

Looking Back at 2022



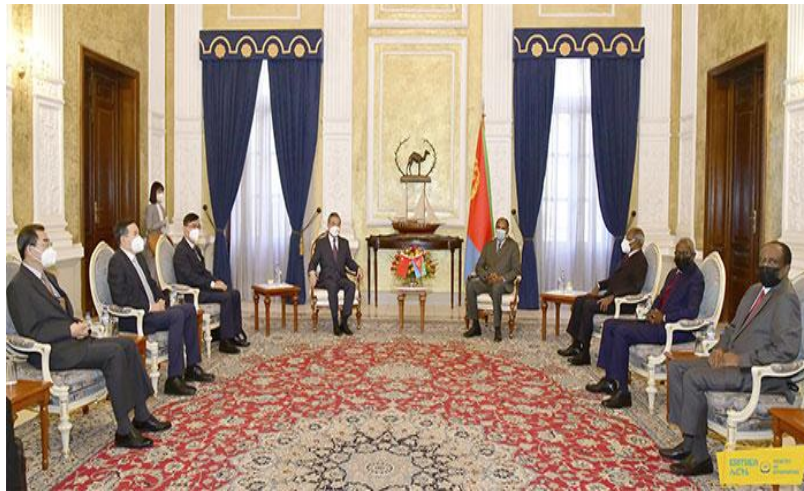
By : - Dr. Fikrejesus Amahazion

January

2022 began on a sombre note. Veteran freedom fighter and one of the prominent leaders of Eritrea's long liberation struggle, Romodan Mohammed Nur, passed away at the beginning of the month at the age of 83 due to illness. Having joined the Eritrean Liberation Front in 1964 and serving as Commissioner of the Fourth Department during the early years of the liberation struggle, Romodan went on to become one of the founders of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF). He was elected Secretary of the EPLF during its first Congress, while after independence he served the nation as Governor of the Northern Red Sea Region and Minister of Justice. Although Romodan's passing was a moment of profound sorrow for the nation, he also left behind a towering, shining example of commitment and service to country for all others to aspire to.

During the first week of January, a senior Chinese delegation, led by Wang Yi, State Councilor and Foreign Minister of China, visited Eritrea to meet with President Isaias Afwerki, Foreign Minister Osman Saleh, and other officials. The fact that Eritrea was the Chinese delegation's first overseas visit of the year underscored the countries' growing closeness. During the visit, Eritrean and Chinese officials discussed bilateral and international issues of common interest,

and the two foreign ministers signed a joint statement agreeing to further cooperation and development of the China-Eritrea partnership.



January not only starts the year – it is also when several important religious holidays are observed. Both Geez Christmas and Timket were celebrated enthusiastically by Eritreans at home and abroad. During events to mark the occasions, the late Reverend Abune Qerlos, Fifth Patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo Church, extended warm wishes to all.

Water is life, and so it was exciting to see the year begin with the inauguration of a new potable water project in Dembeselam administrative area, Adi-Tekelezan sub-zone. Built at a cost of over two million Nakfa, the project was led by the Water Development Department in Anseba Region and involved the active cooperation of the local community.

Another important development was the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework agreement signed by the Eritrean government and the Office of the United Nations (UN). Covering a period of five years, the agreement aims to strengthen cooperation and promote development in a number of areas, including infrastructure, agriculture, energy, industry, health, education, and capacity-building, among others. As part of the launch of the agreement, a large delegation from the UN conducted a multiday visit to Eritrea to hold talks with officials and visit various developmental sites.

Sticking with development, the Asmara College of Education (ACE) held its 15th commencement ceremony, with 115 students graduating. A further 101

students from ACE were presented certificates for completing vocational training programs organized by the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students.

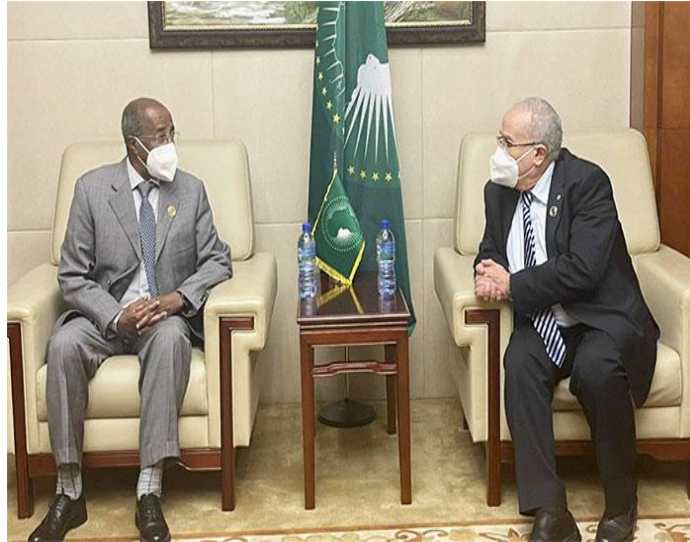
The month also saw important events conducted by Eritreans abroad. Specifically, the YPFDJ in Italy conducted its fifth annual congress in Milan, while in Australia, the Eritrean community gathered for the 22nd annual Eritrean Festival.

Finally, January featured an in-depth interview with President Isaias conducted by local media outlets. Covering a number of regional and domestic topics, the interview featured many interesting points, including on the TPLF-instigated war in Ethiopia, the group's attack on Eritrea, the illegality of unilateral sanctions, and Eritrea's growing cooperation with different partners, among others.

February

The second month began with a senior Eritrean delegation composed of Foreign Minister Osman Saleh and Presidential Adviser Yemane Gebreab attending the 35th Summit of the African Union (AU). In addition to delivering an official statement, the delegation met and held talks with representatives of AU member states and organizations.

Also in diplomacy, on 7 February President Isaias Afwerki met with Mikhail Bogdanov, Special Representative of President Vladimir Putin for the Middle East and Africa, in Massawa. Bogdanov delivered a message from the Russian leader to President Isaias and stated that the visit underscored Russia's readiness for cooperation with Eritrea. During the meeting, President Isaias underlined the vital contribution that Russian could make to the progress of Africa.



February forever stands out on the annual Eritrean calendar, for it is forever associated with Operation Fenkil. During official celebrations held in Massawa under the theme, “Fenkil: Embodiment of Heroism of Generations”, President Isaias laid a wreath at the Twalet Martyrs Cemetery in tribute to those who gave their lives while fighting for Eritrean independence. As part of the celebratory events, the Eastern Africa Half-Marathon Championship 2022 was also held in Massawa. In the male category, Samson Amare from the Southern Region came in first place, while Nazareth Woldu won the female category race.

Remaining with athletics, Eritrea’s National Olympic Committee (NOC) organized a workshop to develop a five-year strategic plan. Led by Leul Fissehay, President of the NOC, the workshop was attended by representatives from the Commission of Culture and Sports, national sports federations, various officials, and other stakeholders.

One of the most exciting developments of the month was the Eritrean Aviation College’s (EAC) first commencement. Held at the Fenkil Air Force Base in Massawa, the ceremony saw graduates awarded with advanced diplomas. In his keynote address, President Isaias congratulated the students and their families, and also commended the contributions of trainers and teachers.

Other important local events in February included: the election of area administrators, managing directors, and village coordinators in the eight administrative areas of Habero sub-zone; community meetings on development

programs in Mai-Aini sub-zone; and the renovation of roads linking the five villages of Durfo administrative area, Akria sub-zone.



Meanwhile, looking abroad, the PFDJ branch in Sweden held its annual congress on 19 February in Vasteras. During the meeting, in which about 100 representatives from 22 sub-branches participated, a new executive committee was elected.

March

As always, International Women's Day, 8 March, was celebrated by Eritreans in the country and around the world. The occasion allowed for the immense and multifaceted contributions of women, both before and after independence, to be once again recognized and honored. In connection with the special day, members of the National Union of Eritrean Women from 13 sub-zones of the Central region, as well as women in the civil services, voluntarily donated blood to the National Blood Bank.

In international diplomacy, President Isaias met the Special Envoy of the People's Republic of China to the Horn of Africa, Ambassador Xue Bing, in Asmara. During the meeting, which was also attended by other officials from both countries, the two discussed bilateral issues, as well as peace and security in the Horn of Africa. Meanwhile, the Eritrean Ambassador to the Republic of South Sudan, Yohannes Teklemicael met with Mayiik Ayii Deng, Minister of

Foreign Affairs of South Sudan. Their meeting focused on strengthening bilateral ties and regional developments. Similarly, Humed Yahiya, Chargé d'affaires at the Eritrean Embassy in Kuwait, met with Assistant Foreign Minister of Kuwait for African Affairs, Ali Sulaiman Al-Saeed, to discuss bilateral issues.



As well, Foreign Minister Osman Saleh participated in the Tokyo International Conference on African Development and also delivered a speech covering various topics. Meanwhile, at the 39th Session of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, an Eritrean delegation led by Luul Gebreab, Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, delivered the country's national report on implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The report reviewed progress made and challenges encountered, as well as outlined steps forward.

Once again demonstrating their pedigree, Eritrean cyclists put in a strong performance at the African Championships, held in Egypt. Henok Mulubrahan took gold in the elite category road race, while across all male and female categories Eritrea took home a total of 15 medals (seven gold, six silver, and two bronze).

There were several education- and training-related highlights during the month. Students from vocational schools across the country that joined the 34th round of national service in Sawa graduated on 13 March, while the Ministry of Education branch in the Northern Red Sea region handed out awards to

outstanding students in Massawa sub-zone. Additionally, the National Confederation of Eritrean Workers, in cooperation with the Northern Red Sea administration, organized vocational training for 52 government employees, and the PFDJ Cultural Affairs Department handed out awards to 130 youth that completed a five-month training program focusing on theater and filmmaking.



Last, elections for area administrators, managing directors, and village coordinators were conducted in several parts of the Northern Red Sea region, including the sub-zones of Sheib and Gelalo.

April

The month began with World Autism Awareness Day being observed nationwide, including in special events held in Mai-Diminet, Central Region and Assab, Southern Red Sea Region. The colorful events, which involved the participation of officials, various ministries, students, community groups, and other stakeholders, promoted greater awareness and called for fighting stigma and discrimination.

On the diplomatic front, a high-level Eritrean delegation, led by Foreign Minister Osman Saleh and Presidential Adviser Yemane Gebreab, conducted a working visit to Russia upon the invitation of Sergei Lavrov, Foreign Minister of Russia. He briefed the Eritrean delegation on the conflict in Ukraine, while the Eritrean delegation reiterated Eritrea's position and called for a bilateral

solution to the conflict. The meeting also saw dialogue on developments in the Horn of Africa and the expression of desire for mutually beneficial cooperation.



Regionally, an Eritrean high-level delegation paid several working visits to Sudan. During the visits, the delegation, again led by Foreign Minister Osman Saleh and Presidential Adviser Yemane Gebreab, met with General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, Chairman of the Sovereign Council, Vice-Chairman, General Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, and a range of officials and community leaders. The delegation underscored Eritrea's support for a locally-driven solution to the country's challenges and noted that Eritrea has confidence in the Sudanese people's capability to achieve peace, stability, and unity. Additionally, Eritrea's Ambassador to South Sudan, Yohannes Teklemichael, met with Mayiik Ayii Deng, Foreign Minister of South Sudan, and other officials. They discussed several issues, including strengthening bilateral ties, regional developments, and integration, among others.

April saw a number of development-related activities. Residents of Ad-Omar, Dembe-Zeratsion, Dembe Adi-Tsegay, Guldmit, and Adi-Tesfu came together to support the renovation of an 18-kilometer road, while residents of Ad-Fakai, Hagaz sub-zone, built terraces and carried out other water and soil conservation activities. As well, in mid-April, a new gymnasium, established by local and overseas branches of the National Association of Eritrean War-disabled Veterans, was opened in Mendefera. On 28 April, the Ministry of Health, alongside local and international partners, launched its five-year strategic plan. Running from 2022-2026, the strategic plan includes several core components.

Meanwhile, in the sub-zones of Goluj and Areza, cultural and sports week events for students were organized, while at Mai-Nefhi College of Science, 278 students received awards for academic excellence. Similarly, in Segeneiti sub-zone, 16 students were recognized for registering top scores in the eighth-grade national examination. Last, the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students organized a vocational workshop for 101 youth in Mai-Aini sub-zone.



Eritrean communities abroad remained active. In Sweden, South Sudan, and Uganda, Eritrean nationals held meetings and seminars focusing on different issues. Also, in Europe, YPFDJ branches came together in Rome for the organization's 16th annual conference. One of the highlights of the month was Nazareth Woldu winning the 12th edition of the Daegu Marathon in South Korea. Finishing the race in 2:21:55, the Olympian set a new personal, national, and course record.

May

May is a month of celebration and it began, as always, with events marking International Worker's Day. The official commemoration took place at the National Confederation of Eritrean Workers, with the late Tekeste Baire commending workers nationwide for their multifaceted contributions. On the following day, Eid Al Fetir Al Mubarek was celebrated across the country. Special prayer services, attended by religious leaders and government officials, among others, took place at Bahti Meskerem Square, while Sheik Salem Ibrahim

Almukhtar, Mufti of Eritrea and Chairman of Higher Assembly of Eritrean Iftae and Islamic Affairs, extended warm wishes to all. Weeks later, the nation came together to celebrate Eritrea's independence.



At the main ceremony in Asmara Stadium, President Isaias congratulated all Eritreans, while Ambassador Zemedu Tekle, Commissioner of Culture and Sports, expressed appreciation to those that contributed to making the festivities so enjoyable. Similarly, Eritreans around the world marked the occasion with colorful, enthusiastic celebrations. Messages of congratulations also poured in from leaders and organizations around the world.

Shifting to development, eye surgeries were conducted on 250 patients in six sub-zones of the

Southern region, a community greening campaign was conducted in the Central Region, and residents of Bakla administrative area, Nakfa sub-zone conducted water and soil conservation activities. As well, Keih Bahri Secondary School, located in Central region, handed out awards to 146 students that registered top scores on the annual National School Leaving Exam, while Dembe Sembel Junior and High School added three classrooms at a cost of 2.4 million Nakfa.

Regarding diplomacy, Eritrea's Ambassador to Sudan, Isa Ahmed Isa met with General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, Chairman of the Sovereign Council of Sudan, and Vice-Chairman, General Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, in Khartoum. During the meeting, various topics were discussed and Ambassador Isa delivered a

message from President Isaias focused on strengthening bilateral ties and Eritrea's support to Sudan.



As well, Foreign Minister Osman Saleh and Presidential Adviser Yemane Gebreab met South Sudan's President, Salva Kiir Mayardit, in Juba and delivered a message from President Isaias. The meeting touched upon topics of mutual interest, and President Isaias' message underscored Eritrea's support for the independence and sovereignty of South Sudan. The Eritrean delegation also visited Chad and met with General Mahamet Idris Deby, President of the Military Council. The delegation delivered a message from President Isaias and stressed Eritrea's readiness to establish cooperation. Within international forums, Eritrean experts from the Ministry of Agriculture participated at a COP15 meeting in Abidjan, and Ambassador Sophia Tesfamariam, Permanent Representative at the United Nations, delivered a statement at the International Migration Review Forum. In May, Presidential Advisor and the Head of Political Affairs of the PFDJ, Yemane Gebreab, gave a briefing to nationals in Juba, South Sudan. The discussion touched on numerous areas, including domestic issues and regional developments. As well, YPFDJ branches in Germany conducted a conference in Frankfurt, with the General Consul of Eritrea in Frankfurt, Kibreab Tekeste, meeting with participants.

Some of the biggest cheers of the month were for the trailblazing cyclist, Biniam Ghirmay. Following his historical exploits in March, where he won the Ghent-Wevelgem, becoming the first African to win a Belgium cobblestone classic, he

won Stage 10 of the Giro d'Italia and became the first black African rider to win a Grand Tour stage. Unfortunately, he was forced to withdraw from the competition with an eye injury.



June

While May celebrates independence, June is about remembering those who paid the ultimate sacrifice to achieve and protect it. Martyrs Day was commemorated by Eritreans nationwide and around the world. At a special ceremony, President Isaias placed a wreath at the Martyrs Cemetery in Asmara, while a nationwide minute of silence was observed. In connection with the occasion, prayer services were conducted at Saint Michael Church and Al-Khulafae Al-Rashideen Grand Mosque in Asmara.

For development, in Nakfa sub-zone, residents conducted water and soil conservation activities, and in all regions of the country, students, offices, and communities planted trees and carried out various environmental or sanitation efforts in connection with Martyrs Day. As part of the nation's observation of World Environment Day, the Ministry of Land, Water, and Environment organized a discussion forum at the National Confederation of Eritrean Workers Hall, and communities nationwide carried out a range of environment and sanitation activities under the theme, "Only One World".

Alongside the above, outstanding students at Harnet High School received awards of recognition, Mai Habar Technical School held its graduation ceremony, nearly 1,000 students graduated from Sawa Vocational Training Center, Barentu School of Assistant Nurses conferred certificates to 121 students, and 34 doctors completed special training programs organized by the Ministry of Health and UNICEF.

Additionally, a team of Eritrean researchers and experts participated at the 11th World Potato Congress in Ireland, and a delegation from the Ministry of Agriculture attended the 32nd Session of the Commission for Controlling Desert Locusts and its 36th Executive Committee Meeting in Saudi Arabia.

In terms of diplomacy, Isa Ahmed Isa, Eritrea's Ambassador to the Sudan, met with General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, Chairman of the Sovereign Council.

The two discussed issues of mutual interest and Ambassador Isa reaffirmed Eritrea's support for peace in Sudan. Meanwhile, in Asmara, President Isaias received the credentials of ambassadors from various countries, including Russia, Turkey, South Sudan, Oman, Thailand, Mauritania, Nigeria, the Philippines, Namibia, and Japan.

On the athletics scene, the highlight was the Eritrean Road Cycling Championships. In the junior male category, Aklilu Arefaine won the individual time trial, with Arsema Woldemichael taking first place in the junior female category. In the female elite and under-23 category, Danait Fitsum came in first, while Biniam Ghirmay won the equivalent male category. Finally, in the elite men's road race, Merhawi Kudus won first place, with Monaliza Araya winning the elite women's race.

July

For Eritreans, July is traditionally a month of festivity and celebration. Among the most special celebrations were those for Eid Al Adha, 1443 Hijira year. The occasion was marked nationwide, with the official ceremony at Bahti Meskeram Square overseen by Sheik Salem Ibrahim al-Muktar, Mufti of Eritrea. During his address, Sheik Salem extended warm wishes to all.

Also, a colorful entertainment program for members of the Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF) was held in Mai-Mne sub-zone. The program was organized to recognize the EDF's immense contributions to development and safeguarding national sovereignty. Finally, festivals were held by Eritrean communities worldwide, including in Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, and across Scandinavia. Festivals featured cultural programs, art exhibitions, sports competitions, and seminars, among other activities.



Alongside festivals and celebrations, July has traditionally been about graduations. This year was no different. 654 students graduated from the College of Business and Social Sciences (in Adi Keih), 193 from the College of Science (Mai-Nefhi), 581 from the College of Engineering Technology (COET, Mai-Nefhi), and 349 from the College of Agriculture (Hamelmalo). As well, in its 61st commencement ceremony, the Asmara Technical School awarded diplomas to 53 students, while the Dekemhare Police and Security Training Center awarded graduation certificates to 33 trainees.

One particularly special moment during July was the inauguration of a new training center in Tessenei. Built at a cost of 33 million Nakfa and sponsored by the Swiss branch of the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW), the center is expected to promote gender empowerment through strengthening women's skills.

July also saw various development-related activities: National Malaria Day was observed at Adi-Guaedad, Gala-Nefhi sub-zone; residents of Halhale sub-zone

conducted a range of water and soil conservation activities; and the national summer student greening program, which saw over 23,000 students nationwide take part, was launched. Furthermore, the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students organized a workshop for 132 youth from across Gash Barka, as well as a three-month training program on electrical installation for 82 students from the COET; Segen Construction Company, with the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, provided an extended training program for 63 youth from Barentu and Shambuko; and the NUEW organized a leadership workshop for 80 members from various institutions.

Solidarity is a core component of Eritrean culture, and the month offered several illustrations. The administrative areas of Ingel and Duluh, in Gelalo sub-zone, distributed 42,000 Nakfa to seven local families of martyrs, while staff of the Ministry of Education branch in the Northern Red Sea Region donated 36,000 Nakfa to six families of martyrs. Additionally, students from Dembe Sembel School donated 15,000 Nakfa, as well as clothing and other materials, to patients the Fistula Center at the Southern Region Referral Hospital.



Turning to diplomacy, an Eritrean delegation participated at the 41st Session of the AU Ministerial Executive Council in Zambia, while in New York, an Eritrean delegation led by Ambassador Sophia Tesfamariam participated in the

2022 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and presented Eritrea's inaugural Voluntary National Review on the Sustainable Development Goals. Meanwhile, COMESA's Federation of National Associations of Women in Business held its Horn of Africa Summit in Asmara. Taking place at the National Confederation of Eritrean Workers Hall, the event saw representatives from across the Horn.

Last, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, President of Somalia, visited Eritrea for a four-day visit. He toured development sites, visited Somali cadets in training, and met with President Isaias and other government officials. The trip also saw the two leaders sign a memorandum of understanding, which outlined their agreement to work to strengthen cooperation and relations in various areas.



August

The eighth month was filled with development activities. Reflecting the principle of social justice, the National Association of the Deaf organized six-month course on sign language for 31 youths from various institutions, while also developing plans to establish more courses across the country. As well, the Culture and Sports Department in the Southern Region organized a seminar on the conservation of cultural heritage for local residents, the Southern Region branch of the Ministry of Education conducted activity assessment meetings in

Mendefera and Dekemhare, and residents of the sub-zones of Ghinda, Berik, Hagaz, and Serejeka carried out greening and water conservation activities.

Meanwhile, in Haikota sub-zone, local residents helped to organize an entertainment program dedicated to the EDF. The event, which featured music and cultural activities, was put together by the local community as an expression of gratitude and appreciation for the EDF's contributions to local development efforts, as well as its role in protection the nation's sovereignty.

In terms of diplomacy, an Eritrean delegation, led by of Osman Saleh, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Presidential Adviser Yemane Gebreab, participated at the 8th Tokyo International Conference for African Development in Tunisia. The delegation delivered a speech, while also participating in a series of meetings. Closer to home, Eritrea's Ambassador to Sudan, Isa Ahmed Isa, convened a public discussion with Eritreans in Khartoum, focusing on domestic issues and regional developments.

Eritrean communities around the world also remained active. The National Union of Eritrean Women branch in Germany organized a seminar for members from 20 sub-branches, and the annual Eritrean community festivals in Canada were enthusiastically celebrated in Calgary and Toronto. In Dallas, the National Council of Eritrean-Americans held a conference under the theme, "Building a Strong Nation Rooted in Grassroots Participation", before the city played host to the 48th annual Eritrean Community Festival in the US. As a part of events, the mayor of Dallas announced that 5 August would be dedicated as "Eritrea Day".



September

The first of the month represented the 61st anniversary of the beginning of Eritrea's armed struggle for independence. The special day was marked with a commemoration at national level in Barentu, featuring various cultural and music programs. Weeks later, Kudus Yohannes and Meskel were also enthusiastically celebrated nationwide.

As always, September was a month that featured numerous diplomatic activities. President Isaias sent a message of congratulation to Kenya's newly-elected leader, William Ruto, and he also met with Velamveli Muraledharan, India's State Minister for External Affairs. During the latter meeting, the two agreed to strengthen cooperation in diplomatic sectors and in global forums. Additionally, President Isaias met with the Special Envoy of the People's Republic of China to the Horn of Africa, Ambassador Xue Bing. The two discussed modalities of deepening bilateral cooperation in Eritrea's priority areas of development, and also agreed that development cooperation must be pursued within the framework of regional economic linkages.

Meanwhile, further abroad, at the United Nations (UN) in New York, a Eritrean senior delegation, comprising Osman Saleh, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Presidential Adviser Yemane Gebreab, and Ambassador Sophia Tesfamariam, participated at several high-level meetings and held bilateral talks with delegates of various countries, as well as with Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the UN, focusing on bilateral relations and issues of interest of the two sides. In addition, the delegation delivered official statements, participated at the Ministerial Meetings of the Non-Aligned Movement, Group of Friends in the Defense of the UN Charter, Least Developed Countries, and the Group of 77 and China, and attended other events, including the Transforming Education Summit.



In local development events, the 30th anniversary of the Fred Hollows Foundation was celebrated at the National Confederation of Eritrean Workers Hall, while the National Potato Conference was held at Asmara Palace Hotel under the theme, “One Vision and Harmonized Work for Sustainable Potato Seed Supply”. Both events featured the participation of government officials and various stakeholders. Additionally, a mother tongue pedagogy workshop was organized for teachers in the sub-zones of Forto-Sawa, Sel’a, Kerkebet, and Laielai-Gash; seed and productivity training was provided for 65 agricultural experts from agricultural colleges; and government-led public seminars were held with residents in the sub-zones of Asmat Gelalo, Foro, and Massawa. Finally, Debre Sina Holy Trinity College of Theology of the Orthodox Tewahdo Church of Eritrea held its graduation ceremony, with a total of 221 students receiving diploma and certificate awards.

October

Culture is at the root of Eritrean society. And a core element of the country’s culture is its rich diversity and faith traditions. Underscoring this, Eid Mewlid Al-Nebi was colorfully celebrated on 8 October nationwide. During the celebration held at the Al-Khulefa Al-Rasheedin Mosque, Mohammed-Seid Beshir, Chairman of the Islamic Awkaf of Asmara, and Sheik Salem Ibrahim Almuktar, Mufti of Eritrea, offered warm greetings to all and delivered a message of hope for peace and prosperity for the country.

The tenth month of the year was also full of development-related activities, including the graduation ceremony at the Orotta College of Medicine and Health Sciences. During the commencement, a total of 269 students were awarded either a degree or diploma. In addition, the month saw the National Association of Eritrean Teachers hold a meeting focused on capacity-building, and Musa

Hussein, Director General of General Education at the Ministry of Education, deliver a seminar for students at Warsai-Yikealo Secondary School. This was followed up by the National Union of Eritrean Women organizing a seminar for female students at the same institution.

Also in development, International Day of Senior Citizens was observed at national level in Asmara with a ceremony organized at Debat Training Center, and World Food Day and International Day for Eradication of Poverty 2022 were commemorated in Embaderho, with the occasion seeing the participation of ministers, representatives of UN Institutions in Eritrea, and ambassadors of various countries. Finally, the NUEW conducted a seminar for female teachers in the Central Region, around 54,000 livestock were vaccinated against various animal diseases in Hagaz sub-zone, and the Mai-Aini-Mendefera saw repairs through the strong participation of local residents.

In Eritrea, social justice and leaving no one behind are important guiding principles. Reflecting this, the National Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disability organized a meeting in Mendefera to raise public awareness and mobilize support, while the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare branch in Adi-Keih sub-zone extended school materials to 128 disadvantaged students in the area.

In terms of diplomacy and international engagement, the Ministry of Land, Water and Environment, in close cooperation with Global Monitoring for Environment Security and Africa Regional Center for Mapping of Resources for Development, organized a workshop focusing on environmental monitoring and appraisal. The gathering, held in Asmara, saw the participation of individuals from a number of countries.

Meanwhile, Eritrea participated at the 41st session of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), held in Montreal, Canada. The Eritrean delegation, led by Paulos Kahsai, Director General of Civil Aviation Authority of Eritrea, engaged in discussions with officials from the ICAO, including on challenges and prospects within the aviation sector. Additionally, the Eritrean Embassy in South Africa participated at the Diplomatic Fun Fair in Pretoria, South Africa. The Embassy was awarded the Tambo Award, recognizing it for presenting the best overall exhibition.

Last, the Eritrean community in Qatar held its 8th Congress, while Eritrea's Ambassador to Sudan, Isa Ahmed Isa, presented credentials to Mohamed Yonus al-Menfi, President of the Libyan Presidential Council, as Eritrea's non-resident ambassador to the country. During the meeting in Tripoli, Ambassador Isa

conveyed a message of good will from President Isaias and expressed Eritrea's readiness to strengthen bilateral relations.

November

Diplomatic engagements continued into November. President Isaias sent a message of congratulations to Lula da Silva upon his election win in Brazil, and an Eritrean delegation participated at the 17th African Union Extraordinary

Summit and African Continental Free Trade Area held in Niger. As well, President Hassan Shiek Mohamud of Somalia travelled to Eritrea for a multi-day visit. During his stay, he visited development projects, met with Somali cadets undergoing military training, and held extensive discussions with President Isaias and other Eritrean officials, focusing on bilateral and regional issues. Not too far away, in Tehran, Ambassador Sophia Tesfamariam delivered a statement at a meeting of the Group of Friends in Defense of the United Nations Charter, while an Eritrean delegation led by Tesfai Gbereselasie, Minister of Land, Water and Environment and Fasil Gebreselasie, Eritrea's Ambassador to Egypt, participated at the Climate Change Conference in Sharm El Sheik, Egypt. Notably, Eritrea also signed on to the Food and Agricultural Organization's Agreement on Port State Measures, a welcome step toward more effectively combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the region, and one that is expected to play a positive role in contributing to the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the country's living marine resources and marine ecosystems.



Focusing on development, once again the month was packed. Elections for area administrators and managing directors were conducted in Barentu sub-zone, World Toilet Day was observed in communities nationwide, the National Voluntary Blood Donors Association conducted its annual meeting at the Central Region Administration Hall, and residents in the villages of Adi-

Hawsha, Zigib, Adi-Yakob, Tsaeda-Christian, and Adi-Abeto came together to support vulnerable households with harvesting.

Meanwhile, for education, capacity-building, and skills development, the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students in Gogni sub-zone, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, provided a training workshop on first aid and control of malaria for 59 youth, the Eritrean Women's Agribusiness Association and the National Confederation of Eritrean Workers organized a course on business administration for 40 women, 130 staff of the Ministry of Information completed a workshop conducted by the United Nations Development Programme, and the Ministry of Health provided a course on financial and material management for employees.

Additionally, several schools handed out awards to students. In particular, Hadinet Junior High School, located in the Central Region, and Emba Gedom Junior and High School, located in Massawa, handed out certificates of recognition for students that recorded top scores in the 2021/2022 national examination.

Finally, in a national first, the Ministry of Health conducted a mass cervical cancer vaccination campaign. The multi-day nationwide campaign was carried out across 1,382 schools, 301 health stations, 250 temporary stations, and 60 mobile facilities, targeting females aged 9-15 years of age.

December

The final month of the year began on a somber note as His Holiness Abune Qerlos, the 5th Patriarch of the Orthodox Tewahdo Church of Eritrea, passed away on 2 December at the age of 96. Subsequently, a funeral service was held on 8 December at Abune Bitsie Amlak Monastery in Godeiti after a touching memorial service at Saint Mary's Church in Asmara. President Isaias, various government officials, delegates of sisterly churches in Egypt and Ethiopia, religious leaders, and members of the diplomatic corps and international organizations, among others, attended the service.

One of the highlights of both the month – and the entire year – was the inauguration of a new maternity ward at Keren Hospital. Built at a cost of 90 million Nakfa and developed with the support of international partners, the new wing is expected to play a significant, positive role in maternal and child health. Also in health, the Chinese medical team in Eritrea, in partnership with local doctors, performed special spinal surgeries at Halibet Hospital.

Even as the year wound down, development-related activities continued apace. International Aids Day and International Day of Persons with Disabilities were observed nationwide, helping to raise awareness and mobilize support. As well, the Ministry of Health branch in Gash Barka Region organized a training course focusing on the prevention of communicable diseases, outstanding students at Mai-Nefhi elementary and junior school in Asmara were awarded certificates, and residents of Goluj sub-zone came together to support disadvantaged households with harvesting.

Looking abroad, Eritrean nationals in both Sudan and South Sudan held public meetings. The gatherings, attended by Ambassador Isa Ahmed Isa, and Ambassador Yohannes Teklemicael, respectively, focused on issues of concerns for the local Eritrean communities, as well as Eritrean and regional developments.

Finally, in diplomacy, Eritrean delegations participated at the 15th conference of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Montreal, and the 10th Summit of the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, which took place in Luanda, Angola. Additionally, William Ruto, President of Kenya, accompanied by a delegation which included Cabinet Secretary and Defense Minister Aden Bare Duale Gure, Deputy Chief of Staff Joshat Koli Nanok, and other senior Kenyan officials, visited Eritrea. President Ruto and his delegation held talks with President Isaias, along with other Eritrean officials, on enhancing bilateral ties and consolidating regional partnership. At the conclusion of the visit, the two leaders signed a joint communique in which they agreed to bolster bilateral relations between Kenya and Eritrea, as well as improve people-to-people ties with a view to enhancing regional integration. Notably, the two countries also abolished visa requirements for their respective citizens.