

President Isaias Afwerki's Interview With Local Media Outlets



Eritrean media outlets conducted an interview with president Isaias Afwerki on the occasion of the new year 2026, on international, regional, and domestic issues. The full text follows:

Q.1 In your previous interview, you provided comprehensive and detailed explanations of the current global and regional situation. Building on that discussion, our questions today are brief and focused on recent developments. We will begin with global conditions, and then move on to our regional and internal affairs. The conflicting events, uncertainties, shifting dynamics, and unclear direction unfolding at the global level highlight a crisis of the transitional framework of the global governance system. Although the full picture has yet to emerge, based on a general assessment, what impact might these developments have on Africa and our region?

PIA: To speak about the future at the global level, and even to accurately describe the present, we must begin by examining where we have come from. The world has passed through distinct phases of the Cold war, each with its own characteristics. That era formally concluded with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the 1990s. In its aftermath, the notion of a unipolar world order emerged. Who initiated this project, and how it evolved, is a long historical process. What transpired during the last three decades is not necessarily congruent with what Fukuyama and Huntington envisaged.

Now, more than thirty years have passed. The ambition to create a unipolar world order; to bring the globe under comprehensive economic, technological, and

military dominance, has run its course. What results has this philosophy actually produced? Has it delivered peace, stability, justice, or prosperity? Or has it instead generated disorder and uncertainty? The present global confusion invites these fundamental questions. The first and most evident illustration is the current condition of the United States.

It's important to grasp that America's internal and external circumstances have significant global repercussions. We must therefore ask: what do we observe in the United States today, and what can we anticipate in the coming years? With President Donald Trump returning to power, what defining features characterize his approach? If we evaluate America's trajectory over the past three decades, we see a gradual decline in economic strength and pre-eminence, technological advantage, military dominance, and international influence. From the Clinton era onwards, this deteriorating trend has become manifest incrementally; step by step. One need only compare America's position then and now; its economic capacity, global standing, and level of acceptance, to recognize this shift. The endeavor to establish a unipolar world order has not produced the intended result; instead, it has coincided with America's eventual weakening.

Today, the United States carries a national debt exceeding 36 trillion dollars. Beyond the sheer scale of the debt, the more pressing question is whether America still possesses real productive economic power. By many indicators, its economic, military, and technological supremacy has diminished.

It is within this context that Trump's "MAGA" doctrine (Make America Great Again) must be understood. Implicit in this slogan is an acknowledgement that America is no longer "great" in the sense it once claimed, and that a deliberate effort is required to restore that status. Trump recognizing this reality as positive. This outlook does not belong to one individual alone; it reflects the thinking of a significant segment of American society. This raises further questions: What can realistically occur within America? How might this doctrine shape its global conduct? What possible decisions can Trump make on the basis of this doctrine? What measures will be pursued in the name of restoring greatness, and will they succeed?



During Trump's first term beginning in 2016, certain initiatives were launched but later reversed under the Biden administration. Now, with a Second Term underway, we must consider what policies may take shape over the next three years. One example is the recent measures toward Venezuela, justified under the pretext of combating narcotics trafficking. Following the reported abduction of President Maduro, the narcotics trafficking issue is fading. This is not an event isolated to Venezuela. Other countries – Greenland, Canada, Mexico, Cuba, Colombia, and Panama – have already been signaled as part of a larger strategic outlook and assigned timelines. Measures linked to the Venezuelan situation are already affecting Cuba. Iran also features prominently in similar near-term calculations.

If America adopts military measures under the MAGA doctrine, what consequences will follow? What would be the impact of actions concerning Greenland on Denmark and Europe? How would NATO cohesion be affected? What would pressure on Mexico and Canada imply – can it actually be sustained? If Iran were attacked, what repercussions would occur in our own region? Military initiatives taken in the name of combating narcotics or restoring order carry unpredictable and far-reaching consequences.

Military action is not the only tool under this doctrine. From skyrocketing tariffs to economic coercion, withdrawal from multilateral forums, debt leverage, and the logic of intervention based on perceived persecution—"the Whites in South Africa" or "Christians in Nigeria"—are all featured in this strategic toolkit. We have identified about nine or ten such instruments. There is also a patterns of intervention under the cloak of peace facilitation, as seen in the cases of Ukraine, Congo, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and the tensions between Thailand and Cambodia.

Are these measures truly designed to make America “Great,” or do they instead deepen global instability? What ultimate objective underlies this strategy?

Inferring from the trajectory of the MAGA policy, the primary objective of these measures in recent years has been to control the extraction of natural resources. Venezuela’s wealth is not limited to oil; generally, Latin America’s mineral reserves are vast. The situation in Congo is similar. A central focus of MAGA-oriented policies is access to and control over these resources. Because America’s economic power has declined globally, it has increasingly sought measures to reassert strength by securing strategic resources. In the coming three years, similar measures can be anticipated. What will their consequences be – not only within the targeted countries, but also across entire regions and continents? These questions require serious and continuous analysis.

Ultimately, the principal strategic targets are China and Russia. Whether the focus appears to be Greenland, Venezuela, or other regions, the underlying objective remains the containment of China and Russia. Under this doctrine, American policymakers believe that restoring national “Greatness” requires first constraining these two powers. This does not mean that other States will be spared from pressure. In Asia, India, Pakistan, Japan, Korea, and Indonesia are also areas of strategic concern. Even NATO partners are subject to forms of control and leverage. In Europe, how are France, Germany, and England positioned under the MAGA doctrine? For MAGA to work, what alliances will be reshaped, and what counter-measures will emerge? Under this strategy, Europe itself becomes a target, a field of competition. Tariff and sanction policies serve broader objectives of influence and control. Even migration policies are framed as instruments for easing domestic pressures to strengthen America.

Whenever such measures are applied, reactions inevitably follow in each country. Many of the measures observed so far are inconsistent. Are they means of control or intimidation? Do they produce stability or instability? Have their consequences been carefully calculated? Will these tools prove sustainable, or are they temporary instruments of coercion? In this context, we can say there is no definitive answer. In our own vicinity, we observe developments involving Gaza, Somalia, Sudan, and Ethiopia. The Red Sea region, rich in energy resources and

strategic maritime routes, is also implicated. To provide sound analysis, we must not only examine the actions of one power, but also take into account the probable responses of others within the context of the MAGA policy.

In the larger context of global governance, the world needs to be built on just, sustainable relationships, moving away from Cold War mentalities and unipolar ambitions. Eighty years after the Second World War, however, predicting the direction of international relations is still not difficult. It is not a new phenomenon. The universal aspiration of the peoples of the world is clear: to live in peace and dignity, to benefit fairly from their labor, and to support one another in solidarity. No society can live in harmony under domination, expansionism, or imposed control. Therefore, if a new world order is to emerge, it must be founded upon these principles. The desire of humanity is simple and does not require elaborate theorizing. But because such an environment does not yet exist, global instability persists.

How, then, might a peaceful world take shape? We are currently passing through a phase of transition and crisis. Will this phase lead toward constructive transformation, or will current measures intensify public resentment and accelerate the demand for a new international order by raising universal awareness? Beyond the United States, developments in other major centers of power will be decisive. What paths will China, Russia, India, Japan, Korea, Pakistan, Malesia and other Asian nations pursue?

Europe presents a particularly complicated and unsettling chapter. The war in Ukraine and NATO's deep entanglement illustrate this complexity. NATO is facing a crisis and the European Union is likewise struggling to project unified influence. When we observe MAGA-driven policies in Venezuela, Africa (South Africa and Congo); Ukraine in Europe, or Palestine in the Middle East, we must ask: how will other powers respond? Thus far, responses have largely been limited to issuing statements rather than taking decisive action, a principle that stands in stark contrast to their international standing and power. The direction of these trends may become clearer over the next three years. For now, we remain in a period of transition.

This stage contains many unknown variables. It is not possible to speculate, at this stage, on every measure a Trump Administration might adopt. Any serious assessment we make must be grounded in verified realities on the ground, and not on mere conjecture. Objective analysis of the volatile global situation is essential for defining our own tasks, pursuing our goals, and identifying opportunities.

Turning to Africa: despite possessing nearly sixty percent of the world's natural resources, Africa remains a marginalized continent. Regional institutions such as the African Union, ECOWAS and IGAD remain weak, limiting Africa's collective role in global power dynamics. Nevertheless, our sub-region – the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea corridor, the Arabian Gulf, and North and East Africa – holds immense geostrategic importance. It is highly sensitive to global shifts, but it also contains enduring opportunities.

In the coming three years, we must therefore give priority to our responsibilities: i.e. advancing development while safeguarding stability and peace. We must closely track how global developments specifically affect our region. We can set aside broader African variables for now, but in our vicinity, we must formulate and implement concrete regional policies that produce results. We should not get overly preoccupied with the unfolding policies of President Trump or be captivated by sensationalist media narratives. Instead, we must assess the actions of other global powers and regional actors with clarity.

Our diplomatic engagement with the United States should not preoccupy us needlessly or create confusion. We must take a calm, objective path, without dramatization. While larger global developments matter, our primary focus must remain our internal conditions and regional environment. This is where our true priority lies.

Q2- Your Excellency, in your previous interviews, you mentioned that in 2026, the Government of Eritrea will strengthen high-level engagement with the United States. In view of the new U.S. national security strategy, what can we expect in regard to Eritrea-U.S. diplomatic ties? Is there any possibility for change in the long-standing U.S. policies in the Horn of Africa?



PIA: Engagement is not a new phenomenon; it has been our consistent policy with the United States and other potential partners. From the outset in the immediate aftermath of our independence, we have maintained that we cannot remain prisoners of history or live in the past, but look forward. Under this premise, we have followed a policy of building relations with successive U.S. administrations, choosing to “forget and forgive” the injustices that were inculcated on us. We had undertaken numerous endeavors in the hope that previous misguided acts would change. All these efforts are fully documented. Unfortunately, U.S. policies have been detrimental thus far. In 2016, during President Donald Trump’s first term, we took the initiative for constructive engagement. Our objective was primarily to elicit rectification of the misguided policies pursued in our region and wider neighborhood. We opted to address the broader regional agenda instead of focusing narrowly on issues pertaining to the (Eritrea-US) bilateral domain.

The end of the Cold War and the emergence of the unipolar world order were concurrent with our achievement of national independence. And, since our independence, we have been monitoring closely the trajectory of US policies from the Clinton Administration onwards until the recent events. Our focus is not confined to the specific injustices meted out to Eritrea. We were acutely aware of the global damage that ensued from these misguided policies. The trends set in motion were not, indeed, sustainable and did not augur well for global governance. We did not succumb to the notion of a US-dominated, unipolar, global order that we had to accommodate whether we like it or not. Singular focus on the illicit sanctions and the wrongs imposed on us will not yield and give us any latitude in the rectification of global or regional realities. While not

exaggerating our capacity, our perspectives and engagement policy must encompass a wider and strategic approach.

We recognized a potential opportunity in President Trump's election to Office in 2016. Believing that the new Administration will have gleaned lessons from the mistakes of its predecessors, we took the initiative for active engagement and sent a message to President Trump. This positive step was taken on the firm conviction that rectification of the misguided policies was as much in the interest of the US as it was in our interest. Without delving into greater detail, President Trump's response was positive. Our approach was prudent and comprehensive to include, with substantive details, the unwarranted policies pursued in the previous eighty years; their ramifications; as well as the rationale for correction. Unfortunately, the opportunity for meaningful interaction was not possible during the remaining years of President Trump's first term due to various factors and the preoccupation of the Administration with other matters of paramount importance. The Biden Administration came to power subsequently. We were inclined to resume our initiative for constructive engagement with the new Administration, convinced as we were that this was not a matter of personalities. But the situation was not conducive and four years elapsed without any result. In total, nearly seven years were wasted without tangible outcome.

With Trump returning to the White House in 2025, we communicated our goodwill to continue the engagement that we had previously started. We underlined that after seven years of missed opportunity, this was indeed high time to resume the consultations that had begun in earnest. Here again, we have encountered some obstacles in the past year. Certain advisors in Washington seemed intent on blocking this engagement, deliberately or inadvertently, even creating obstacles to spoil the process. This may not be the time to dwell on this episode in greater detail. We know there are many "experts", who actually lack the insight, but who nonetheless float certain recommendations. These trends are often intertwined with the lobbying process/norms in the US, and they are not confined to our case. These groups, fueled by their own fantasies and prejudices, usually seek to block positive engagements rather than enhancing them, essentially because they lack profound knowledge on the complex matters at hand. In our perspective, the judicious approach is for the parties to clearly

stipulate the agenda and issues of discussion. This will allow both sides to do their homework and conduct the process of constructive engagement in a comprehensive manner to achieve the desired impact and outcome.

Some of the topics raised do not even merit discussion. To provide a small example, while this engagement process is underway, the U.S. State Department issued a report alleging that “investment is not possible in Eritrea”. The agenda of constructive engagement will obviously include bilateral relations and future prospects; including economic cooperation. We have no qualms or reservations to discuss these matters with an open mind. In the event, how can the State Department under the watch of Marco Rubio, circulate such a document to the international public. To assert that investment is impossible in Eritrea constitutes a stance of defamation and demonization. How can one explain these contradictory messages: asserting, on the one hand, the political goodwill and readiness to undertake fruitful consultations on investment and economic cooperation while alleging in the same breadth, that investment is impossible in Eritrea? If the latter is the case, what will be the topics of discussion? Is the calumny intended to dictate the terms of investment in favor of the US; or is the objective to ultimately undermine the engagement process itself?

I can only designate these ploys as tactics of “ambush and hijacking.” Obstacles are placed on the path before the engagement process is launched in order to divert it into selected topics. This is not new to us; it is both a systemic habit and culture. The goal is to pressure, coerce, intimidate and demonize in order to achieve what one wants. I have dwelt on this episode only as an example. We are not otherwise unduly concerned, and the incident will not derail our initiative for engagement in any way.

Our engagement with the United States is not limited to bilateral matters; it is primarily focused on our wider neighborhood. The disconcerting situations in Sudan, Somalia, and Ethiopia, as well as other various matters will remain central topics in our consultations. Because, we do not have exclusive objectives. We are cognizant of the fact that regional stability, security, and peace are fundamental to development. External policies, particularly of the US, can contribute positively towards the achievement of these objectives in our region. We intend to share,

with full transparency and in good faith, our perspectives on current realities and trends in the Horn of Africa, particularly regarding Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia as well as the preoccupying developments we see in the Red Sea. Sharing information and perspectives in these areas is vital in order to eschew unhelpful positions in the initiatives they take to formulate new policies on the Horn of Africa and the wider region. By the same token, we can discuss our internal situation in greater detail. Because the constructive engagement can be successful only when our assessments are objective. It should not be predicated on emotional or subjective appraisals.

Let us take Sudan as an example. What is Washington's actual perspectives regarding Sudan? What are their intended objectives? Full information on these matters is essential for sharing our views. The measures they have taken so far are neither in consonance with reality nor helpful in alleviating the current crisis. We seek to address this matter directly in the platform/initiative of constructive engagement. Indeed, consultations will lose relevance if undertaken belatedly, and after the situation spirals out of control, dialogue loses its significance. It is maintained, at times, that our priority should be the status of our bilateral ties. For us, the notion of "bilateral ties" falls in the third or fourth degree of priorities. Our bilateral ties will be reinforced only when the regional environment is stabilized and conducive.

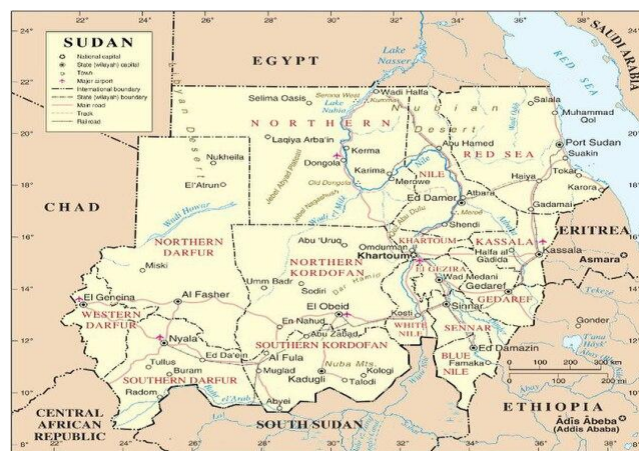
It is essential to understand Washington's policies in our region. And as mentioned earlier, we need to share our perspectives and appraisals of regional developments and trends with the US without reservations. It will then be up to them to take the decisions they deem appropriate. And of course, we are positively disposed should they decide on collaborative and coordinated stance as we have no inhibitions on constructive engagement. Should the US seek collaborative decision-making, we can work out on mutual consultation. We do not harbor hidden agendas; and we do not shift our positions for the sake of narrow interests. Nor are we concerned by the stance of certain pundits who employ tactics of "ambush and hijacking"; which is predicated on a narrow mindset. They talk about "give and take". But what does "give and take" truly imply? Does it mean compromising our fundamental interests; does it mean auctioning our cause in the marketplace? This mentality is alien to our political culture. In the event, our

position can be distilled into a more judicious approach of addressing regional matters first to later revert to bilateral issues. Because focus on bilateral issues without first ensuring the over-arching exigencies of regional stability, peace, cohesion and cooperation will not yield meaningful dividends.

In a nutshell, we should not be unduly hurried or perturbed in consummating the engagement process. We intend to sustain our engagement on the basis of patient appraisals and proper reading of the unfolding global realities over the next three years. This policy will not change. The ultimate dividend will depend on the goodwill of both parties. Nor can we put the onus on the US alone. Obviously, we harbor sincere aspirations that US position will be positive in view of its paramount influence in our region. And whatever policies they ultimately formulate, our task is to communicate to them, if given the opportunity, our positions and appraisals. More importantly, it is incumbent on us to address our own internal situation as a neighborhood before venturing into constructive engagement with extraneous powers. We cannot put the blame on them before we accomplish these tasks. We cannot always request their support, their intervention to resolve our problems before we do our homework and address our own problems. Such policies are doomed to failure. In general, constructive engagement must be predicated on the pillars that I have described briefly. We will monitor its developments in the coming three years.

Q.3. Mr. President, reverting to our region, the greatest challenge is the situation in Sudan, which is deteriorating due to external interference. The UN Security Council issued ominous warning recently that the Sudan crisis could spill over into other countries unless it finds a rapid solution. What contributions can the 'QUAD' Initiative – composed of the U.S., Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the UAE – potentially make to stop the war? What are the future prospects of the Initiative by the neighbouring countries? Furthermore, what is the nature of Eritrea's bilateral consultations with regional States regarding Sudan? In a nutshell, what is the probable trajectory or trend of the situation in Sudan?

PIA: Appraisal of the current situation in Sudan will require going back to its history. The stability, peace, development, and prosperity of Sudan has profound ramifications to the region. In this perspective, what is the backdrop of the events unfolding in Sudan in these crucial times? We can trace Sudan's historical trajectory from 1989 onwards, when Omar al-Bashir seized power through a coup; go back to 1983 during Numeiri's time; or take 1956 as our reference point. We can examine broadly all the significant milestones and developments that occurred in Sudan throughout this entire period as well as in terms of the historical relationships that existed with the Eritrean people.



After our independence, our bilateral relations had deteriorated to the point of a complete break in diplomatic ties due to the policy pursued by the Omar al-Bashir's regime. The Sudanese people, for their part, had endured the excesses of the regime for a long time; indeed, for over 30 years. Ultimately, they lost patience and overthrew the regime through a popular and spontaneous uprising. No political force or army faction staged the coup. The uprising was carried out by the people who said "enough is enough". This was appropriate and a positive development by all measures. Furthermore, the army and the security forces dutifully stood on the side of their people in spite of the orders they were given to suppress and crush the popular upheaval and to kill the demonstrators. The army had thus fulfilled its obligations. Indeed, as a sovereign institution of the country, the army had no other mandate. By accepting the people's will, refusing to crush the uprising, and standing on their side, the army had truly paved the way for Sudan to embark on a new phase of transition. This was the context and backdrop of the Transitional Sovereign Council that it subsequently established.

What are the tasks and authority of the Sovereign Transitional Council? The power entrusted to the Sovereign Council is provisional and limited to overseeing a peaceful transition. Ultimately, it is the Sudanese people that will determine and establish their own system of rule. As stressed earlier, the change that ensued through a popular uprising was positive not only from our perspective but also by all other objective assessments. But the process could not be consummated. After enduring years of injustice, the Sudanese people deserved to achieve their aspirations. For our part, we decided to engage and collaborate directly with them from the outset; drawing appropriate lessons from our experiences and fully cognizant that we should not relegate the matter to others. This approach required full comprehension of their perspectives and intentions first. We could then proceed to share our thoughts. In this spirit, we formulated our engagement policy and started interactions and consultation in earnest with the Sovereign Council. We submitted our ideas and proposals in writing which was predicated on an objective assessment of the situation in Sudan. We were in fact able to reach consensus on the envisaged process. The duration of the transition phase would at least be two years – and not, in any case, longer than three years. It would subsequently hand over its entrusted mandate to the people. This was the substance of our common or shared stance. In this regard, a comprehensive document that spells out the actual dynamics and implementation processes of the transition phase that is in consonance with the wishes and aspirations of the Sudanese people had to be prepared.

The damage inflicted by the NIF rule in Sudan for 30 years was considerable indeed. In the same vein, its deleterious consequences in our region were enormous. The policies that the NIF pursued, especially after 2011, were dangerous not only for Sudan but also for the wider region. The smooth consummation of the transition process was, accordingly, extremely vital in order to ensure enduring peace, stability, and development not only in Sudan but also in the wider region. There was no ambivalence but full consensus in regard to these palpable platitudes. The army accordingly agreed to shoulder its obligations and embarked on the process. Unfortunately, external interferences occurred in the early stages of the transition process which were intertwined with other ploys prevalent in the region. This was mostly manifested through the involvement of

the UAE which was, in effect, acting as a proxy. The scheme revolved around fomenting and plunging Sudan into chaos to ultimately control it. This would in turn, be used as a leverage to influence events in Egypt, Libya, Chad, Central African Republic, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea as well as the Red Sea.

It must be stressed that there were no rifts within the Sudanese Army, or a civil war in Sudan prior to the recent events. The current situation cannot indeed be portrayed in those terms. One cannot plausibly allege about cleavages in the army. On what grounds could infighting within the army arise? Power rivalry within the army cannot be countenanced as the Generals and the army as a whole were indeed entrusted with a temporary tenure of trusteeship only. The concept paper we submitted precluded competition between the political parties in the transition phase. Normative political environment; vibrant activities of political parties would resume after the trusteeship is handed over to its rightful owners. In this transitional stage, however, there would not be any room for conflicting political topics – until the Sudanese people ultimately determine their choice on the basis of the envisaged processes. Obstructive acts that may arise from individual disagreements and that hamper the transition phase are not appropriate, nor can they be entertained at this stage. The army cannot be accused of usurping political power; as the army has been entrusted with a mandate of short duration only. In the event, there are no plausible grounds for engendering acrimony with the army.

The external interference that occurred at this critical juncture was driven by the same underlying motives – to seize and exploit the opportunity to their advantage by compounding the situation as was the case in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan, and Ethiopia. To this end, the Rapid Support Force was provided with financial support and weapons – including drones – in order to unleash military offensives along various fronts. This is, in effect, a war against the people of Sudan. The multi-pronged scheme involved: i) deployment of military contingents in Eastern Libya for assaults in northern and western Sudan; ii) launching military attacks in Darfur using troops, including mercenaries, that were deployed in Chad; and, iii) establishing a new front in the Central African Republic and South Sudan to launch similar assaults towards the Center through Blue Nile and Kordofan.

In this scheme, what they have termed as “the final and greatest battle” would consist of organizing a contingent force in Ethiopia that would unleash military offensives in Kordofan and eastern Sudan via the Blue Nile to ultimately control Sudan in its entirety. The destruction and carnage that this fantasy, or ambition of certain individuals, can engender is incalculable. What we have witnessed in Sudan in these past years is precisely this phenomenon. This devastating loss occurred singularly due to external interference; as it cannot be rationalized in terms of non-existent political rivalries and civil war.

In our view, the Sudanese people must, again, be given an opportunity. The army deserves credit and support for shouldering responsibility for the transitional phase for the attainment of the ultimate objective. Sudan’s issues should not be gauged by what has transpired in the past three to four years, but in the context of its long history. As privy to Sudan’s political situation, we are not new players or novices in engagement. We duly recall our efforts/initiatives during the resolution of the South Sudan issue and the establishment of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in Asmara. Sudan had a chance for a new era of nation-building then, but the process was aborted, leading to South Sudan’s secession in 2011.

Sudan’s nation-building process, which began in 1956, and that achieved impressive progress in the early phases, was repeatedly reversed and encumbered later for various reasons. Nobody can accept, in good conscience, Sudan’s embroilment in intractable quagmire. In this vein, we cannot accept the ordeal meted to Sudan in these past few years. The current subterfuge consists of using Sudan as a stepping stone to foment turmoil in the Red Sea, the Horn of Africa, and northeast Africa. This is not new to us; as it is a trend that we have been monitoring for a long time.

We can analyze in detail each unfolding event that was concocted to make Sudan a platform for destabilization. Why such meddling at this point in time when the Sudanese people are firmly seeking, in unison, redress and reversal of past transgressions? In the event, it is incumbent upon all those who harbour the welfare of the Sudanese people to support the Sovereign Army Institution of Sudan without equivocation. This is not solely Eritrea’s position. It ought to be embraced universally. We can digress and delve into the confounding

perspectives of various forces. But the overarching issue is to extricate Sudan from the quagmire that it is enmeshed in for the Sudanese people to attain their fundamental aspiration.

As emphasized earlier, all those who harbour good wishes for the welfare of the people of Sudan must combat sinister attempts to plunge the country into internecine conflict and turmoil until the consummation of the transition. Exacerbating the crisis in Sudan is also interlinked with ulterior motives of destabilizing the region. As such, the task does not fall on the shoulders of the Sudanese people alone; it elicits the supportive role of all forces in this region. We have been fulfilling our obligations in line with our moral duty.

Ultimately, the pertinent question revolves around what the solution should be? We have seen many initiatives and endeavours. One could ask relevant questions about the “QUAD.” Which are its members? How and when was it constituted; for what objectives? One could write books about its multi-layered facets. The QUAD is practically non-existent these days. There were other initiatives in the preceding period; for instance, the Jeddah forum initiated by Saudi Arabia and the U.S. Again, the relevant question is what was the rationale for this particular composition. It is not a matter of whether we liked it or not. The critical issue is what was its relevance and ultimate objective? What were the underlying presumptions and premises? Was it a matter of stopping a civil war or resolving perceived rivalry between two Generals? A peace initiative stemming from wrong perception of the underlying causes of the conflict cannot yield the desired results.

Before the emergence of QUAD, Egypt had embarked on an initiative that involved all Sudan’s neighbors. This was a truly positive effort as the platform had the potential to foster common awareness on the Sudanese crisis and enhance their individual contributions towards a viable solution. However, the initiative did not last long. One distinct drawback was the failure to invite Saudi Arabia, an important neighbor as it was. In any case, the initiative of Sudan’s neighbours faltered without any result. New initiatives underway – by the UN, the UNSC and others – will not bring about tangible results. In broader terms, global platforms created under the umbrella of the UN mostly focus on superficial arrangements such as “temporary cease-fire...etc.”, that seem outwardly viable and that create

unrealistic expectations while not contributing to tangible and lasting solutions. These endeavours usually end up exacerbating the crises.

The Sudan crisis must be relieved from these complications urgently. The shortest and viable approach rests on giving opportunity for the Sovereign Transitional Council to complete its mission and hand over power to the Sudanese people. Accountability for the immense sufferings inculcated squarely lies on the forces who fomented and funded the crisis. If there are other better proposals and viable recommendations, they should of course be assessed with the requisite rigour. The overriding criterion should not be on who has initiated the peace process, but the viability of its substance.

Finally, all stakeholders, especially neighboring countries, must join hands. Egypt must be involved. Libya should change its role from a conduit and platform for interference to one of rendering positive support. Chad must do the same. Neighbors should invoke various structures to solve problems and contribute together. If there are disagreements in perspective, these can be discussed around a table to foster consensus and a common approach. Relying on the UN, AU, or EU to solve basic regional problems would only prolong and complicate viable solutions. The Sudan issue must be extricated from the various unsuccessful initiatives (QUAD, Neighbours efforts etc.) and be owned by the Sudanese people themselves. The modality is straightforward to merit elaboration. The Sudanese people must be spared from this quagmire. Fortunately, the awareness of the Sudanese people has increased with time. The capabilities of the Sovereign Council are also growing with time. The world at large is also increasingly coming to grips with the actual reality. In the event, all these factors augur well for a solution that benefits Sudan as well as the entire neighborhood. The prospects are accordingly more bright; also because the culprits who have interfered to fuel the fire are becoming increasingly exposed.

Q.4. Mr. President, the Prosperity Party, having adopted the unrealistic plan known as “Two Waters,” continues to conduct perpetual and worn-out propaganda campaigns. Some analysts suggest that these campaigns are a pretext for waging war. Meanwhile, the internal situations in Tigray, Amhara,

Oromia, and other regions remain highly disconcerting. Where is the situation in Ethiopia heading? How would it impact Eritrea?



PIA: We should not waste time on this issue; the question should not have, in fact, been asked in the first place. The phenomenon can aptly be described by the following four attributes: ineptness; bankruptcy, cowardice; and greed. When an inept, bankrupt, cowardly, and greedy entity presents such a fabricated agenda to plunge the people into turmoil, what does it truly signify? The war declared is truly astonishing. We have witnessed many conflicts throughout history, and previous Ethiopian regimes have certainly waged wars, but the current rhetoric does not have precedents. Why was such a bizarre war proclamation issued? The first war decree is actually against the Ethiopian people themselves. This is what is being presented as a pretext under the “Two Waters” banner. Generally speaking, the war proclamation spares no side. What is the significance of waging war in the name of “Two Waters.” Against whom is it being waged? Whom does the waged war concern? It is beyond comprehension to find rationale for it.

Following the Pretoria Agreement, war was waged on the Amhara people, under the pretext of eliminating the FANO movement. It then proceeded against the people of Tigray, the Oromo, the Somali, and the Afar. An endless cycle of war has been forced upon them. The war unfolding in Ethiopia is the worst in historical terms. It is surprising that the absurdity of “access to the Red Sea” gets some traction among some audiences. But those who ignore such rhetoric and pursue their work do not take the bait. Bringing up non-existent issues only leads to, and stokes chaos; it is a vicious cycle of hollow talk.

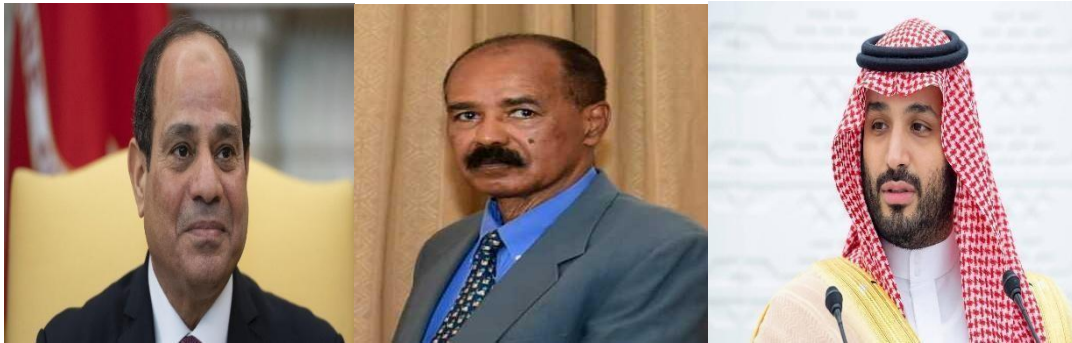
Why should anyone be concerned about this? It is not a matter worthy of concern. War has been declared; Drones are procured... Who supplies all these assortment of weapons? Who is behind these conspiracies? Where exactly is the source of funds; and what is the ultimate motive? This issue is not inherently their agenda. This is not, indeed, the agenda of the Prosperity Party. It is the agenda of their handlers. It is no secret that it cannot be seen in isolation from the previously mentioned war in Sudan. A war waged by a clique of inept, bankrupt, greedy, and coward entity, such as the Prosperity Party and its ilk, who scavenge on leftovers, should not be a source of consternation for us. The wisdom of Aboy Saleh, an Eritrean elderly from Adi Shuma, encapsulates the perils of falling into such traps. In his words: “one should be cautious of the inept, and even the devil – who engage in deceitful ploy that are disguised as benign while the real intention is to derail”. Aboy Saleh’s advice is to ignore them and remain focused.

We hear about frenzied preparations for war? For what ends? Where, when, and why? Will they start by escalating the ongoing war against FANO? Will they first accomplish the war they have waged on the Ethiopian people? Will they march through Semera, Tigray, Gojjam, Gondar, Shewa, or Wollo? We should not waste our time on their boastful pronouncements. The inept, bankrupt, cowardly and greedy should not be allowed to create discord, turmoil and instability amongst the peoples. In any case, our inalienable right of self-defense does not require permission from any quarters in the event of war.

Should war be unleashed on us, we know how to deal with it. We did not learn the art of war in a classroom; it is our lived experience, and history attests to that. We will not be drawn into such unnecessary conflicts. We will, as ever before, discharge our responsibility to prevent such occurrences. There is no reason to run behind delusional, bankrupt actors. They have amassed weapons and forces and declared war; as I said earlier, we will deal with it. For now, let’s stay focused.

Q .5. Your Excellency, one of the major diplomatic engagements of December 2025 was your visit to Saudi Arabia and the discussions you held with the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and Prime Minister, Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, on both bilateral and regional matters. You had previously completed a similar trip to Egypt as well. What is the current status

of the proposal presented by the Eritrean government to enhance the security of the Red Sea region, particularly regarding the formation of a coalition among littoral states to safeguard their collective security and sovereignty? Is there a common view on this? How would these visits contribute to economic and development cooperation?



PIA: Since the period of our armed struggle, we have maintained a consistent principle in our national policy: the pursuit of regional stability. This is rooted in the reality that in the absence of a stable neighborhood, we cannot thrive in isolation; it is simply not possible. Therefore, creating regional stability is not merely a choice—it is a strategic obligation. This is not only our responsibility but the collective duty of every nation in this region. Ensuring the peace and stability of our neighborhood is incumbent upon all of us.

When we define our neighborhood, it consists of four pillars. First, the Nile Basin watershed, encompassing Egypt, South Sudan, Sudan, and Ethiopia, possesses its own dynamics. This area must achieve stability as a vital component of our region. The second is the Horn of Africa, stretching from Somalia to Sudan. The third encompasses the waters of the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and Somalia. We do not view the international maritime transit route in isolation; it has its own unique strategic dynamics. The fourth component is the Arabian Peninsula. These four areas must achieve stability in harmony, for it is impossible for one segment to be stable while another remains in turmoil.

This neighborhood has endured continuous entanglement, largely due to internal regional failings but principally because of external interference. Today, it remains in a state of severe crisis, as seen in Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Yemen. We also witness interference under the pretext of

“enhancing Red Sea security.” This situation must serve as a profound lesson. Working for peace, stability, and regional integration is not a choice; it is a necessity. Economic development and progress are predicated on stability. The region is endowed with abundant resources—natural, human, and geographic. The peoples of this region can only utilize these immense opportunities and achieve sustainable development if they first secure stability.

The long journey and the heavy price and sacrifices paid should not be in vain, and we cannot accept the dire situation in our region. No person of conscience can accept the current deterioration of our neighborhood. One cannot remain complacent while one part of the region is thriving and the other is deteriorating; stability and development are complementary. We seek to work with all regional partners to achieve this shared vision, and our diplomatic engagements primarily serve this objective.

Our relationship with Saudi Arabia is long-standing. Saudi Arabia holds a vital geostrategic place and a significant role in this neighborhood. Its contribution is of great weight to the peace and stability of our region. Therefore, Saudi Arabia must participate fully in this endeavor. Accordingly, Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, and Yemen—can contribute to regional peace.

To achieve this, continuous consultation is required to create a common understanding. Our bilateral engagement with Saudi Arabia serves this specific purpose. Common ground is not reached simply by exchanging papers; it requires deep, ongoing dialogue to reconcile differing perspectives. Our message is not about seeking financial aid or asking others to solve our problems. Rather, it is a call for every regional force to make its due contribution.

This process of consultation is continuous. Since the list of issues is endless, we prioritize urgent matters: the situations in Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Yemen, and Ethiopia, as well as the collective affairs of the Red Sea littoral states. To work for regional stability and development, we should create reliable and sustainable relationships. This is not merely about signing papers; it is about planning and implementing shared goals, nurtured through continuous enjoyment.

Our continuous consultation with Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman has been particularly encouraging, given his prioritization of various political and regional programs, as he is better positioned to make contributions that differ from that of his predecessors. This has allowed our relationship to deepen. This deepening is not just symbolic but aimed at crafting a common plan, issue by issue.

Regarding the security of the Red Sea, we previously presented a 12-point proposal based on an objective assessment of the strategic importance of this waterway. However, strategic importance of the Red Sea waterway should not be used as a justification for external forces to establish military bases. Every state has the sovereign right to host external forces, but we must consider the long-term unintended regional consequences which can affect regional harmony.

Consider Somalia, with a 3,300-kilometer coastline. No external force can ensure the security of that coast as effectively as the Somali people themselves, who know their lands. When Somalia possesses viable defense and security institutions, it can protect its own sovereignty. We must create enabling conditions, either through national efforts or through regional cooperation. We should not entertain the idea that global or regional powers can “secure” the region. Djibouti, Eritrea, Sudan, Yemen, Oman, and Saudi Arabia should all have the capacity to protect their own sovereignty.

The fundamental truth is that capacity and opportunity are required, and each nation must be given the chance to develop its own capacity. Renting out land and coastlines to external forces for “security” does not align with our thinking. We are open to better alternatives, but the principle remains clear.

Furthermore, if it is argued that individual states cannot alone secure this international waterway, then the solution is for the littoral countries to pool their defense capabilities and sovereign institutions. If these two approaches are deemed insufficient, we can accommodate alternative solutions. If needed, alternative mechanisms can be devised based on international law and agreed upon decisions by the Security Council or other international organizations, provided they do not involve arbitrary interference. As the primary stakeholders of this global maritime transit route, the littoral states bear the primary responsibility for its security.

We cannot allow illegal trade, narcotics trafficking, or other illicit activities to flourish in this corridor. In the event that individual capacity falls short, we can seek cooperation. This is the main safeguard for regional stability. If there are illegal activities within a sovereign country, the responsibility lies with the respective state. Besides, we can deter global terrorism together.

Once stability is secured, we can focus on sustainable development: investment, infrastructure, and economic integration can be implemented. We can also integrate social services. To achieve this, we should continuously consult with our partners on all topics, prioritizing the most urgent issues.

Today, the threat engendered by the situation in Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, Ethiopia, and the Red Sea is not hidden. The problems caused by external interference are beyond measure, and this is something that will require collective vigilance and consciousness.

To pave the way for development, we must first reconcile our perspectives and then work for its implementation. It is necessary to not just agree in principle, but to develop practical plans. We must outline our relationships in tourism, education, and communications. Accordingly, we can bolster our economic strength, productivity, export, and imports, and join the global platform. This has been the essence of my continuous discussions with Mohammed Bin Salman.

There are external forces seeking to prolong conflicts and prevent our relationships from maturing. The interference in Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Yemen and the Red Sea is an open secret. We have to work relentlessly to deter the interference through continuous consultation.

Stability and peace are the prerequisites for development and sustainable growth, but not a goal in and all by themselves. If we ensure our security collectively and efficiently, we can create a safe environment for development, opening the path for global engagement. This is no secret; it is the core of our engagement with Egypt and Saudi Arabia. We do not have a hidden agenda; our concern for Sudan, for instance, is based on a realistic mutual assessment. We must resist external hostile influence that fuel conflict. Because we believe we can solve our own

problems as one neighborhood, we have established specific tasks for the Sudan situation. We should not allow miscalculations or external confusion to derail us.

The coalition requires relentless effort. While it can be a steep slope, we should not be deterred to achieve our collective goals, despite the external interests and ambitions.

Ultimately, we must create a common aspiration through continuous consultation and improving and aligning plans. My recent visit is a continuation of a long journey. This is a fruitful culmination of the discussions and exchanges of the last fourteen years. We now have a common understanding and vision, and we are all contributing our fair share. While the journey is not yet complete and concerns linger, we are moving forward, despite the challenges. This recent visit at the end of 2025 has provided an optimistic framework for 2026. We have a general picture of what can be done, and the preparations to undertake in order to address regional stability issues and ensure they are not further complicated.

Q. 6: Mr. President, turning to domestic affairs, you have repeatedly stated that, under all circumstances, national development remains our foremost priority. In your previous interview, you noted that inclusive, well-organized national development initiatives are planned for 2026 to strengthen implementation effectiveness. Can you provide a comprehensive illustration of these initiatives?

PIA: As stated, peace and stability are essential preconditions for national development. In this respect, the precious sacrifices we paid during the liberation struggle to secure peace and stability were immense indeed. Ascertaining our independence was crucial for embarking on unencumbered development. But even during the liberation struggle, the task of development was never postponed. In many respects, the nation-building that follows liberation is more complex. It requires time, material resources, institutional capacity, and sustained coordination, particularly in a fragile region such as ours.

Compared to many others, Eritrea enjoys internal stability, which provides a vital opportunity for vibrant nation-building in comparative terms. To sustain this peace, we must foster integration and solidarity within the region. Despite global and regional instability, nothing will deter our developmental agenda. Under all conditions, development remains our priority. While specific sectoral priorities may be affected by prevailing circumstances, the overall national development program will remain unaffected.

Infrastructure

As we transition from 2025 to 2026, infrastructure remains a central priority. Large-scale programs in road and building construction have been implemented. However, outcomes have not yet met expectations, and assessments indicate the need to improve organization, resource mobilization, and implementation capacity.

The importance of infrastructure – particularly road networks – in driving economic development cannot be overstated. Accordingly, 2026 will focus on comprehensive interstate and intrastate transportation programs. Beyond asphalt roads, the construction of durable unpaved roads will also be expanded to improve accessibility for communities in remote and marginalized areas.

Compared to previous years, implementation in 2026 will be supported by enhanced organizational capacity, increased availability of machinery, equipment, construction materials, and skilled labour.



Water Development

Water development stands at the forefront of national priorities, even exceeding infrastructure in urgency. Water is indispensable for drinking, sanitation, agriculture, livestock, and industrialization. Although it has long been a national priority, progress to date has been unsatisfactory and requires our intensified, sustained efforts. Technical studies conducted by GIS on water and soil conservation provide a comprehensive foundation for future interventions, including the construction of minor and major dams, catchment systems, and enrichment planting to control water flow and restore watersheds.

Our strategy goes beyond water-storage infrastructure alone. Expanded water-flow recovery initiatives, improved control systems, and the integration of modern technologies are necessary to enhance efficiency. In parallel, pipe-based distribution networks will be extended to reach all localities.

Our immediate priority is to ensure that marginalized communities get reliable access to clean water for domestic use, agriculture, and livestock. Whether sourced from wells, rivers, or desalinated seawater, dependable supply systems must be established. This is not a new undertaking but an integral component of the long-term national water strategy. The 2026 initiatives – focusing on increasing water capital, flow recovery, and distribution – represent one phase within this broader plan.

Energy

Following water development, energy – particularly electricity – constitutes the next strategic priority. In the beginning electricity generation was largely reliant on the Hirigigo power plant, but its capacity was already diminished and was inadequate to meet industrial, agricultural, and other developmental demands. For years, only repair and maintenance services were provided. However, over the past three to four years, a cohesive national energy master plan has been formulated.



To provide inclusive electricity access across all regions of the country, decentralized mini-grid systems have been identified as more practical than the reliance on a single national grid. Accordingly, the program will be launched with twelve independent mini-grid power centers.

Regarding energy sources, thermal generation using fossil fuels remains insufficient for long-term sustainability. Renewable alternatives are being prioritized and can replace thermal services with hybridized sources. Solar energy is a primary option, supplemented by wind power, while geothermal energy represents a highly sustainable source. Eritrea's position along the Great Rift Valley provides substantial untapped geothermal potential that must be developed. Nuclear energy can also be a long-term possibility; notably, feasibility studies conducted during the establishment of the Kagnaw Station in Asmara once proposed the development of a small nuclear plant to address energy needs. Even though such options may seem distant, they are technically feasible.

The initial target is to develop 360 megawatts through 12 mini-grids, each gradually expanding to 30 megawatts. These grids will then be interconnected to form a national grid. What is being constructed now represents the foundational phase of that system. Once all grids are interconnected, the national grid is projected to increase from 360 megawatts to approximately 2,000 megawatts.

This energy program is being implemented in accordance with the national master plan. Timelines and operational modalities are defined within a structured schedule, and implementation is already underway. Of course, articulating such plans is far easier than executing them. Therefore, the acquisition of advanced technologies to accelerate progress will remain one of our key priorities.

Equally essential is professional human capital. The success of this program depends not only on financing and technology but also on the availability of skilled personnel to operate, maintain, and expand these systems sustainably. In earlier phases, solar street lighting was introduced as a pilot program, and although its reliability was initially uncertain, these trials tested technological effectiveness, familiarized stakeholders/ institutions with advanced systems, and developed local technical capacity aligned with modern energy infrastructure.

Other Sectors

Beyond the priority programs mentioned, detailed sector-specific initiatives are underway in infrastructure, water-flow recovery, and energy, alongside additional national development programs that must not be neglected. Transportation services require expanded material and human resources, as well as continued road improvement. Residential housing remains a key concern. Marine resource development, agriculture, and mining projects are likewise progressing as part of a comprehensive national development agenda.

Education and Human Capital

The principle expressed in the proverb

“ኬድካ ኬድካ ካብ ጉዳይ ምውጻል ክሳድ ምሓዝ”, (which roughly translates into: “*better to focus on pivotal node than meandering around*”) remains especially relevant because sustainable progress depends on steady, cumulative effort.

Education is the foundation of all development. Ultimately, whether infrastructure, water, energy, housing, transportation, mining, or industry, every sector depends on capable human resources. Material assets and financing yield results only when matched with skilled and competent professionals. No development program can succeed without education. If there is one priority above all others, it is education.

Accordingly, vocational, technical, and professional education must be elevated to the highest level. Development programs require a workforce with practical, applicable expertise, not merely academic certification. Employment in key sectors must be organized to sustain continuous operations and operate across multiple shifts, supported by both qualitative and quantitative human resource capacity. Skilled professionals play an indispensable role in advancing national development.



Despite limitations, progress has been made in developing human capacity. But the outcomes have not yet met expectations. A realistic sector-by-sector assessment indicates that annual advances in human-resource development remain below required levels. For this reason, comprehensive restructuring of the education system is imperative. The 2026-2030 agenda is closely linked to educational reform, from kindergarten to the tertiary levels. The core challenge is not proposal design or asset availability, but the development of capable human capital. Strengthening the education system to produce competent professionals, therefore, stands as the foremost national priority.

The 2026-2030 development roadmap divides programs across six regions, alongside national-level initiatives coordinated by central institutions. Regional programs emphasize community participation and strengthened administrative capacity. Regarding specific regional plans for 2026, it is most appropriate for regional administrators to present detailed information on completed activities, planned initiatives, community engagement mechanisms, preparation processes, priorities, and implementation strategies. These matters are best addressed directly by them.

Q. 7: Mr. President, is there a plan for the Eritrean diaspora to invest and contribute, in their capacity, to the projected national development programs?

PIA: This issue is vital and cannot be treated as a single or isolated topic. Mobilizing the public, both at home and in the diaspora, is a complex undertaking. Diaspora engagement is not new to us; their contributions during the armed struggle was indispensable, and their patriotism and national commitment remain strong in the post-independence period. Their role remains significant and cannot be overlooked.



Over the past three years, a structured plan has been drafted to facilitate diaspora participation in nation-building and economic development. Implementation has been delayed due to the need for careful and studied requisite preparations. It was necessary to establish a clear working framework before proceeding.

Diaspora participation can be broadly categorized into two areas. The first concerns national defense in its political, diplomatic, and media dimensions. While this has long been part of diaspora engagement, greater organization is now required. Members of the diaspora must strengthen their associations, expand networks, and build partnerships to raise awareness about Eritrea's positions and challenges. Diplomatic engagement is not conducted only through embassies; it is the responsibility of every citizen abroad. Media engagement is equally essential in countering disinformation, defamation, and distortion in today's information landscape. It's important to note that such efforts already exist, but improved coordination is necessary to achieve greater effectiveness.

The second area is development. A conducive environment must be created for the diaspora to participate in national development programs across mining, agriculture, marine resources, water, energy, infrastructure, and service sectors. Opportunities should be available for investment and engagement, individually or collectively. To ensure effectiveness and practicality, clear guidelines and a roadmap are needed to provide a structural framework for diaspora investment and participation.

Beyond financial contributions, the diaspora's knowledge and skills are especially critical. Those with educational and professional expertise play a central role in strengthening human resource development and educational programs. The potential contribution of the diaspora in research, advanced professions, technology transfer, and curriculum development is substantial and should be systematically harnessed. Much of this work can and should be done by them.

The central challenge is not identifying areas of engagement but in their effective participation. This requires reliable data. A comprehensive database must be developed to identify locations, educational backgrounds, professions, qualifications, and potential fields of contribution. Where collective engagement is required, appropriate platforms must be created to facilitate coordination. Monitoring and evaluation likewise depend on accurate, reliable, and well-administered data systems. It is impossible to design and implement a meaningful plan without such data infrastructure. Moreover, given contemporary cyber security risks and concerns, system architecture must be carefully designed to protect private, personal information and prevent misuse. It would be naïve to assume the absence of saboteurs. Secure platforms must therefore be established before collecting detailed personal data. Members of the diaspora can contribute significantly in this area and have already contributed to these preparatory efforts, and this work will continue to be refined.

Ultimately, the objective is to provide the diaspora with concrete opportunities and responsibilities to invest across different sectors, enabling maximum contributions to national development, especially in strengthening human capital. This is not a rhetorical or symbolic engagement. Eritrea faces unique circumstances and challenges, and our national organization, both at home and abroad, must reflect this reality. Participation must be measured not only in numbers but in quality and impact.

In that vein, we will proceed deliberately rather than hastily. A roadmap for diaspora participation within the 2026- 2030 national development plan has already been prepared. Its implementation will begin in 2026 and will be evaluated at the end of the year to ensure objectives are being met.