Eritrea’s path to success

By: Berhane Woldu

Since WWR II the world has experienced extraordinary growth. In Africa however, according to statistical report, there are 7 million more hungry Africans, 30 million more illiterate people; 10 million more families without homes 40 million more unemployed persons than there were 20 years ago. There are 240 million human beings in Africa without the necessities of life, and this is when the region is *richer and more stable* than ever. Its true there has been growth in Africa but also incredible poverty and misery.  High growth and so much misery how do you reconcile those two statements?

Africa is a very fascinating diverse continent, rich in mineral and human resources that are being wasted. There is extraordinary wealth and riches, and incredible poverty. The slums of the urban areas are appalling and rural areas are worse. African leaders have ensured that Democracy couldn’t work. The power is often in the hands of “minority regimes” that hold the wealth of the nation. Citizens are marginalized and factionalized in various ways; fractured political constituencies, barriers against unified working-class, exploitation of ethnic conflicts. The high level of inequality which is the highest in the world is an invitation for chaos. This inequality has not just come from heavens.

*Growing part of the population suffering from the serious inequities of the society, would “secretly sigh for a more equal distribution of life’s blessings; but, if they had democratic power they would do more than sigh. Madison*

To the contrary, Eritrea’s struggle for independence had matured into a cohesive national society. The Eritrean People’s liberation Front (EPLF) tolerated no discrimination of ethnicity, or religious divides. It was inclusive, equal, indiscriminate egalitarian social structure that fostered environment conducive for intellectual, laymen, women the entire society to work collectively in order to achieve their goal for independence in unity. This is the culture the EPLF cultivated and has afforded Eritrea its might. The Western countries are very much opposed to Eritrea’s independence and bitterly hate and condemn it with punitive actions.

Eritrea has isolated and addressed the causes of foreign influences and dominance. One such example is expanding education to all as a national priority to develop human capital. Educational reform in-conjunction with socioeconomic reforms and equalization of opportunities for the nation’s population are imperative if wealth creation is to benefit more than just a few cosmopolitan elites like in Nairobi, Addis Abeba or Johannesburg.

Eritrea is developing domestic industries, putting in place policies that work to meet indigenous needs-with a mindset of equal distribution of wealth. To that end Eritrea applies the “Philosophy of Self-reliance” and has increased production of goods for domestic needs and reduced inequality.

The basic principle being that the people of Eritrea should be the prime beneficiary of the country’s resources. Comparing rich people to poor people within countries in Africa the gap is much sharper one can conclude it will take a miracle to narrow wealth gap.

In Eritrea the income differences are minimal wealth is widely spread, land ownership is equitable with legally defendable property rights. Home ownership is widely spread if one states that 90% of the population owns its home; it might not be far-flung from the truth. The integrating extralegal land use into the formal property system giving squatters legal title is an example of the Government’s commitment to social justice. Eritrea is well ahead of many African countries in health, education, infrastructure and women’s rights. Village development programs are impressive. Income has increased, technology and electrification has transformed villages. Life expectancy and adult literacy rates have increased significantly. Infant mortality rate is low. Villages are egalitarian and self-governing with planed agricultural diversification and agricultural researches where by a farmer could seek help for pests or seeds that have high yields. Water reservoirs are in place drip irrigation system is commonly used. Private farm cooperatives have flourished. There are roads to transport farmer’s goods to the urban areas. The people have strong relations among them and high sense of support for one another. There is no taxation on the villagers, no property tax, and no income tax.

The social safety net programs are in place. The government provides broad national benefits for unemployment, sickness, and disability, nationalized health care, and universally free public education. Pro-labor legislation is in place lifetime job security “cradle to grave” are ways of Social redistribution and equitable share of national wealth. In most of the African countries with so much wealth in natural resources the population lives in miserable poverty with vast income inequality.

What is striking about Eritrea is that old, young, male and female are actively engaged in the national development activities. These are signs of economic growth you can’t put GDP numbers to certify; this is popular self-determination. Eritrea as a nation has set its priorities and it is using its national wealth for economic emancipation navigating a pragmatic path towards substantial and perceptible improvement in attaining to become high income country.