



Organization of Eritrean-Americans

August 13, 2010

OEA Press Release

Workshop Explores Ways to Make U.S. Policy Fair, Balanced

The E-SMART Research Team's workshop held under the auspices of the Organization of Eritrean Americans (OEA) on August 7, 2010, in the Washington, D.C., explored ways to make U.S. policy toward Eritrea fair and balanced. The meeting was held at the Washington Convention Center as part of this year's annual Eritrean Festival.

The main focus of the two-hour roundtable discussion was a 26-page working paper titled "UN/US Sanctions on Eritrea: Latest Chapter in a Long History of Injustice" distributed to the participants ahead of the meeting. The paper takes a close look at Eritrea's relations with both the US and the UN over the last six decades in an attempt to make sense of the UN Security Council decision to impose sanctions on this young African nation based on groundless charges.

In Part I of the working paper, the document took a careful look at the last 60 years of Eritrean history and its findings revealed a pattern of betrayal and injustice against the people of Eritrea by the West in general and the US in particular, as well as the United Nations and the African Union (formerly Organization of African Union (OAU)). In Part II, entitled "Sanctions: Different Century, Same UN Betrayal," the paper makes the case that these sanctions are a glaring demonstration that the world body continues to betray the Eritrean people and that serving special interests of the powers takes precedence over upholding the principles of fairness and justice.

The meeting was opened by Dr. Asgede Hagos, who moderated the discussion, by stating the workshop would focus on what Eritrean Americans can do to break up the pattern of a US policy skewed in favor of Ethiopia, and almost always at the expense of Eritrea. Then two members of the e-smart research team gave an overview of the key sections of the paper. Dr. Ghidewon Abay Asmerom, who covered Part I of the working paper, urged participants to look at the UN sanctions imposed on Eritrea on December 23, 2009, as a pattern in history and not as a separate incident. Dr. Mehreteab Gebre Hiwet covering Part II pointed out that the principles of fairness and justice can be discarded by the powers that be when that serves their purposes.

During the comments, questions and answers session, the participants gave a series of suggestions on what can be done to break the pattern of unbalance and unfairness in U.S. policy for the Horn of Africa in general and Eritrea in particular.

As a follow-up to the workshop, the organizers said that a broad conference has been set for later this year in Washington, D.C. The planned conference is expected to include speakers from all of the Horn of Africa communities in the United States.

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

<http://www.eritreanamerican.org>

email: oea@eritreanamerican.org