

***A PRIVATE AND UNAUTHORIZED TRANSLATION FROM TIGRINYA
OF THE ISSUES TAKEN UP IN THE PUBLIC MEETING
ON THE 1th OF SEPTEMBER 1994.***

THE PRESIDENT REPLIES

To mark the 33rd anniversary of the armed struggle 721 questions were sent to President Issaias Afwerki. These were condensed to 42 and what follows is a synopsis of the most important issues addressed.

ON HOUSING SHORTAGES AND RISE OF PRICE OF RENTED HOUSES

There are housing problems, especially in Asmara because of the economical difficulties of the nation. The question is raised repeatedly, but the government has been giving resolves for solution in different meetings. It is known that there are big problems among house owners and renting people. There are questions now rising in every corner that "if the government had been taken these houses as they were before, it would not happen the problems we are facing now would not happen. There were hot discussions in the past three years about the reason why to return houses to their owners. But we have to understand this, based on the proclamation and policy that the government agreed to return all houses to their rightful owners.

So I believed that our proclamation and policy are right.

In the past three years the government has been working hard to implement this policy, but it seems like the policy is still not fully understood. There seem to be an understanding that if the government would administrate the houses, problem of housing could be solved, but I think this is unacceptable, because the basic problem is not the administration of houses, but it is the lack of houses. So the policy line the government is taking has to be put in action, and has to be fully implemented. But to minimize the problem of housing we have to answered first the question of land. The government has been working hard to find private organizations to work with full capacity, having the necessary construction materials, machinery, manpower and skills. We have to recognize that almost half of the work is already done within these three years. But still there is a shortage of houses.

I know the civilized nations in the world, which are rich enough, still could not find solutions for their housing problems. In our towns we would need miracles. We can not build houses for our people within a very short time like a carton making.

Inflation is an expression of economical health. To know whether we have health economy or not is the task of our economists, working day and night. Within the past three years the rising price or inflation, leave alone the problem of housing, were almost solved. The price of houses, especially the increasing price of house rent, became very high and put us into high inflation, which is still being the highest problem. Almost all other prices are at acceptable levels and our economy is stable but for the increase of house rent the government has been trying to control them for more than a year. A part of the problems are the difference in rent between the government and private houses. They became heaven and earth. It is remembered the government has studied the problem and has proclaimed that rents should be 3,4,5 and 7 1/2 times increased, but most people were not happy and rumours were appearing and it is understood that people living in the government's houses

are paying very low in comparison with the market price and private houses. On the contrary the rent for private house is increasing very high, for different reasons, and the gap is becoming very wide between the two. This leads to house owners wanting to kick out people living in their houses, in order to rent their house for a high price to others which is not legal.

Houses owners are trying various tactics of how to kick out present tenants. Some are asked to give money, others decided to fight and take them to courts. So this creates hardship in the town, because the price of houses became very high and that leads to inflation. One of the worst things in the government's houses are that the tenants took one part of the house and rent the second part to others, and gained very high profits. So it is decided that persons who are living in the houses of government and have used these illegally, will be removed and legal steps will be taken against them. The rent will also be balanced with the market price conditions. It is also understood that this policy itself can not give basic solutions, but the basic solution will be that people build their own houses, in order to settle their situation, or be able to rent them. The government has the responsibility only to give land and to encourage for the nationals who have the capacity to build houses. It must be known that the government can not use force major in the relations of house owners and house renting people. At the same time the government itself can not rent houses and build houses for residence.

NO COLLABORATION IS DONE FOR CADRES FROM OTHER FRONTS.

All fighters of the people's front have served life long and are still serving without salary for the sake of the Eritrean people. People's Front is also demobilizing fighters because they have decided to carry the load of the nation. The Front has still not organized its members, the right person in a right place. On the contrary because of the present conditions of civil servants the government is demobilizing fighters who can work, and they are receiving minimal help to manage their new life.

It is known that within this three years the government has accepted persons who came from other organizations and assigned them into the highest positions. The Front has been trying to give jobs without enmity, and has been trying to make amends and encourage others forgetting the past, which has not been seen or be done in other countries.

So it is not fair to say that cadres and other fronts have not been given positions. It must be known that almost all members of the People's Front are waiting for years living without jobs. Many are sent out of the Front to get jobs themselves or to go to farming or to trade. Persons who asked these questions should have to have a right imagination. They must observe that People's Front is leading the nation by restraining their members. People's Front did not show cruelty and counted crimes upon wrong doers. On the contrary People's Front called for all Eritreans to return home and participate in rebuilding the country. So this government must not be criticised, but should be thanked for its tolerance and goodwill.

LAYING OFF PENSIONERS AND MINIMIZE CIVIL SERVANTS.

It is known that pensioners who have reached their right, are continuing to work on contracts in different governmental organizations until the civil service law is proclaimed and a reply of their conditions can be answered. It is necessary that the Civil Service should be small and efficient. There a lot of manpower available except in some distinct professions. It must be understood that almost all high professionals are still working with

in the ministries. Therefore the persons who presented this question, if they are ready to help the government with a good advise they can write and give viewpoints to the concerned departments or ministries. But in the studies done by the different ministries to identify the spread of the abilities of people within the civil service, there can be seen shortage of professionals. Some ministries have professionals over their capacity and some departments have no professionals. This study will help the government in balancing the civil servants assigned to all departments or ministries. For example there are many educated people in the ministry of Education, but we don't have the necessary skilled man power in the ministry of transport. Therefore it has to be known that there are studies made in all departments. These studies will be proclaimed after a short time, and the balancing of manpower will be implemented. There are some professionals assigned to administration, leaving their profession. This also will be solved. There is scarcity of physicians in the country. But 99% of the human capacity in the ministry of public health are present at work in their right places. But you are also invited to tell to the departments or ministry of public health if there are professionals leaving their profession working in administration.

ON ALLEGATIONS OF RURAL NEGLECT

It can be seen in different programmes that the government did not forget for the rural population. One of the biggest programmes the government is working on is the process of infrastructure. In the different parts of our nation in general there is land which is still not developed. The government has drafted a broad policy, or analyzed programmes, to reach the rural places with supply. Above all roads, agriculture and other different development programmes, such as health and educational services, must be widespread. To do this, roads have to be constructed to the areas where people are living. Most of the areas have been helping the Front, except in a few zones, there are not sufficient roads and transportation materials. To solve this, the government has taken action by drafting programmes to construct roads for the Province of Gash-Setit, Barka, Sahel and Danakil. From Nefasit to Mai Habar, Decamare, Teraamni to Mendefera. From Areza to Tokombia, Barentu. From Asmara to Keren, Akurdar, Barentu and Tesenei. From Akurdar to Keru, Sawa to Geremaika, Sebderat to Tesenei. Another from Massawa to Karora and from Massawa to Assab. All these programmes are drafted into a document, but every body has to understand that such work cannot be done within a day and night. The government has taken as first priority the areas which had no services and were cut from development. This programme will start from 1995 and necessary proclamation will be issued. To change the livelihood of the population will take time, and will require a big man power. But the government is trying its best.

ON THE INCIDENT AT MAI HABAR WHEN EX-FIGHTERS WERE KILLED

It is clear that the Mai Habar incidence was a distressing and unexpected incidence. How did it develop? This was testified by the fighters who were present there. It was a serious offence that no body or the government was expecting. When people are gathered one or two persons can disturb and break down a meeting, and this can lead to a situation out of control, which can be stormy and be followed by an unnecessary crises. The incident is connected with the rehabilitation and demobilization of the ex-fighters by the government. It should be remembered that fighters participated in the front after 1990 are already demobilized. Ex-fighters demobilized in the second phase are mostly the disabled fighters who have the problem that they can not participate in military or in different kinds of jobs. The government studied their problems and designed a special programme. Some of these fighters who have abilities and skills, but can not serve in military due to their injuries,

should be demobilized and assign in different fields such as agriculture, industry or go in their own trade activities. These fighters will be given 10,000 birr each and other different materials from the government. So the fighters who are aligned or organized in this programme were told in advance that they will be demobilized, whether they are volunteers or not they should go to their villages or contact the organizations for rehabilitation. But those who were volunteers and had no capacity for work, the government has prepared a temporary programme to care for them at Mai Habar and necessary expenditure is done for this temporary place. Every needed things were prepared. The camp was ready to receive the disabled. This was at the end of July, when full preparation was done, the corps and all military branches were asked to send all disabled to the camps of Mai Habar. By this way more than 1000 disabled fighters entered the camp of Mai Habar. After this two officials, one from the office of rehabilitating fighters and one from the Eritrean War Disabled Fighters Association (EWDF), were sent to explain about the programme at the camp, that it is a temporary solution and that 10,000 birr to be given for demobilizing fighters does not apply to them. There was a discussion of understanding that lasted more than two hours. The fighters have translated this in a wrong way, and had the idea that the government did not demobilize them regularly and did not care about them. The officials also tried to convince them and gave necessary view points of understanding. But at the end some of the fighters lost their control and tried to lead the meeting to unnecessary inclination and started to throw unnecessary words. So the officials told them that they will pass their official demands to the responsible authorities, to find the necessary answers and solutions. But they ordered the officials to call President Issaias to be present at that moment in the meeting. This was not possible. Then the fighters took one of the officials, the head of the rehabilitation office of fighters, as a hostage while the other one was sent back to Asmara. They refused to release the official. In this condition the ex-fighters gave warnings to the branch heads of the EWDF of Mai Habar to be silent and asked them to go to Asmara and pass on the messages. These ex-fighters also passed resolutions to take the hostage official until they get a reply, if not to take action upon him. Within a very short time unnecessary high shouting were heard, saying that the President must come, where is he? Otherwise we shall go to Asmara to tell our problems to the foreign embassies. It was a flagrant violation of discipline. They were out of control. During the night the demonstrators prepared numberless of banners and unnecessary slogans. They hijacked a car which came to the camp and put the driver under control. They made a plan to hijack vehicles from the roads of Nefasit and Mai Habar to come to Asmara to petition foreign embassies in Asmara. There were many fighters within the group who did not want to continue with this illegal demonstration, but they were silenced by the ringleaders. They continued night long without sleeping, to prepare programmes. This was out of law. The mob was raised up to higher emotional stage, and they didn't care for any advices. There were hot discussion during the night up to one o'clock to make an agreement but they refused. Then six ex-fighters from the security were sent from Asmara to calm the case, and later 30 others followed them. These ex-fighters did not know how this case started and where it had developed, but reached to Nefasit and moved on the way to Mai Habar. They met on the way with the 30 ringleaders who had commandeered a civilian truck which they hijacked in Nefasit. They were also waiting to hijack other trucks. But the ex-fighters tried to reason with them. They tried to advice them to return to their camp and told them that this case could be answered simply. But they refused and forced on to pass to go to Asmara and began to throw stones to the ex-fighters. The ex-fighters did not go to shoot, but to make them understand. The disabled fighters attempted to kill the ex-fighters with stones and sticks. The ex-fighters started to fire shoots to the air to disperse the angry mob. The disabled fighters did not go back, but they run forward and throw stones and the situation became critical and disabled tried to snatch their guns. So they were forced to fire shoots down in the ground in their self defence. But they didn't return, then three were killed and others were injured and the rest escaped and returned to their camp. As the result of this

tragic incident 15 ringleaders are imprisoned and a force major will be taken upon them. In this worst incident every body can say that the government has done unnecessary deeds over this fighters, but in general it must be understood that this incidence was started of the reasons which I mentioned above. Therefore who forced the ex-fighters to this incidence? Did they know where this situation could lead to? Any one has the right to oppose the government, but no body has the right to take the law into his own hand. The law is the law and any grievances should be addressed through the proper channels.

QUESTIONS ON OF THE OPPOSITION FRONTS OUTSIDE ERITREA

The demobilizing fighters know their responsibility and sacrificed their capacity, body and ability for their freedom, peace and prosperity. They are not ready to destroy what they constructed. This can not be seen comparing with Algeria and other countries. The Eritrean people have lost so many lives to reach to this freedom. If there is any force to oppose peace and which tries to be an obstacle in the safeguard of the people, it has no place today. The government itself has the necessary capacity of security, force and respect of laws. These laws prepared to oppose any opposition groups before these appearing. There is no problem to control them if they appeared. Some forces, especially forces from outside have the idea, and are trying their best, to disturb the Eritrean peace and security, by giving money or using other means to buy some demobilized fighters to betrayals. There are many secret things that the government knows, but this fronts could not get chance for success from the beginning, but we are not afraid and believe that they will not succeed because we have organized capacity of security, force and respect of laws.

HOW TO ORGANIZE CIVIL SERVANTS AND DECREASE EMPLOYEES

What is the reason that we are forced to decrease employees? It is the only task in the role of strategies and policies of the government. The government and bodies of the government drafted and wrote policies. They drew up necessary ways and means for their work. An institution is organized for taking actions. How and where did the government perform in the past three years? How was the government advancing forward? Did the government serve the important aims? It is important to ask these questions now? After Eritrean liberation many of the institutions that we inherited from the former regime were not clear and had inflated numbers of employees. The situation of the government's civil services at that time had been established for the benefit rulers. Most of the workers were not Eritrean nationals. Most of the nationals were also serving for the benefits of the rulers, with different reasons. They were employed and took responsibilities by friends, parent, bribe and for political reasons. Secondly the People's Front itself and the organization of People's front were assigned to the different institutions directly, according to where they served in the field. The government had no time or chance to change these old institutions to proper departments or ministries. This reorganization is still going on, as one part of the governments responsibilities. So the conditions of the government's offices in each department and governmental organizations are still inflated or overcrowded with unskilled workers. At this moment the government has a big expenditure for civil servants. So the economical capacity of this nation is very low and faced with a big loss for taking a huge number of civil servant. Before drafting any policy the government has been studying the economical capacity of the nation. This is also is not finished fully. But the main points that can serve for this economical capacity, a general studies have done in a simplified manner. To put in action the drafted policies in the right way the capacity of the nation must be put into consideration, and also what kind of government is needed. This takes very long time, as such tasks cannot be done only by the government. But the government decided to study

the capacity of the nation to have a successful and efficient form of administration. Different international organizations have participated and it took almost a year to finish this work. These studies have been going on in order to have a few and skilled manpower, which can give good services, a study was also made of the question of materials, to enter new technologies, the possibility of decreasing the capacity and expenditures in each ministry, department and authorities. These recommendations have still not been put in action, but they are taken as a policy lines and introduced to minimizing the big civil servants who are at work, both in terms of government workers and fighters.

We have to understand that in some departments during the time of the Derge there were unskilled employees engaged, by parenthood, to be secretary of the secretary, secretaries of the secretary and secretaries of the secretaries just to fill their pockets. So taking this into consideration we want to know our capacity, and needs want to reconstruct our nation and must help and encourage each other for the right policies.

THE QUESTION OF ARABIC LANGUAGE

There are 9 speaking languages in Eritrea. One of these is the Arabic language spoken by Rashaida and some communities of Yemen. All others have the mother languages known speaking in their houses while they are born. There is a saying that during Eritrean federation, the Eritrean Parliament had passed resolutions that Arabic language should be one of the main languages to be used at that time. This was for political affairs and had political analysis. People's Front and now the government has been going side by side to escape from this political analysis. This does not mean that there is knowingly done hard working and study to degrade the Arabic language and respect the Tigrigna language. The People's Front in its second congress has taken a decision and has invited all persons who have the capability to participate in this difficult working to spread, the Arabic language, and these efforts are still going on.

There is a question why Arabic language is needed. With the different times of our historical background we can not erase the culture and historical relations that we have with our neighbours, and we can not leave our strategical relations and benefits we have at this moment. Not only Arabic language, we are also learning and studying other languages. So we don't have any intensions to escape from using and learning Arabic language. All our people in general need to know Arabic language.

There are sayings that it is allowed to speak or work only with the Tigrigna language, but not allowed to speak or work with any other languages, especially Arabic, in the government's offices. This is not true. Not only Arabic, if any person does not know other languages than his mother language, and if he says that he don't know of any other persons who can translate in his office, you can not be working in the government or with government's tasks. However, every body can present his view points in the languages he knows, in order to be given the necessary answer. This is also said before.

As much as possible a continued hard working is going on that governmental departments have to translate and write Arabic language. A continued hard working is also going on, especially the heads or responsible persons in the offices have to know different languages of nationals and above all Arabic language. This government or the Front does not want to make politics on the language question.

THE QUESTION ABOUT EX-FIGHTERS IMPRISONED FOLLOWING THE DEMONSTRATION IN ASMARA IN MAY 1993

The demonstration happened last year on the eve of Eritrea's declaration of independence was known by all people that it left a scar in the Nation. It seemed that the condition is forgotten now, but it was known by every body of the Asmara city that it was serious. It seemed that it was a baby's idea and the deeds of irresponsible persons. It was done without imagination and started with a personal feeling. To calm this condition necessary major actions was taken. The responsible ringleaders of the mob of about 130 were imprisoned in Adi-Quala. A special court from the forces of defence was formed and carried out the necessary studies and gave their judgement within a year. By this judgement one has been set free, four warned, 19 dishonourably discharged from the army, 21 sentenced to a year and a half, 33 will spend between one and a half and three years in prison, 36 jailed for between 4 and 6 years, 8 from six to 10 years and 8 are sentenced for more than 10 years.

THE QUESTION OF JOHOVA WITNESS AND NATIONAL SERVICE

The law of the nation is above all other laws. The law of heaven is equal to all human beings. Every body is responsible to respect his own religious beliefs. Since we are in this world the law of nation and the law of government are over all laws. Any body who does not respect the law of the government, Johova witness or any other witnesses a major action will be taken upon him or her by the law of the government. The National Service has already began. Therefore, it has to be known that if there are some who refused to participate, whether they are Johova witness or others, who remain in hiding or of their religious belief refuse to serve, will be forced to enter in the National Service by the government's law.

THE QUESTION OF RESTITUTION FOR THE PARENTS OF MARTYRS

To answer this question is needed to see the condition of the government's budget. If we observe of the 1992-1993 and the first half year of the 1994 budgetary balance, the 1992 government's income and with the offering of foreign nations aid was 488.8 million birr, and the expense was 553.7 million birr. This was a deficit of 64.9 million birr of the budget. This is, leaving that the government has not been paying salary for fighters.

In 1993 the incomes have been increased, but the expenses were also rising dramatically. Based on this in 1993 there was a shortage of 157.3 million birr of the budget. This was more than 1992. If we see the budget of 1994, within half a year there is a 100.5 million birr deficit of the budget. The economists can understand more about the translation of incomes and expenses of this governmental budget figures. It is a problem to understand that which way we are going; and from where the government has brought its income for these expenditures. However, it is not difficult to understand where the problem of balancing the budget is leading to. I think the following can give us a good understanding if we take and compare the shortage of budgets in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia and Eritrea. In 1993 the yearly budget of each person in dollar in Kenya was 55 while in Eritrea was 80.8 dollars. This shows that the expenditure of the government is rising more and more. If we ask what the reason is, the government borrowed much money from the Bank for the demobilization and rehabilitation of fighters. So, this increased the government's expense. The government is trying its best to contract roads, houses, schools and public health services, while there is the problem and shortage of budget. Every body can

did not leave or disband the government and stay at home in order to make good for some persons or to be said that it is democratic. People's Front award its responsibility and its leading role played in liberating Eritrea. Everybody knows that the People's Front has done mercy without presenting to Justice the persons who were betrayers because it did not want to have or show any feelings of enmity. If the People's Front had chosen the path of dictatorship, there was no opposition force that stood in front of them. People's Front did not choose that path and the opposition is free to voice its dissent. People's Front had been calling for Eritreans repeatedly to step forward and to offer their cooperation for constructing the nation. Even after independence there were people who refused to participate in either the referendum or the reconstruction. We repeatedly called them to be forget the past, and to work together to construct the nation. The government is still calling these people to return and help participating in the democratic process. While people were in doubt whether independence will come or not, People's Front had declared that it is the security of the country; that it was not only the political force of one mobilizing party, but it was a body of different political forces which had broad participation. In the 3rd congress People's Front had also assured this principle again.

However People's Front can not create political parties from different places for the sake of multi-party, and it will not step down leaving its country and forgetting its responsibility. The government can not legislate parties into existence. If political parties are to be formed they must emerge themselves. People's Front is working to have secured democratic government, over all to be led and ordered by constitution and to bring political government that people can participate in. The People's Front is organizing itself now to register its members. People's Front does not want to monopolize power. It is registering its members because it has been accused of neglecting its membership. It has to be known that there are even some members of the People's Front who refused to register in the PFDJ. They are waiting for other parties to emerge as they know that the PFDJ will not be the only party in the country. This is their right and we respect that. People's Front believes in democratic condition. Peoples's Front clearly knows the way how democratic condition will come in this country and it has started to work with it. People's Front started to registered its members because its presence is to be for security.

THE QUESTION ON REGISTRATION OF MARTYRS

Every body knows that during the time of registering the martyrs, People's Front did not say to register the members of EPLF only. People's Front didn't make any discrimination among EPLF and ELF. There were many members of EPLF who had not registered at first in the registers of the Front, especially veteran fighters. Many of them had been registered by their parents, friends or by any body who knows them; and the registration of martyrs from other organizations have been registered and still are registering on this way. This process is also a continuous process. So, if there are any martyrs who are not still registered, they can be register if assurance can be present by anybody who wants to register them. There is no meaning to say unnecessary words of this is EPLF or that is ELF at this moment.

THE QUESTION ON THE LAND LAW AND LAND DISPUTES

It is not a simple work to draft the land law. But now much effort has been done and is presented in the last 5th congress of the National Assembly. The importance of this proclamation is not to finish with a short explanation, but it will be given broad and necessary explanations. There is one thing that I want to mention, we must not think that

the proclamation itself can solve all the problems related with land. The proclamation is only for a guide. Based on the proclamation, or by the spirit of the proclamation, if we want to get the beginning and ending solution we have to make continuous effort using the law as a guide. To put in action this law itself needs continuous effort and much preparation of human capacity, how to organize, to have different kinds of materials, needs to create necessary atmosphere where people can cooperate each other. Before finishing these preparations it is impossible to think that all problems related to land will be solved in time. Out of this, when land disputes occur between villages, the government will not ignore them. But this government does not wait for the proclamation to find solutions for problems. The resolution passed by the government and the land dispute between Toraa and Tsinadegle villages in Akeleguzay Province is a case in point. Not only the government but also local administration will intervene in the land disputes.

In general with regard to land incorporated in the towns, will also be solved with the law. But it is taken as a problem in a span of time and needed quick solutions. So to solve these problems some actions of understanding is taking with people. The government and the city administration of Asmara are negotiating with representatives of 14 villages around Asmara. They are discussing how the new policy will be implemented. These negotiations will be used as a working model for other towns and villages. The problem of houses in the city of Asmara is not directly connected with this programme. The open places in the city have to be given and to be constructed. Hard work is also needed for some parts of the lands, to be constructed within a very short time to solve the problems of houses. High effort is also made not only to companies present inside the nation, but also companies from foreign countries have to come and prepare their study to construct houses according to their own capacity. We are expecting that some companies will start the construction of this programme at the beginning of 1995.

THE QUESTION ON THE CONDITION OF REHABILITATION FOR REFUGEES

Some people are saying the government wants to collect tax from Eritrean refugees coming to rehabilitate from Sudan and this is being an obstacle for returnees to their country. To say this it is sure to make the ant to an elephant. It is sure, for Eritreans living in foreign countries, especially in Europe, Middle East and America have been permitted to bring different kinds of goods with free tax that can serve for their rehabilitation. Taking as a policy this has been working for a limited time. But this benefit was cancelled because out of the policy one person had brought a container full of whisky for trading without licence. So we are not going to permit these kinds of deeds to be done and this is also a crime.

THE QUESTION ON THE PRICE OF ELECTRICITY AND WATER

The service giving of electricity and water is not estimated with the salary of employers. There is no service of water. The government is trying its best to fulfil the necessity of water and electricity without subsidy. The government itself can not give these services free. The high price and low price of electricity is based on the given expense. The government can not reduce the prices of electricity by covering the expenses of necessary fuel oil and others, and nobody must wait for this. It is not correct to say that because of tax the price of the service of electricity and water became high and heavy.

With the problem it has the government thinks very much about the expenses facing the necessary capital investments in industries. We are using electricity produced from generators by buying fuel oil and our industries are in deficit; because the price of the

products are becoming very high, the prices of electricity and water are also became high.

So at the end, the products produced from these industries can not get the capacity of competition in markets, especially in foreign countries. This is making a big damage in our economy. But the government is working hard to make lower the prices of electricity and water in order to make the productive organizations to be able to be competitive by distributing qualitative goods in the markets. If we come to the livelihood of our people it is understood that the distribution of water and electricity is going side by side with the price of fuel oil and transportation. This is also being controlled, so we can not say that the tax and excise is making higher for the livelihood. If we are saying that our daily product is very low we must try to work hard to raise our product, and the only means we have is to try to be able to use or minimize the services of our electricity and water according to our products or salaries..

THE QUESTION ON COURTS AND THEIR WORK

It will be good if the government did not to put its hand in any thing concerning the affairs of Justice or courts. The government is trying and working hard to construct and develop a free and just legal organization.

Starting from our liberation day we tried our best that an organization of court is free to work from the hand of the government. But the courts have a shortage of judges and sufficient capability of services. The judges are working day and night. The conditions of crimes to be seen are also becoming beyond their capacity. Not only the high court, but also the courts of different provinces have not sufficient judges and materials needed for their work. Everybody knows that this is not of bad wishes or unwanted deeds, but due to lack of capability the work are going backward. Sometimes resolutions passed by the courts may be translated wrongly by people which are not given a right judgement, and it can be said that this is done by bribery, faction or by other means. If there are disagreements of these kinds they can be solved only by the court. The government has no responsibility to put their hand in this case. If there is any doubt that judges are giving twisted verdict being above the law it has to be assured by the court to get the veritable rights.

THE QUESTION ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

We have not forgotten our principled stand with regard to women;s rights. Both men and women, especially the men, were conscious of the equal rights of women. They participated together in all aspects and also women knew that they are not under men and are equally part and parcel of the struggled for independence. There is no rights only concerning for women and also for the rights of men. In different times some words are heard that the government is forgetting the rights of women. Some women ex-fighters who have different problems of their own social life can spread wrong ideas, saying is that women's rights are oppressed because there are no women ministers or authorities or given chance in the different positions of a government. This can not to be taken as the government has forgotten about the issue of women's rights. But the government is working hard to put a capable person to work in his right place without discriminating on gender issues. Above all, the government is working hard to participate them in different positions in the election of National Assembly, in the provinces of local administrations in order to be faithful with the social or cultural conditions of the Nation. In order to have participation in different governmental sections reserved seats are given for women. This is because they can not get a chance of election and can not get services with the habit of social life of our people if

they are left to complete in a voting.

As well as this, the government is trying hard to upgrade women's academic and professional skills and to promote capacity-building programmes. It is not correct to think that the rights of women is confirmed by 50-60 women being engaged or placed in different responsibilities in the governmental positions. It is true that this can create an understanding that women have progressed in professional skills and participation. But this is not the last scale. The programme that women can participate will be dynamic and that takes a very long time. As well as this, sufficient help is to be done not for women living in towns, but for women living in the Eritrea rural areas, of different cultures, women's who have no capacity and are living having different customs must be freed from this circumstances.

This is not only to have equal rights as men. but as nationals to secure their rights they have to get education, health services and professional training and to get sufficient help in order to be able to participate in the different social life of the nation.

The basic question is not that how many women ministers are sitting in the chairs. But it is to work hard to know their present life and livelihood of women living in the towns and women living in rural areas. It is also to try to do much effort to make them free and be themselves equal to men and as nationals to be able to exist having full rights.

So this government as a Front is not doing this to try to prove a point or to please women, but because the government recognize that women make up 50% of our population and should be respected accordingly.