



Organization of Eritrean-Americans

For Immediate Release

January 16, 2010

Eritrea's Economic Potential said to be Bright

Eritrea's development in agriculture, mining, tourism, port services (what were called the hardware of development), and education (human resource development) can position it in a bright economic future.



This was the conclusion of Professor Kiflai Gebremedhin of Cornell University who spoke at an OEA sponsored presentation at the Eritrean Community and Civic Center in Washington, D.C. on Friday, January 15, 2010. Dr. Kiflai, in his presentation on "*My trip to Eritrea: Observations and Impressions*", showed the standing-room capacity audience how Eritrea can move towards food security using only the water that can be harvested at the two Fankos (Fanko-tsimue and Fanko-rawi) and Gerset. With certain clearly stated assumptions, he calculated that Eritrea can harvest enough

food that can feed its population.

In his two-hour presentation, Dr. Kiflai shared slides of what he observed in water harvesting, by way of building major and minor dams, river diversion schemes and terracing. He spoke how the sprinkler irrigation system he witnessed at the Gerset irrigation project is the state of the art. The goal of the irrigation projects underway in Eritrea is to produce three times a year and this is helping Eritreans from all ethnic groups and repatriated nationals to participate in food production with some help from the government. This modern way of farming is a good substitute to the antiquated subsistence farming using the power of camels and oxen.

He also explained, using data from his observation and the publications of the mining companies, how the potential of Eritrea's mining industry in gold, silver, copper, zinc and other metals from Bisha, Zara, and the Asmara belt is bright. He reminded his audience that there are well-studied safe guards to social and environmental impacts that could come with mining.

Dr. Kiflai further pointed that Eritrea's tourism industry is well-suited to be competitive because what Eritrea can offer tourists is great; in Eritrea, Dr. Kiflai noted, tourists can enjoy personal safety, clean beaches, unpolluted air, a mosaic of a welcoming population, a spectacular variety of birds and marine life, including Eritrea's coral reef that is predicted to be the "global marine future" in light of the anticipated global warming.

Looking beyond Ethiopia, stated Dr. Kiflai, Eritrea's port facilities including: Massawa's deep water port, Assab's strategic location at the gateway to the Indian Ocean, are ideal for refueling, servicing, and rest area for big as well as small ships and this will greatly add to Eritrea's economic potential.

Organization of Eritrean Americans, 600 L Street NW Washington, D.C. 20001

<http://www.eritreanamerican.org>

email: oea@eritreanamerican.org

Dr. Kiflai's final discussion on Eritrea's economic potential was on what he called is the software that will drive the above mentioned economic hardware of Eritrea: this is education or human resource development. Eritrea's good start with the expansion of higher education and its vision is positioned to provide the necessary human resources for Eritrea's economic development. He particularly noted that the spread of educational institutions all over Eritrea is important because among many other things this can enhance local employment in addition to encouraging local education.

Dr. Kiflai who started his presentation on how the solar-powered pump he witnessed at Diga Durko is a good example of harnessing alternative energy, concluded his presentation on how what he observed in rural electrification, provision of clean water, and rural waste disposal was inspiring and heartening. He told his audience how he remembers walking two kilometers each night to the nearest town in order to study under a street light. By contrast today he was delighted that Eritrean villagers are getting access to electricity.

Organization of Eritrean Americans, 600 L Street NW Washington, D.C. 20001

<http://www.eritreanamerican.org>

email: oea@eritreanamerican.org