

Progress or Regress: Eritrea's Human Development Status

An overview of the 2014 Human Development Report

Launched today

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On July 24th, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2014 Human Development Report (HDR) has been launched in Tokyo, Japan. The theme of the 2014 HDR is *Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience*. This note on the composite indices of the HDR is based on the explanatory note on Eritrea. Globally the HDR by UNDP presents the Human Development Index (HDI) for 187 countries and UN-recognized territories. It also presents other indices such as the Inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI), the Gender Development Index (GDI), the Gender Inequality Index (GII), and the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). Accordingly, the HDR values and ranks countries based on their progress in human development index (HDI) which is the composite average measurement of life expectancy at birth, education and living standard. Thus, the HDI is a composite long-term measure of progress in the three-dimensions of human development namely **a long and healthy life, education and a decent standard of living**. In brief, **a long and healthy life** is measured by life expectancy at birth, **education** is measured based on two indicators which are the **mean years of schooling** among the adult population, which is the average number of years of education received in a life-time by people aged 25 years and older and the **expected years of schooling** for children of school-entry age, which is the total number of years of schooling a child of school-entry age can expect to receive if prevailing patterns of age-specific enrolment rates stay the same throughout the child's life, and the third dimension is the **living standard measures by Gross National Income (GNI) per capita** expressed in constant dollars converted using purchasing power parity (PPP) rates.

Since 1990, the HDR has been prepared as an advocacy and knowledge tool to advance human wellbeing by presenting cross-country comparisons in the three-dimensions of human development index based mainly on comparable international databases such as those of by the United Nations Population Division, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Institute for Statistics and the World Bank. In doing so, the HDI is traced back to 1980 and the current report presents HDI values and ranks from 1980 to 2013. According to the HDR, countries are grouped into: low, medium, high and higher HDI group countries. It has also grouped countries based on regions and sub-regions for comparing HDI progresses. The next sections will present about Eritrea and how it is progressing in human development. However, most of the indices mentioned above were not computed by the report due to lack of relevant data. The only computation/calculation we have for Eritrea is the HDI and therefore comparison is based only on this figure.

Eritrea's HDI value and rank

Despite the non-sense claim by the PFDJ regime that the country is making progress in the life of its people, the HDI value and ranks for Eritrea tell the other way round. As always Eritrea's human development progress is among the lowest of the low HDI group countries. Its HDI value for 2013 is 0.381 and its rank is 182 out of the 187 countries and UN-recognized territories. Unacceptably, over the last four years (2010-2013) the progress in HDI is marginal unlike the rapid progresses among the low HDI group countries. Eritrea's HDI value of 0.373 in 2010 has marginally raised to 0.381 in 2013 which is an increase of only 2.1 percent between 2010 and 2013 with an average annual increase of about 0.71 percent. As mentioned, this low and marginal increase is contrary to the fast increases in HDI values of many low HDI countries over past 10 or more years. According to the 2013 and 2014 HDRs the lower HDI group countries appear to be improving at a higher rate – while optimism for our beloved Eritrea is very far under the incompetent leadership of Isaias Afewerki.

Table A below summarizes Eritrea's progress in each of the HDI indicators. Between 1980 and 2013, Eritrea's life expectancy at birth increased by 19.6 years, mean years of schooling stagnated and expected years of schooling increased by only 0.7 years between 1995 and 2013. Eritrea's GNI per capita decreased by about

21.2 percent between 1995 and 2013 despite the false claim of the PFDJ regime that the economy is growing while facts speak differently.

Table A: Eritrea’s HDI trends based on consistent time series data and

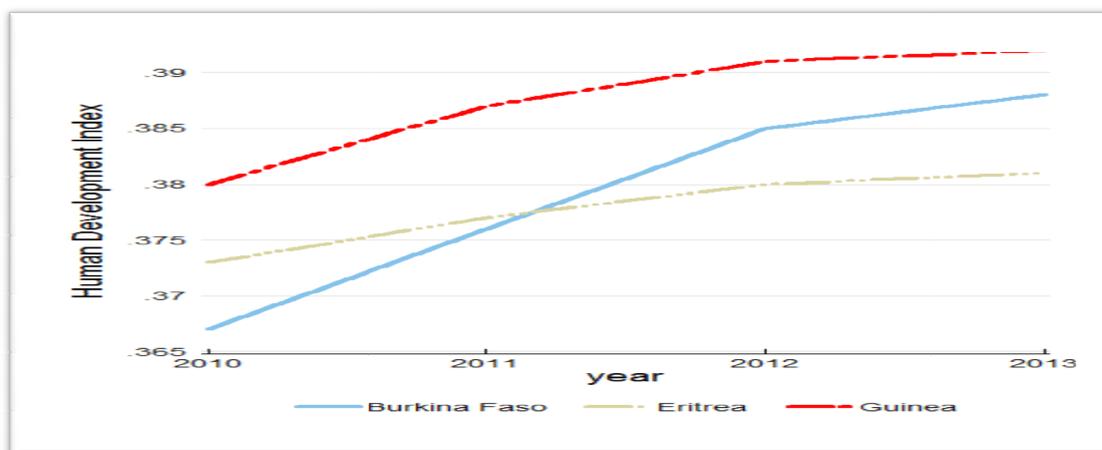
Table A: Eritrea’s HDI trends based on consistent time series data and new goalposts					
Year	Life expectancy at birth	Expected years of schooling	Mean years of schooling	GNI per capita (2005 PPP\$)	HDI Value
1980	43.3				
1985	45.0				
1990	48.2				
1995	52.5	3.4		1,455	
2000	56.1	4.1		1,455	
2005	58.7	4.7		1,319	
2010	61.8	4.1	3.4	1,072	0.373
2011	61.8	4.1	3.4	1,129	0.377
2012	62.3	4.1	3.4	1,169	0.380
2013	62.9	4.1	3.4	1,147	0.381

Source: UNDP, HDR 2014

Table A above reveals that the country is making little progress toward improving the wellbeing of its people. If at all the only progress, albeit, slow is in life expectancy at birth which is an increase of 14.7 years between 1990 and 2013 for which the PFDJ is accountable. In education, although expected years of schooling marginally progressed between 1995 and 2005 both the expected and mean years of schooling came to deadlock after 2010 indicating the PFDJ regime is not helping our educational system. Likewise, Table A shockingly, shows per capita income (GNI per capita) is on the decline and it has declined by 21.2 percent between 1995 and 2013.

Compared with countries in the Low HDI Group and countries with similar socio-economic situation the image is still shocking. Figure 1 below compares Eritrea with Burkina Faso and Guinea for the period between 2010 and 2013. The figure indicates that Burkina Faso and Guinea are moving rapidly in their HDIs than Eritrea. From the trend it is clear that Burkina Faso and Guinea improving their HDI rapidly which is the case with other Low HDI group countries. Let us hope the PFDJ regime accuses not the CIA or USA for interfering in the writing of the 2014 HDR.

Figure 1: Trends in Eritrea, Burkina Faso and Guinea’s HDI 2010-2013



Source: UNDP, HDR 2014

Comparing Eritrea with selected African countries, Sub-Sahara Africa and low HDI group countries

Ironically, the PFDJ regime always points its fingers to African countries as if they are failing and that it is a model in modern day Africa by not repeating failed history. Not surprisingly, its supporters applaud shamelessly as if their regime is running Singaporean like state in the African continent. Nevertheless, Africa is making progress except the unlucky ones like Eritrea and few others with inept leadership thanks for the blind supporters and apologists of authoritarian regimes. As stated above Eritrea's HDI value for 2013 is 0.381 much below the average HDI of 0.502 for Sub-Sahara Africa as a whole and the average of low HDI group countries around the globe which is 0.493. Table B below presents selected Sub-Saharan Africa countries with similar HDI ranks and values and with similar population size with Eritrea, Sub-Sahara Africa average HDI and the Low HDI group.

Country/Region	HDI value	HDI Ranks	Life Expectancy at Birth	Expected years of Schooling	Mean years of Schooling	GNI per capita (PPP US\$)
Eritrea	0.381	182	62.9	4.1	3.4	1,147
Central African Republic	0.341	185	50.2	7.2	3.5	0,588
Sierra Leone	0.374	183	45.6	7.5	2.9	1,815
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.502	—	56.8	9.7	4.8	3,152
Low HDI	0.493	—	59.4	9.0	4.2	2,904

Source: UNDP, HDR 2014

PFDJ Regime is not open for information

Eritrea' Inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI) – did the 2014 HDR compute it? No!

The HDR always goes beyond the composite measure of HDI. HDI is basic average and nominal measure of human development – based on life expectancy at birth (health), expected years and mean years of schooling (education) and GNI per capita (income). In other words, it does not tell us how resources across geographical areas and vertically across households are distributed – simply put, it masks inequality across regions and societies. For this reason, and to unmask inequality the 2010 HDR introduced another real measure known as the inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI). IHDI is the real measure of human development while HDI is a nominal measure because it disregards equity and distribution of national wealth among citizens. On the contrary, IHDI tells us how much resources are distributed through the provision of health services, education and access to sources of income and or livelihoods across regions and society at large.

Unfortunately, the PFDJ regime did not want us and the world to know how the country's resources are being distributed among its people. Lack of publishing national budget ever since 1991 is an excellent example. Due to lack of data the 2014 HDR, like in the past 24 years, did not present IHDI figures for Eritrea. This is not a wonder for those of us who know how the PFDJ conducts its day-to-day business – secrecy and fear of accountability. Interestingly, PFDJ keeps telling us Eritrea is heading towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) very soon, especially, in health related MDG goals. Even if there might have

been marginal changes in the health services the truth is that it is not policy induced and it is essentially donor induced and the hard work of the people of the Eritrean both inside and outside the country. Much credit in the health improvements should go to the UN agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) who are vigorously doing a good job. PFDJ does not want to tell us the roles and contributions of this great UN agencies in the areas of health, nutrition and water and sanitation. For example, UNICEF's work in water and sanitation, health and nutrition and education through mobilizing millions of USD from donors and implementing projects like water supply projects in Weki, Tsaeda Kristian, Adi Shimagle, Afelba, and the list is endless. PFDJ media did not and will not tell us the truth.

Eritrea's Gender Inequality Index (GII) – did the 2014 HDR compute it? No!

Another basic composite for measuring inequalities is the Gender Inequality Index (GII). As a composite measure for gender equality GII measures gender-based inequalities in three dimensions: reproductive health (maternal mortality and adolescent birth rates), gender empowerment (share of parliamentary seats held by women and secondary and higher education attainment by each gender for the 25+ years old), and economic activity (labour market participation rate for women and men). By the way do we have a labour market except supplying the military and the PFDJ companies who do not hold a pay roll?

To make it short, GII is another measurement of human wellbeing and it measures the loss of human development due to inequalities of gender based on the aforementioned GII dimensions. Guess what? No relevant data to calculate GII of Eritrea – reason – secrecy and fear of exposure by the PFDJ regime.

Eritrea's Gender Development Index (GDI) – did the 2014 HDR compute it?? No!

What is GDI? GDI is a gender disaggregated HDI and is defined as a ratio of the female to the male HDI. Thus, GDI is a measures of gender inequalities in the three-dimensions of HDI (life expectancy at birth, education (expected and mean years of schooling for male and female aged 25 and above), and command over over resources (measured by female and male estimated GNI per capita). Do we have such data to compute in Eritrea? No! Why, PFDJ is not foolish to collect and analyze disparity between genders. After all do we have an official census? No! So, we do not even know the proportion of female to male or vice versa leave alone their anguish. If we do not know the size of our population how is it possible to plan for health, education and other services and invest money? It is like preparing food without knowing how many people to feed? Under PFDJ everything is a joke.

Eritrea's Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) – did the 2014 HDR compute it? No! No! No!

Global MPI has three dimensions and 10 indicators, and each dimension and each indicator within a dimension is equally weighted. Thus, as a measure of deprivations MPI has 10 equally weighted indicators in health, education and standard of living. The dimensions and indicators (in bracket) are: (i) health (nutrition and child mortality), (ii) education (years of schooling and school attendance), and (iii) living standard (electricity, sanitation, water, floor, cooking fuel and assets). MPI is introduced first in the 2010 HDR and it is a measure of inequality in human development. MPI identifies multiple deprivations in the same households in education, health and living standards. As stated above the education and health dimensions are each based on two indicators, while the standard of living dimension is based on six indicators. The global MPI is computed from the same household survey over a series of years to measure progresses in human deprivation. The indicators are weighted to create a deprivation score, and the deprivation scores are computed for each household in the survey. Accordingly, if a household is deprived in **20-33.3%** of the weighted indicators they are considered '**Vulnerable to Poverty**', if a household is deprived in the range of 33.3-50 percent they **multi-dimensionally poor**, and if they are deprived in **50% or more** they are identified as being in '**Severe Poverty**'.

Did the 2014 HDR compute MPI for Eritrea? No! No! No! thanks for our superstitious and stone-age communist leader!!

Conclusion

It is save to conclude that Eritrea is under siege thanks for the military junta. Lack of data or statistics to measure human development progress in Eritrea shows there is nothing the PFDJ regime has to boast because the regime knows that nothing has changed positively in the life of the people in the last 24 years. In fact, we lost everything we have had including our industries and businesses. Not surprisingly, PFDJ's reaction to the 2014 HDR would be blind denial of the facts and we all know that the life and wellbeing of our people is going from bad to worse in every minute and every day. The message of the 2014 HDR is not for the PFDJ junta because they do not need somebody to tell them that the country is sinking both economically and its human assets. The message of the 2014 HDR is to the Eritrean people, supporters and apologists of the regime and the true opposition.

It is long overdue to say **“ENOUGH IS ENOUGH”** for the oppressive and inept PFDJ leadership.

May the Living God give eternal rest to our Martyrs and strength to our people!

Thank you for reading!

Wedhankum!