fourth Front" and detail initiatives to strengthen national organizations and enhance their overall effectiveness.

Mr. Romodan outlined the core aims of the Fourth Front, stating they include nurturing Eritrean citizens who possess a strong national identity and awareness, preserve unity and deep attachment to their homeland, play an active role in national development and in safeguarding national sovereignty, and are equipped with education, skills, and economic capacity.

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MEETING WITH RECONCILIATION COMMITTEES

Ms. Fauzia Hashim, Minister of Justice, conducted a meeting with reconciliation committees from all sub-zones in the Central Region.

The objective of the meeting was to review the activities of the reconciliation committees since their establishment a year ago, particularly regarding their modalities of resolving community issues.

At the meeting, a detailed assessment was conducted on the achievements registered and the challenges encountered.

Minister Fauzia said that the armed struggle for Eritrean independence was based on the people, participated in by the



people, and owned by the people, serving as the foundation for ensuring the social sovereignty of the Eritrean people.

Minister Fauzia further stated

that the Ministry of Justice will continue to work earnestly to nurture and preserve national values, combat negative attitudes, and ensure unity, stability, and development within the society.

Underlining the significant role of the community-based legal system, Minister Fauzia called for the active participation of all concerned bodies.

In the Central Region, there are 415 elected members of reconciliation committees operating across the 83 administrative areas of the region.



Statement by Ambassador Sophia Tesfamariam, Permanent Representative of the State of Eritrea to the United Nations, At the 19th Mid-Term Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

Your Excellency, Jeje Odongo Abubakar

Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Republic of Uganda,

Excellencies and Distinguished Delegations,

Allow me first to extend my delegation's warm appreciation to the Government and People of the Republic of Uganda for their gracious hospitality and the excellent arrangements made for this 19th Mid-Term Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement. We commend Uganda's leadership as Chair of our Movement and its tireless efforts to advance the outcomes of the 19th Summit held here in January 2024.

Mr. President,

As we assemble today to reflect on and assess the progress and challenges since the Summit, it is distressing that humanity is yet confronted with perilous global peace and security, geopolitical polarization, widening inequalities, environmental crises and the continued marginalization of the Global South in global decision-making processes.

For NAM Member States, these realities underscore the continuing relevance of the Movement's founding principles: solidarity, mutual respect, genuine cooperation and partnership, non-interference, and the right of all nations to pursue independent paths of development.

Mr. President,

The underlying causes of the interlocking and intertwined crises facing humanity are attributed to

multiple factors. However, the glaring failure of the existing global governance architecture remains at the core. Predicated on the ill-premised "rules-based international order", the existing global governance architecture has been and continues to foment conflicts and proxy wars, promote military adventurism, deprive societies and monopolize resources, and abrogate the principles of international law and the UN Charter.

Mr. President,

The existing global economic and financial institutions – the embodiment of the unfair and non-inclusive international order – are essentially designed to serve the very few and narrow ideals of the 'neo-liberal economic' outlook through exploitation and monopoly of the global economy and affluence while aggravating poverty across nations. Besides, the subtle institutionalization of corruption constitutes another means of manipulation and plunder.

The magnitude of exploitation of the resources in developing countries through the 'neo-colonial' arrangements is too evident to merit elaboration. The experience of Africa, a Continent endowed with 60% of the World's natural resources, is an object lesson. Ironically, this resource-rich Continent remains the source of raw materials needed for the economies and technological products of the covetous few 'developed countries' at a minimal price. In turn, the Continent purchases back value-added products at an exponentially high price, and this keeps most African nations under acute trade deficit and hence poverty.

Additionally, the Continent has been subjected to externally instigated wars and conflicts with the sole purpose for intervention and domination.

Mr. President,



The idea of "shared global affluence", the guiding theme of the Ministerial Conference, can only be realised once the ramifications of the above-highlighted malfunctions and ill-premises of the existing global governance architecture are rectified.

Realizing such a noble vision entails forging meaningful and symmetric ties of cooperation and partnership to boost our collective commitments and resources based on promoting fairness and justice as well as mutual respect for national independence and sovereignty. To that end, our Movement will require higher standards and a revitalized perspective to redress the injustices created by the dysfunctional global governance and accomplish the objectives laid before us, and thus achieve a shared global affluence.

Mr. President,

For its part, Eritrea remains committed to promoting economic self-reliance, social justice as well as South-South cooperation, and equitable global partnerships. We will continue strengthening collaboration with NAM partners, enhancing trade, technology

transfer, and investment in human capital, with the goal of building resilient, and sovereign economies capable of contributing meaningfully to global prosperity and affluence.

Eritrea underscores the sovereign rights of all states, large or small, and the importance of respecting their independence, territorial integrity, and decision-making authority. We stress the principles of multilateralism, peaceful coexistence, and the protection of the sovereignty of all states, which remain central to our shared vision. Eritrea categorically rejects any reckless attempts transgressing these cardinal principles in pursuit of perceived geopolitical interests as these will lead to unprecedented regional and international destabilization.

Mr. President,

To conclude, Eritrea urges upon all NAM member states to mobilize their untapped resources and resolve to forge a global order predicated on the equal and full participation of all member States as opposed to unilateralism and the futile 'rules-based order.' NAM member States

need to reassert their peculiar and historical responsibility to uphold the sacrosanct principles of equality, respect of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of all nations and peoples as enshrined in the UN Charter and the Bandung Principles.

Eritrea reaffirms its solidarity with all NAM member states in promoting peace, justice, and inclusive development. In this regard, we reiterate our firm support to the right of self-determination of the Palestinian People as the natural and lawful entitlement that must not be compromised at any time. We further urge for the unconditional lifting of all forms of unilateral coercive measures and sanctions imposed on all NAM member States including Cuba, Eritrea, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe.

I Thank You!

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ERITREAN COMMUNITY IN SOUTH SUDAN ...

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Highlighting the crucial role of Diaspora nationals in the successful implementation of national development programs, Mr. Romodan stressed the significance of organization and unity for the realization of national objectives.

The meeting also featured briefings from Mr. Tsegay Mehari, Eritrea's Consul in the Republic of South Sudan, and Mr. Marikos Merhatsion, Head of the National Committee, who underscored the importance of strengthening organizational capacity to ensure the rights and full participation of citizens.

SpotLight

Bana Negusse

Commemorated every year on October 16, World Food Day (WFD) is one of the most widely observed dates on the United Nations calendar. First celebrated in 1979, the day marks the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in 1945, an intergovernmental organization dedicated to achieving food security for all.

Each year, WFD calls for global solidarity in the fight against hunger and for the creation of more sustainable, resilient food systems. The 2025 observance carries special significance, marking the 80th anniversary of the FAO's founding. This milestone invites both reflection and renewed commitment to ensuring access to safe and nutritious food for everyone.

Despite decades of progress, the global fight against hunger faces growing challenges. According to the FAO, agrifood systems worldwide are under unprecedented pressure. Conflict, the impacts of extreme weather and climate change, economic shocks, and widening inequality are straining the land, water, and biodiversity on which communities around the world depend. As supply chains weaken and costs rise, millions of people are being pushed into food insecurity.

Today, an estimated 673 million people face hunger, while 148 million children are stunted and 45 million suffer from wasting – conditions that rob them of health, potential, and life. At the same time, rising obesity and widespread food waste reveal a world where abundance and deprivation coexist. These challenges remind us that achieving global food security is not only about producing enough food but also about ensuring fair access, sustainability, and resilience across all societies.

Against this backdrop, countries like Eritrea are working to strengthen their food systems and promote sustainable agricultural practices. As the world marks the 80th anniversary of the FAO, Eritrea's ongoing efforts to enhance food security and resilience stand as part of this broader global commitment.

Since achieving independence in 1991, Eritrea has placed food security at the center of its national development agenda.

Eritrea's Unwavering Commitment to Sustainable Food Security

Located in the Sahel region within the Horn of Africa, Eritrea is characterized by an arid and semi-arid climate with limited and erratic rainfall, making it particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. To address this, the country has prioritized reducing dependence on rain-fed agriculture and modernizing the sector to enhance productivity and climate resilience.

Over the past three decades, the Eritrean government has invested heavily in infrastructure to support agricultural growth. Across all regions, dams, water reservoirs, terraces, and catchments have been constructed to increase water availability for irrigation and domestic use. Around major dams, access roads and storage facilities have improved efficiency, expanded access to markets, and boosted productivity.

To further support farmers, the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) implements programs that promote water harvesting, expansion of arable land, improved seed varieties, modern farming techniques, and environmentally friendly inputs. Efforts to combat soil erosion and land degradation are coupled with initiatives that diversify rural livelihoods through integrated household packages designed to supplement incomes and strengthen resilience.

Livestock health is another national priority. A comprehensive national program provides free, compulsory vaccinations against major animal and zoonotic diseases. Since 2013, an average of 2.5 million animals have been vaccinated annually, resulting in significant reductions in disease incidence and mortality.

Capacity building remains central to agricultural advancement. Through the MoA and Hamelmalo College of Agriculture, experts and extension agents provide nationwide, hands-on training and technical support at no cost. The establishment of farmer field schools has been particularly successful, creating spaces for farmers to exchange knowledge, share experiences, and adopt best practices in crop and livestock management.

A flagship initiative in this regard is the Minimum Integrated Household Agricultural Package (MIHAP), launched in 2013 to promote inclusion, sustainability, and poverty reduction. Each rural household receives a comprehensive package that typically includes a dairy cow or 12 goats, 25 chickens, two beehives, 20 fruit and leguminous trees, a vegetable garden, cropland, and access to modern inputs and training. Thousands of households – many headed by women – have benefited from MIHAP, leading to tangible improvements in nutrition, income, and self-sufficiency.

Eritrea is also exploring new frontiers in agriculture through urban and peri-urban farming.

Innovative techniques such as vertical farming, rooftop gardening, hydroponics, and aquaponics are being promoted to diversify diets and increase access to fresh produce. These systems combine nutrient-dense crops with short-cycle livestock like chickens and rabbits, contributing to better urban nutrition.

Another promising area of growth is date palm production. The Red Sea region's climate is well-suited to date cultivation, and the government has actively encouraged the development of this sub-sector since 2003. Through partnerships with the UNDP, FAO, and IFAD, Eritrea is working to modernize the industry by providing technological support and training for national experts and farmers. This collaborative effort is creating new opportunities for livelihoods, food security, and economic growth.

Partnerships remain a key pillar of Eritrea's agricultural strategy. Collaboration with regional and international organizations continues to strengthen research, regulation, extension services, and capacity-building across the sector.

Despite persistent challenges, Eritrea has made meaningful progress in improving food security and agricultural development. This was highlighted in its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), presented to the United Nations in 2022, which reported notable gains in agricultural productivity and nutrition outcomes.

Looking ahead, Eritrea's ongoing investments in infrastructure, innovation, and sustainable practices place the country on a promising path toward achieving long-term food security. With continued focus on climate resilience, capacity-building, and inclusive growth, Eritrea is steadily moving toward a future of self-reliance and stability. In the spirit of World Food Day 2025, the nation's efforts exemplify how local action and determination can contribute to global progress toward a zero-hunger world.





Marriage in Eritrea: A Cultural Institution of Unity and Identity

Luwam Kahsay H.

Marriage in Eritrea is a deeply rooted social institution that reflects the values, traditions, and communal bonds of the nation's diverse ethnic groups. Across the country, marriage is celebrated not only as a union between two individuals but as an alliance between families, clans, and communities. It plays a vital role in preserving cultural heritage, reinforcing kinship ties, and fostering social cohesion.



Historically, marriage in Eritrea has served multiple functions beyond companionship. In many rural communities, it has served as a mechanism for resolving disputes and strengthening fragile relationships between communities. These practices were especially prevalent in pre-modern times, when tribal and clan affiliations were central to social organization.

Most Eritrean ethnic groups follow a patrilineal system, where lineage and inheritance are traced through the male line. A newly married couple spend their married life at the groom's village. This tradition reinforces the continuity of

male lineage and the integration of the bride into her husband's social network. The Kunama ethnic group follow a matrilineal system, and the groom may settle in the bride's locality.

In traditional Eritrean society, arranged marriages were the norm. Parents and elders played a central role in selecting suitable partners, negotiating dowry arrangements, and organizing wedding parties. These decisions were influenced

by a variety of factors, including economic considerations, social status, and the desire to forge alliances between families. The process was governed by communal laws and customs, which varied across ethnic groups that shared common principles of respect, reciprocity, and social responsibility.

Dowry and bride wealth are key components of negotiations in marriage. In most ethnic groups, dowry is provided by the bride's family and may include livestock, land, jewelry, or other valuable items. In the Afar, however, bride wealth—offered by the groom's family—plays a more prominent

role. These are not merely economic transactions; they symbolize commitment, honor, and the merging of two family lineages.

In the Tigrigna ethnic group, marriage is formalized through a communal and religious covenant known as qal-kidan. This covenant is recognized by the church and the community, underscoring the dual spiritual and social dimensions of the union. The process begins with an engagement ceremony called hitse, during which families agree on logistics, guest lists, gift exchanges, and ceremonial details.

During the hitse, the bride's family traditionally has greater influence, presenting its wishes regarding the wedding arrangements. The groom's family is expected to respond with civility and respect, using polite language and gestures. This negotiation process reflects the values of diplomacy and mutual respect.

Preparations for the wedding span several weeks or even months. Activities include brewing traditional beverages such as siwa, a beer-like drink, and mes, a honey-based alcoholic beverage. Families also engage in food preparation and the distribution of wedding invitation cards.

On the eve of the wedding, festivities known as arki hilfot take place at the bride's home. These celebrations feature music, dancing, and communal feasting, often lasting until late at night. The covenant ceremony occurs the following morning, typically in a church, and is followed by a celebratory procession led by the groom's family, werad'o meria. Community elders, selected by mutual agreement, officially declare the marriage valid under customary law.

Guests are served food and drink in what's known as me'adi, a sitting arrangement around a small table in groups of eight, eating from the same platter, which reinforces the communal nature of the celebration. Traditional drinks such as siwa and mes are served, and the festivities continue with music and dance. In rural areas, the bride is traditionally transported to the groom's home on a mule's back, marking the beginning of the honeymoon.

Marriage involves formal contracts recognized by both religious and communal institutions. Material or monetary gifts, gezmi,



may be offered by the bride's family to the couple or the groom's family. These exchanges serve as tokens of goodwill and support for the newlyweds.

Newly married couples may initially reside with either family,

The groom is expected to participate in farming, household chores, and other social duties. His performance is closely observed by the bride's family, who ultimately decide whether the marriage should proceed. Once the family is satisfied,



depending on logistical and economic factors. However, they are expected to establish their own household as soon as possible. Upon doing so, they are given a plot of land to build a house and a farm on, marking their full integration into adult society.

In the Kunama ethnic group, marriage customs are rooted in matrilineal values. The marriage process traditionally spans over a year, during which the couple lives with the bride's family. This extended honeymoon period serves as a probationary phase, during which the groom must demonstrate his productivity and commitment.

the couple may begin building their own home and establishing an independent household.

Traditional customs associated with marriage remain strong in rural areas, while they are influenced by modernization in urban areas. In cities, couples increasingly choose their own partners, and arranged marriages are less common. Despite these shifts, the cultural significance of marriage endures. Eritrean weddings continue to be vibrant expressions of identity, community, and tradition. They serve as reminders of the country's rich heritage and the enduring values that bind its people together.



REPORTAGE

Mussie Efrem

Commemorating Global Priorities: A Unified Fight against Hunger and Poverty

This week, the world observed two critical global events that are deeply intertwined: World Food Day and the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. Both serve as reminders that hunger is the most devastating symptom of poverty—and that a life of dignity is impossible without food security and economic justice.



Dr. Pa Lamin Beyai

In a strong reflection of this interconnection, Eritrea jointly



address, Mr. Tekleab Misgina, Director General of Regulatory Services at the Ministry of Agriculture, reaffirmed Eritrea's commitment to food security as a pillar of its national

Production, Better Nutrition, a Better Environment, and a Better Life.” Meanwhile, UNDP’s Dr. Pa Lamin Beyai underscored the importance of integrated efforts, pointing

implemented in various parts of the country.

The global fight against hunger and poverty has reached a critical juncture. Conflict, climate change, and economic shocks have left an estimated 673 million people undernourished and over 2.3 billion experiencing food insecurity worldwide. This deepening crisis perpetuates the cycle of poverty and undermines global stability.

Eritrea’s national strategy, in contrast, focuses on building a resilient and self-reliant food system. Its multi-sectoral approach emphasizes massive investment in water infrastructure, with more than 800 dams and ponds constructed since independence to enhance irrigation and water management. The country has also introduced 45 drought-resistant crop



Mr. Tekleab Misgina

varieties, expanded horticultural production, and strengthened the integration of agriculture and health. Initiatives led by the Ministry of Health, such as free livestock vaccination campaigns and nutrition programs targeting women and children, are helping to ensure food safety and improve public health.

The commemoration concluded with a lively agricultural exhibition that showcased local harvests, innovative farming methods, and value-added products. Cultural performances of music and poetry added vibrancy to the occasion, serving as a heartfelt tribute to the resilience of farmers and the collective determination to overcome hunger and poverty.

Ultimately, the joint observance stood as a compelling reminder that only through shared vision, solidarity, and sustained action can humanity achieve the global aspiration of a world free from hunger and poverty.



commemorated the two days on October 16 at Hotel Mai-Nefhi, bringing together government officials, diplomats, and representatives of UN agencies to advocate for a unified approach in addressing these global challenges.

The day’s themes underscored the power of cooperation. World Food Day’s call to go “Hand in Hand for Better Food and a Better Future” aligned perfectly with the poverty eradication message, “Empowering Communities through Climate Change Action and Food Security Initiatives.” Together, they emphasized that collective action, local empowerment, and climate resilience are essential to sustainable progress.

Delivering the keynote

development policy. He outlined ongoing efforts to modernize the agricultural sector through the introduction of advanced technologies and drought-resistant crop varieties, while promoting environmentally sustainable farming practices.

The event also marked a significant milestone—the 80th anniversary of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations, as well as the 60th anniversary of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Representatives from these organizations reiterated their commitment to partnership and collaboration. Dr. Qu Dongyu and Ms. Ariella Glinni of the FAO highlighted the organization’s guiding principles of “Better

to ongoing climate-resilient agricultural initiatives being





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Salary: As per company salary scale
Contract type: Indefinite period
Number required: Two (2)

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3. Prepare drilling reports to head office weekly.

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Qualifications:

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Skills:

1. More than 5 years' experience.
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Skills:

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3. Physically fit.

Additional requirements for Nationals:

1. Having fulfilled his /her national service obligation and provide evidence of release paper from the Ministry of Defense.
2. Present the clearance paper from current or last employer.
3. Testimonial documents to be attached (CV, work experience credentials, a copy of your National Identity Card, etc)
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5. Only shortlisted applicant will be considered as potential candidates for an interview.
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Address: Please mail your application to the following address

1. Zhong Chang Mining P.L.Co
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Note to Eritrean applicants:

1. Please send a copy of your applications to Aliens Employment Permit Affairs.
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- (5) Create strategic production plans based on the analysis of the company's status and financial forecasts. Developing strategies that work to minimize financial risk;

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- (3) Ability to work in culturally diverse working environments;
- (4) Ability to work well with people;
- (5) Commercial and business awareness and with an analytical mind.
- (6) Team management skills
- (7) Problem solving skills, Teamwork, and collaboration skills

Language:

- 1 Language proficiency in English is required.

Additional requirements for Nationals:

- Having fulfilled his/her National Service obligation and providing evidence of release paper from the Ministry of Defence.
- Present clearance paper from current/last employer
- Testimonial documents to be attached (CV, Work experience credentials, a copy of your National Identity Card, etc.).
- Only shortlisted applicants would be considered as potential candidates for an interview.
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1. ENFI-MCCT MINING ENGINEERING PLC.

P.O.Box 6547 Asmara, Eritrea

2. Mineral Resources Management

P.O. Box-272, Asmara

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Aliens Employment Permit Affairs

P.O.Box 7940 Asmara, Eritrea

**LETTER
to the
EDITOR**

Modern gadgets —mobile phones, tablets, iPads, laptops, and other smart devices — can influence a child’s mental and physical development positively and negatively, depending on how often and for what purpose they are used. This article explores how these gadgets affect the mental and physical development of children and their emotional, behavioral and social skills.

Mental Development

The use of the modern gadgets has been found to affect the mental development of children, positively and negatively.

The use of modern gadgets gives access to learning tools such as educational apps, e-books and videos that may enhance vocabulary, problem-solving skills, and general knowledge. Such gadgets can also promote cognitive stimulation through interactive games that can strengthen memory, attention, and logical thinking. Moreover, early familiarity with technology helps children adapt to modern learning environments, thereby promoting digital literacy.

Constant screen switching, such as jumping rapidly between apps, videos, games, and messages, and quick dopamine release from games or videos can make sustained focus harder and reduces attention span. Dopamine is a brain chemical linked to motivation, pleasure, and learning.

Excessive gadget use can replace face-to-face interactions, slowing development of empathy and communication, resulting in delayed social skills. Overexposure to bright screens and fast-paced content can overstimulate the brain, leading to irritability, restlessness, and difficulty in calming down. Blue light from screens suppresses melatonin, delaying sleep onset and reducing sleep quality, causing sleep disruption.

Melatonin is a hormone naturally produced by our brain in response to darkness, and it plays a key role in regulating our circadian rhythm — our body’s daily internal “sleep-wake” clock. Such fast-changing, highly stimulating content of the gadgets trains the brain to expect instant rewards and makes it difficult for children to concentrate on slower, less stimulating activities such as writing, reading a book, doing a homework, or listening to a lecture.

Physical Development

The use of the modern gadgets affects, positively and negatively, not only the mental development

The Effects of Modern Gadgets on the Development of Children

of children but their physical development.

Though limited compared to real-world hands-on activities, physical activities, such as swiping, tapping, and typing that are associated with the use of modern gadgets, can improve finger dexterity — the fine motor skills. Some of the gadgets can also assist children with special needs through speech apps, sensory tools, and adaptive learning programs, providing assistive technology for the disabled.

The use of modern devices such as mobile phones has many harmful effects on the physical development of children. Children hooked over devices for long hours can suffer from back, neck, and shoulder strain and can end up in poor posture and musculoskeletal structure. They can also feel eye strain (digital eye syndrome), symptoms of which include dryness, blurred vision, and headaches. Screen time often replaces outdoor play and results in reduced physical activity, leading to weaker muscles, poor coordination, and higher risk of obesity. Repetitive tapping or gaming can cause strain in fingers and wrists due to the overuse of fine motor muscles. Such injuries may end up incapacitating or disabling children to use their fingers in writing or doing other significant tasks. Studies have revealed that 6th and 7th grade students who spend most of their time over smart devices cannot properly write using pen or pencil.

Emotional & Behavioral Impacts

Many children jump rapidly between apps, videos, games, and messages. This constant switching doesn’t give the brain much time to focus deeply on one thing. Over time, the brain becomes used to frequent novelty due to dopamine release, so staying with one task feels boring or uncomfortable. Games, videos, and apps are designed to give small, frequent rewards.

Each reward triggers a tiny release of dopamine, making you want to keep on going. When children spend a lot of time on fast-reward activities, the brain starts to crave constant stimulation. Slower activities, such as working on a math problem, a homework, listening to a lecture, and reading

a chapter, don’t give that rapid dopamine release, and, as a result, the brain loses patience. This can lead to restlessness, distraction, or a habit of seeking something “more exciting” every few seconds.

Sudden withdrawal from screens can trigger mood swings in children accustomed to constant stimulation and may cause increased irritability and nervousness, causing children to throw tantrums. Children may become overly dependent on gadgets for entertainment, neglecting other interests, and they may develop addiction-like behavior. Without proper supervision, children can be exposed to inappropriate content and may come across violent, sexual, or misleading materials. That could be one of the reasons why young children (teen-agers) in the western world take guns and shoot their classmates or some of their family members.

The World Health Organization (WHO) makes the following recommendations on the healthy use of screen time limits to young children:

- Children under 2 years: Avoid screen time entirely (except video calls).
- Ages 2–5: No more than 1 hour/day, preferably less.
- Older children: Prioritize quality content and balance with offline activities.
- Tech-Free Zones/Times — No gadgets during meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner) or 1–2 hours before bedtime.
- Encourage Outdoor Play — Maintain a healthy mix of physical activity, social interaction, and creativity. Parents should co-view and discuss contents with their children to build common critical thinking.

On the basis of the negative impacts of the modern gadgets on the development of children, many countries have either imposed restrictions or decided to totally ban the use of these gadgets in schools. Governments and schools that restrict or ban mobile phones generally give educational, developmental, and safety-related justifications, often focusing on the following:

Better learning outcomes: banning or restricting modern gadgets in schools has been

shown to improve performance of students (especially among lower-achieving students), by reducing distraction, and encouraging active class participation. Without phones, students are more likely to engage in class discussions and activities. Besides, students will be discouraged to use their phones for simple calculations and will be encouraged to memorize mathematical tables, formulae, vocabulary, etc.

Improved socialization: banning of the gadgets may encourage face-to-face interaction, reducing cyberbullying and sexting, and can curb cheating. Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place through digital devices (phones, computers, and tablets) that may include sending mean or threatening messages, spreading rumors or sharing embarrassing photos/videos on line. Sexting is the sharing of sexually explicit messages, images (e.g. sending nude or semi-nude photos), or videos via mobile phones or other digital devices.

Mental health protection: banning or restricting the gadgets has been shown to protect mental health by reducing anxiety and stress, protecting self-esteem, and promoting mindfulness.

Physical health: excessive use of modern gadgets encourages sedentary behavior, which could negatively impact health of the users, deprives normal sleeping hours and may cause neck, shoulder, and eye strains. Thus, appropriate use of these gadgets could reduce sedentary behavior, encouraging play and physical activity instead of screen time. Besides, it prevents sleep deprivation and avoids overuse injuries of parts of the body, such as neck, eyes, and fingers.

Virtual Autism: is a term used to describe autism-like symptoms in young children that are believed to arise from excessive exposure to screens (TVs, tablets, iPads, smartphones, etc.) during critical periods of brain development, especially under age 3, compared to the traditional neurodevelopmental causes of autism. During early development, a child’s brain relies heavily on social interaction, movement, and sensory experience. When these are replaced by passive screen time the child’s language, emotion

regulation, and attention may not develop properly. As a result, the child may withdraw from social environments, mimicking core autism traits. Warning signs include: lack of response to name, poor eye contact, speech delay, preference for screens over people, tantrums when screen time is removed, and delayed motor skills. Virtual autism can improve or disappear, if addressed early, with screen reduction and increased human interaction.

Fairness among students: another reason for banning smart phones emanates from the fact that all students cannot afford to buy the latest smartphones or other gadgets, which can create stigma or inequality among students. Thus, equal learning conditions are ensured and all students are treated equally when such gadgets are banned from schools.

Safety and discipline: banning or limiting the use of smart phones and other gadgets prevents the youth from misuse of these gadgets and limits their exposure to harmful content. Cyberbullying and sexting are the major reasons why many countries and schools impose restrictions or bans on phone use among students.

Globally, about 15–20 educational systems have enacted complete bans (no phones in schools) and about 60 educational systems have imposed restrictions (classroom bans, partial grade-level bans, exam bans, or teacher discretion). Europe is leading with both complete bans (France, Italy, and Hungary) and classroom restrictions, while Asia and Africa are following with rapid adoption of restrictions, and some moving toward full bans. The Americas have mixed policies — with Brazil and Uruguay adopting national rules banning the use of smart phones, while U.S. and Canada rely on state/province-level policies. By 2025, about 40% of education systems worldwide had enacted some kind of smartphone regulation in schools.

Considering the benefits and harmful effects of modern gadgets such as smart phones, it is, indeed, high time for policies governing their use to be designed for the safety and wellbeing of students in Eritrea.

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(Source: ChatGPT-AI, 2025)