

## Reviving Construction Industries To Accelerate Development Drive

Written by Samrawit Efreem

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The existing fascinating art deco in Asmara, Byzantine and Turkish buildings in Massawa, ancient roads and traces of railways prove that modern construction industry was introduced long time ago in Eritrea. Urban master plan was drafted in 1895 for the first time and Eritrean rural areas began to morph into urban and semi-urban centers. However, its advancement was crippled due to prolonged wars.

After independence, the Government of Eritrea inherited severely damaged infrastructure facilities, buildings and industrial plants in shambles that required immediate attention. Without these constructions, no economic transaction and social interactions could have developed. Hence, the Ministry of Public Works set up to take prime responsibility to stimulate construction industry intended to erection and repair of immobile facilities. In connection with those undertakings, the Ministry has conducted a successful symposium in Asmara from April 25-27 to review its past endeavors. In the course of the symposium, 14 study papers were presented highlighting the implementation of engineering projects carried out in the past 20 years. It also discussed in detail the achievements, shortcoming as well as its forthcoming programs of the Ministry.

In a study paper presented, lack of skilled manpower was mentioned among the main hurdles of the Ministry had to cross. To this end, substantial investment was made to nurture professional and competent workforce in a bid to maximize the quality and productivity. Technical and vocational schools were expanded by the Ministry of Education and as a consequence number of engineers, technicians and semi-skilled workers rose significantly. Most of the major infrastructure and buildings projects were executed by skills and ingenuity of locally trained human resources. It was also disclosed the need to produce architects and town planners so as to realize strategic urban development and engineering programs.

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