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Conference highlights increasing desire to renew friendship between Ethiopian, Eritrean people



The respective participants from both nationals also expressed their readiness and desire to further strengthen people to people relation of both countries. Solomon Afewerki, 60, an Ethiopian born Eritrean national, grew in the border town of Badme located between Ethiopia and Eritrea. He used to cross the border to enter both countries freely to visit his relatives. Some of his relatives were living in Eritrea while others in Ethiopia. He had spent half of his age in Eritrea and he is currently residing in Ethiopia. Unfortunately, it has been almost 17 years since the Ethio-Eritrea border put under closure due to the war took place from May 1998 to June 2000.

For years, many people including Solomon have remained separated from their parents and beloved ones. As a renowned man once said “There had not been good war and bad peace”. No matter how the war broke out, all that left due to the war was loss of life and property and separation. For years, the conflict sparked slight disagreements between the peoples. However, as their relation has been deep-rooted, there is still an increasing interest in the heart of both people for friendship.

The staunch friendship and relation of both peoples has not faded yet because of the closure of the border. As many Ethiopian do, Eritreans are keen to renew their friendship and cooperation with their Ethiopian brothers said a participant who took part in a conference organized by the Ethiopian International Institute for Peace and Development yesterday.

There is a fertile ground for friendship. No body is against peace. Let the politicians do their political homework but strengthening the relation between the people of both countries should continue. It is through the people that smooth relation is achieved, said another Ethiopian born Eritrean national journalist.

He said that leaving their homeland, Eritrean journalists are trying to start new and stable life in other countries. "Once we settle, we will try to bring journalists together and work to promote the people to people relation between the two countries. It is promising enough that there is an increasing desire between both peoples to renew their friendship," he added.

According to the participants, negotiations and discussions should held between peoples.

Famous Eritrean Artist Resom Gebre-Gorgis inaugurated a new single song clip entitled: "peace" at the conference. In his new song, the Artist expressed the importance of cooperation, friendship and unity between the peoples of two countries.

The artists,who has released 10 albums said: "As a responsible citizen, I have produced the song to show how peace is important for people". Peoples of Ethiopia and Eritrea share same culture identity and religion. We have to hand over love and friendship that existed between the two countries to the coming generation."

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The participants also stressed that both peoples leaving the hatred propaganda of anti-peace elements aside need to show genuine manner for mutual friendship and cooperation.

In his opening remark Ethiopian International Institute for Peace and Development Deputy Director Moges Tekele-Mikael said that the Institute has organized the conference to bring the two countries' peoples together and discuss their matters. It is not political conference and it has no other motives as well. The conference is a platform to find possible ways and opportunities so that peoples of both countries strengthen their relation and ties.

Member of Conference organizing Committee Tsega-Luel Wolde-Kidan said that both peoples want peace more than anything. There is a long standing friendship between Ethiopian and Eritrean peoples. They are keen to renew their relations. Both peoples have many things in common. Because of this public diplomacy can play tremendous role to achieve cooperation and friendship. The other enabling condition is the increasing determination of Ethiopian government to restore peace and strengthen the people to people ties. Once the people are cooperated , they will influence governments to work for peace, Tsega-Luel added.