

## **Tedros Adhanom did well during the Candidates' Forum at WHO**

by Bewnetu Tesema, 11-08-16

My comment is prompted by the article that appeared in the Ethiomedia with a title "Tedros Adhanom fails to understand WHO questions" dated November 5, 2016. The article was written either due to ignorance in the field or and most probably out of hatred to defame the Candidate's reputable name. I had been in that meeting and as everybody who attended the Forum and who followed up the webcast would agree that Dr Tedros has done amazingly very well. Many of the African countries who participated in the meeting expressed their satisfaction immediately after his presentation and question-answer session came to an end. More importantly, the African Union Commission has also expressed its appreciation and great satisfaction upon his arrival in Addis.

The question he allegedly failed to understand was a question posed by Brazil and that question was controversial and before he had to answer such a question he had to ask for clarification. It is normal to ask for clarification when questions are put in ambiguous way or when you want the person who asked the question if he really meant it that way. So what is strange here. By the way, I have learnt from colleagues that Dr Tedros had held a bilateral meeting with Brazil who did ask the question which required clarification and came to understand each others view on the subject matter raised in the question. The other question was, if I remember well, was raised by Estonia and that did not need much clarification, but just to once again repeat the question as he did not hear it well. For your information there were eight to ten questions in total and asking for repeating the question for the two of them should not have surprised you at all. This was done by other candidates too.

The truth is that the wrong judgment you have made in your article is an extension of the opposition campaign to undermine his race. This has been demonstrated on the day of the Candidates' Forum when a hired one person came up to the WHO corner with a sign of "Stop Dr Tedros ....." and this gesture was very much

criticized by many saying that how come that being an Ethiopian or an African campaigning against his own country as well as African candidate? Some were saying that was as good as betraying a country by standing against the country's candidate for such big and prestigious Organization.

The writer of this small article has even contradicted himself in which on one hand, he said he failed to understand WHO questions and on the other "the only hope Tedros will be given the WHO directorship is because of the "Whose Turn?". He is afraid that it may turn out that Dr Tedros may win the position . It has to be clear that WHO has one of the very best election process which others should also learn from it as it is characterized by accountability and transparency as well as merit oriented. This doesn't mean, among the criteria, geographic and gender would have no role at all. In case two equally competent contestants reach to a final, of course the decision could take those two important factors into consideration and this will not reduce the role of competence and merit at all.