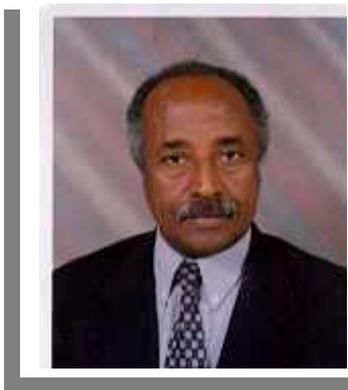


Eritrea



Osman Saleh Mohammed

Minister of Education

Born in 1948, Mr. Saleh holds a B.Sc. from the Haile Sellaise I University. He attended many study tours, workshops, conferences on various fields in different European, Asian and African countries. Mr. Osman Saleh has a long record of political and educational involvement. For four years, he served as Head of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front refugee-schools in the Sudan. In 1987, he was subsequently appointed Head of the Education Department. From 1987 to 1992 he was Commissioner for Eritrean Refugees Affairs. Since 1993 he has been Member of the Executive Bureau of the People 's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) and Member of the National Assembly. Mr. Saleh has been since 1993 Member of the Central Assembly of PFDJ. In June 1993, he was appointed Minister of Education of Eritrea..

The Role of Languages in Promoting Education for All for Learning to Live Together

The phrase "...Learning to Live Together" encompasses many items of strategic importance of which education is the epicenter. Education in return presupposes, inter alia, the development of curriculum and languages. Therefore, language policy becomes a core issue that calls for a politic course of action. The reason is clear and vivid: the adoption of mother tongues as media of instruction (in multi-ethnic societies like Eritrea) is of many and varied advantages-- psychological, political, pedagogical and democratic rights as well.

In Eritrea, there are nine ethnic languages and all are used as media of instruction in the national education system. Formal and non-formal education at the basic level (preprimary, elementary, and literacy programs) is being pursued in mother tongues; English is used as media of instruction starting from junior upwards.

This initiative gave unshakable psychological confidence to the learner. It helped the learner assert that his/her mother tongue whether "developed or undeveloped" is equally important. It also enabled him/her to build self-esteem and equate his/her importance parallel with his/her counterparts. Such opportunity brought the users of the different languages much closer together and induced them to love, tolerate and respect each other. This conviction as social cohesion brought the citizens of the country to live for the sake of each other. Consequently, it fostered unity in diversity through genuine and deep-seated cultural tolerance.

However, such endeavors called for collective responsibility and partnership especially in the training of teachers, production of textbooks and infrastructural networks. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the international community in line with the sweeping philosophy of Globalization, to pull its resources together to assist those on the embarkation. *✍*