



ETHIOPIA TODAY

Newsletter of the Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to Canada

VOL.1. No.12 March 2015

Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt Sign a Declaration of Principles on GERD



Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt signed an agreement on a Declaration of Principles on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on Monday (March 23) in Khartoum. Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, Egypt's President Abdel Fattah El SiSi and Sudan President Omar Al-Bashir signed the agreement. Others attending the occasion included the Vice-President of South Sudan, James Wani Igge, as well as officials, representatives from IGAD, the Nile Basin Initiative, the World Bank and other international organizations.

The three leaders welcomed the agreement in speeches in Khartoum's Republican Palace, and watched a short film about the Grand Renaissance Dam highlighting its benefits for the region. Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn said that the waters of the Nile constituted an

important livelihood for the people who shared the river. He underlined that the development that all riparian countries aspired to could only materialize through dialogue and continuous cooperation. This would ensure mutual benefits for all users. He pointed out that the Nile was a matter of survival for the people of the riparian states and a prerequisite for the economic development of the Nile Basin countries. He stressed that the GERD was a project which should catalyze cooperation and also provide a basis for regional integration. He pointed out that Ethiopia has taken the bold step in initiating the establishment of the International Panel of Experts (IPoE) to encourage the building of mutual trust and confidence among the three Eastern Nile Basin countries.

Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir said that Sudan understands and gives due attention to the necessity of cooperation and collaboration on Nile waters issue. He underlined the importance of confidence and trust building mechanisms to realize development and peace in the Nile Basin. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El SiSi said that Egypt did not stand against Ethiopia's right to develop and use its natural resources. He said firmly: "we have chosen to cooperate on any issue regarding the Nile waters."

In the Preamble to the Declaration of Principles the three countries enter into the signing of the

Declaration "mindful of the rising demand of the [three countries] of their trans boundary water resource, and cognizant of the significance of the River Nile as the source of livelihood...". By laying down the Principles relating to the GERD, the document underlines its historic importance. It also demonstrates that cooperation is the only way to solve disagreements and enhance confidence and trust among the three countries regarding the GERD. To this end, the three countries have agreed "to cooperate based on common understanding, mutual benefit, good faith, win-win and principles of international law [, and...] in understanding upstream and downstream water needs in its various aspects."

The Principles endorsed in the Declaration are: the Principle of Cooperation; the Principle of Development, Regional Integration and Sustainability; the Principle of Equitable and Reasonable Utilization; the Principle of Not to Cause Significant Harm; The Principle to Cooperate on the First Filling and Operation of the Dam; the Principle of Confidence Building; the Principle of Exchange of Information and Data; the Principle of Dam Safety; the Principle of Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity; and the Principle of Peaceful Settlement of Disputes.

The Declaration of Principles endorses the point that the benefits of the GERD are for the whole region "through generation of sustainable and reliable clean energy supply" which is itself an important input "to contribute to economic development, promotion of transboundary cooperation and regional integration." The Declaration is a crucial document in the sense that it also rejects any past mistrust and suspicion. The three riparian states have now opted for cooperation and utilization of their transboundary watercourses on the basis of internationally

accepted principles: the "principles of equitable and reasonable utilization and not to cause significant harm."

The three countries have agreed to cooperate on the first filling and operation of the GERD, to apply the recommendations of the international technical experts committee and the results of the final report of the Tripartite National Technical Committee during the different stages of the project. They will "utilize the final outcomes of the joint studies" recommended by the Tripartite National Technical Committee and international technical experts to reach agreement on the guidelines for different scenarios for the first filling in parallel with the construction of the dam as well as agree on the annual operation policies which "the owners can adjust from time to time."

This will help the three countries to avoid any significant harm and in fact helps to build trust and confidence among them; the three countries will establish a mechanism of contact through their ministries of water and irrigation. These points will be implemented with 15 months from the start of preparing the two studies recommended by the Technical Committee. The Declaration clearly states that "the three countries appreciate the efforts undertaken thus far by Ethiopia in implementing the [International Panel of Experts-IPoE] recommendations pertinent to the GERD safety."

The three countries also agreed on the principle of sovereign equality and territorial integrity for the optimal utilization and adequate protection of the Nile River. In the face of growing climate change and environmental degradation, it is the responsibility of involved states to maintain and enhance the protection of the river and environmental conservation in order to benefit

effectively from the environment. This principle is therefore a manifestation of the rights and responsibilities of the riparian states in their utilization of the Nile waters. One of the benefits of the GERD for the region is, of course, that it will encourage and expedite environmental conservation and play a crucial role in the improvement of both the quality and quantity of the Nile waters.

Another central point in the Declaration is that the three countries, as owners of the issues, have opted for an internal mechanism for peaceful settlement of disputes. This crucial point demonstrates the level of trust and confidence that the three countries are reaching.

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn at the signing ceremony stated that, "Ethiopia's signing of the Declaration of Principles is to demonstrate its dedication for cooperation." He added that as the Declaration of Principles was based on a win-win spirit, it would pave the way for further cooperation and collaboration among the three Eastern Nile Basin countries. In effect, the signing of the Declaration of Principles has brought the three countries closer together. It provides the basis for cooperation in the Nile Basin and is in line with the objectives for development of the region. It will be important for the three countries to keep up this momentum for their cooperation, and cooperation in the region, and maintain the current win-win spirit. The successful State Visit of Egypt's President Abdel Fattah El SiSi to Ethiopia after the signing was just such an example of the way forward.

The signing of the Declaration of Principles has been welcomed. The Nile Basin Initiative has issued a statement congratulating the three countries on the signing, describing it as a

milestone in the history of cooperation on the Nile. It said it could be expected to have immense significance for trans-boundary water resources management and development in the Nile Basin. The signing has also been welcomed by the EU and by the US and others. Mutaz Musa, Chairman of the Nile Basin Initiative - Ministerial Council and Sudan's Minister of Water Resources and Electricity, described the Declaration of Principles between the three countries on the Renaissance Dam as a prelude for cooperation and the implementation of the joint sustainable development projects between the three countries.

News

President El-Sisi Calls for Strong Partnership between Egypt, Ethiopia



President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has called for a strong partnership and cooperation between Egypt and Ethiopia.

While addressing the joint session of members of the House of Peoples Representatives and House of Federation on March 25/2015, the Egyptian president said the two countries need to work together for peace and prosperity.

President El-Sisi stated that his visit to Ethiopia is aimed at conveying the message of peace and prosperity from the people of Egypt to Ethiopia. “I stand before you in the house of the Ethiopian people carrying a message of sincere fraternity and true affection to you and hands stretched out well seeking cooperation for progress and prosperity from your brothers in Egypt,” he stressed.

According to the president, Egypt has a strong political commitment for dialogue and communication with Ethiopia at all levels and through different forums.

River Nile should be a source of cooperation between the two countries instead of a source conflict, President El-Sisi said, adding that “it is the river whose water flows as blood in the veins of Egyptians and Ethiopians who shall always remain brothers and would not allow any dispute to creep on them or to impair the strength of the ties that bring them together”.

The president recalled that both Egypt and Ethiopia had worked for the realization of the Organization of African Union and stated that the countries now need a stronger degree of cooperation and solidarity to attain their goals and to face today's challenges.

El-Sisi pointed out that the two countries need to write together a new chapter of bilateral relations that is guided by the principles of cooperation and realizing common interests directed to development and welfare.

Japan Extends 150,000 USD to Ethiopian Peacekeeping Training Center

Addis Ababa, March 26/2015 The government of Japan has extended 150,000 USD to support the

training programs of the Ethiopian International Peacekeeping Training Center (EIPKTC).

Japan, which began supporting the establishment of the Center in 2012, is sponsoring the project through the Japan- UNDP Partnership Fund.

In 2010, Ethiopia made a decision to establish the center to enhance regional standby capacity of military, police and civilian experts for peacekeeping and peace-building missions.

Japanese Ambassador to Ethiopia, Kazuhiro Suzuki said his country believes that regional capacity building for conflict resolution is indispensable and supports the project through financial and technical assistance.

The center held its first course last October and students from Ethiopia and other East African countries attended it. As the Ambassador said the training was successful, in terms of strengthening regional and continental cooperation.

This year, Japan will work with the Center to conduct two courses, 'Conflict Management' and 'Post Conflict Recovery', Suzuki said.

Ethiopia Celebrates Achievement in MDG Target of Water Supply

Addis Ababa, March 23/2015 Ethiopia on March 23/2015 celebrated its achievement of reaching the MDG target of halving the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water by 2015.

The number of people who have access to safe drinking water, which was six million in 1990 has now reached 57 million.

The Joint Monitoring Program for water and sanitation (JMP) in November 2014 formally declared that the Millennium Development Goal

for halving the number of people without access to clean drinking water has been achieved, nine months ahead of schedule.

In spite of the challenges the nation encountered over the past years, Ethiopia has made a considerable progress in terms of expanding access to clean drinking water, said Wondimu Tekle State Minister of Water.

Safe drinking water coverage has reached 80 percent in 2014 from 19 percent in 1990.

He said the nation will continue to work with stakeholders to ensure that the Universal Access Program targets for safe drinking water and sanitation met.

The achievement of Ethiopia implies the "critical role" that government plays in leadership, the importance of partnership, and sustained investment "underpins any success story", said Leila Pakkala UNICEF Regional Director, Eastern and Southern Africa said.

The ambitious growth and transformation plan that placed water supply at the core of the development agendas, led to increased government and donor investment, which in return enabled rapid acceleration of water supply coverage, she said.

"It is evident that Ethiopia's water and sanitation and hygiene sector effectively transitioned from 'reactive' to 'proactive' programming" she said.

Ethiopia's achievement in realizing this goal also reinforces that sustained investment is important in realizing goals, she added.

She mentioned the ONE WASH national program which has an investment of 2.4 billion USD between 2013 and 2020, of which 50 percent of

this investment is covered by the government as an example.

According to her, development partners now see Ethiopia as a country of "best practice" in water supply; a country that can assist its neighbors in achieving similar successes in the post 2015 period.

Send-off Ceremony for Outgoing Ethiopian Peacekeepers

Addis Ababa, 30 March 2015 (WIC) - The African Union Mission in Somalia on March 23/2015 held a medal parade for the outgoing Ethiopian peacekeepers in Baidoa, Somalia, to honor them for their contribution to the peace process in the country for the past fifteen months.

A military medal parade is a prestigious ceremony that appreciates exemplary contributions of contingents and individual soldiers in the execution of the AMISOM mandate during their tour of duty.

The Ethiopian contingent started their tour of duty in January 2014 and has contributed immensely to the peace and tranquility being experienced throughout Bay, Bakool and Gedo regions in southwest Somalia. The regions fall under sector 3 of the AMISOM contingent.

During their tour of duty, the ENDF troops were able to quell political disputes and rivalry in sector 3 and their efforts brought together leaders, clan elders, religious leaders and various stakeholders to talk peace. They were also instrumental in the formation of the Interim South West Administration (ISWA).

Ethiopia Destroys Over 6 Metric Tons of Illegal Ivory



Ethiopia burnt on March 20/2015 6.1 tons of ivory it confiscated from illegal traders over the past 20 years to discourage poaching.

Speaking at the National Ivory Stockpile Destruction Ceremony Program at Gulele Botanic Garden, Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonen said burning ivory would help to save the life of elephants as it will transfer huge message to those engaged in illegal hunting of elephant and trade.

The government has been working hard to protect its wildlife by involving all citizens and stakeholders, and make its wild resources a source of economic development, he added.

Ethiopia ratified the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and

Flora (CITES) and this ceremony shows the government's stance for upholding international laws, he pointed out.

The director-general urged countries all over the world to join hands in saving wildlife from danger in general, and fight illegal hunting and trading of African elephants in particular.

Chairman of Stop Ivory, Ian Crag said this event gives recognition to Ethiopia across Africa and gives a message to the world as Ethiopia's ivory will not be sold to fill demand.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) entered into force in 1975, and became the only treaty to ensure that international trade in plants and animals does not threaten their survival in the wild. Currently 180 countries (called Parties) implement CITES.

Business and Economy

Ethiopian Working to Expand Freight Service

Addis Ababa, March 28/2015 Ethiopian Airlines said it is working to expand its freight service to meet the ever increasing demand from Ethiopia and Africa.

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In an exclusive interview with ENA, Fitsum Abadi Managing Director of Ethiopian Freight Service said *Ethiopian* is contributing a pivotal role to the growing import-export trade through its technologically advanced aircrafts.

According to him, *Ethiopian* is providing cargo service with its 8 freighters dedicated for this purpose, four of them are Boeing 777, while two ND11 and one 757.

It is providing three distinctive freight services, for export, import and transit service to meet the growing market demand in the country and the continent.

The major export products transported through the airline are agricultural products including horticultural products, meat and spices, among others.

“We have engaged in a multi-million dollar investment to facilitate the budding export interest of Ethiopia. Three years earlier our export cargo capacity was less than 100,000 tons, but it has jumped now to 120, 000 tones”, he said. The import capacity has also reached 40,000 tons, from 25,000 tones three years ago, he added.

The airline that owns a cold warehouse with 65,000 tons capacity per annum, is building an additional cold warehouse to meet the ever increasing demand.

The new warehouse, being built with 107 million Euros, will have a capacity of more than 1.2 million tons per annum.

As Africa continues to witness fast economic growth, Ethiopian Airlines is working to reach more destinations. So far, it reaches 24 destinations in the continent for this service.

The Airlines has won the 'Air Cargo Brand of the Decade for Africa Award' from Shipping, Transport, Aviation and Tourism (STAT) at a ceremony held in South Africa in February 2015.

Chinese Company to Build Textile, Garment Factory with Over 15 Million USD

Shaoxing Mina Textile Company said it would build a textile and garment factory in Sebeta, Oromia Regional State, with an outlay of over 15 million USD.

Company CEO, Wei Chang Jun said a dying and printing factory that has been under expansion on five hectares of land will also be completed within months as 95 percent of the equipment have already been imported from Italy and South Korea.

This was disclosed after President Mulatu Teshome held talks on March 04/2015 with CEO Wei Chang Jun here in Addis Ababa.

The president said on the occasion Ethiopia has been giving prime attention to supporting investors that engage in the manufacturing sector.

The country has a favorable investment atmosphere, cheap labor, market and geographical location, he added.

President Mulatu noted that the Sebeta railway and the expressway planned to connect the town with the capital city will further enhance investment.

The textile and garment factory plans to export its products to Europe, USA, Thailand, Turkey and other African countries, it was learned.

Upon going fully operational, the textile and garment factory would create 5,000 jobs.

Tourism and Culture

Addis' First Seven Star Hotel



Addis Ababa, 9 March 2015 (WIC) - Addis Ababa is to get another world class hospitality image before the end of the year when the AU Grand Hotel managed by Westin Hotels and Resorts inaugurates its seven star hotel in the African Union (AU) compound.

The multibillion Birr investment owned by the billionaire Sheik Mohamed Hussein al Amoudi will be inaugurated before the coming European Christmas, according to an insider source.

MIDROC Ethiopia Project Office Contracting and Management Services Plc. (MEPO), which is a collaborative partner of the MIDROC Group that develops, constructs and manages property, undertakes the construction of the hotel which is in its final stages.

A two year prior cost estimation of the seven star hotel was USD 350 million. “The project cost can jump by more than 20 percent by completion of the work than the previous estimate,” the source added.

The hotel that will be the fourth international brand in the country after Hilton, Sheraton and Radisson Blu will also have several extraordinary facilities that shall serve the heads of states and top officials.

“The project will be one of the top investments for the billionaire in Ethiopia,” sources at MIDROC told Capital.

Jawbone Discovered in Ethiopia is Oldest Known Human Lineage Remains



Addis Ababa, 5 March 2015 (WIC) - A lower jaw bone and five teeth discovered on a hillside in Ethiopia are the oldest remains ever found that belong to the genus Homo, the lineage that ultimately led to modern humans.

Fossil hunters spotted the jaw poking out of a rocky slope in the dry and dusty Afar region of the country about 250 miles from Addis Ababa.

The US-led research team believes the individual lived about 2.8m years ago, when the now parched landscape was open grassland and shrubs nourished by tree-lined rivers and wetlands.

The remains are about 400,000 years older than fossils which had previously held the record as the earliest known specimens on the Homo lineage.

The discovery sheds light on a profoundly important but poorly understood period in human evolution that played out between two and three million years ago, when humans began the crucial transformation from apelike animals into forms that used tools and eventually began to resemble modern humans.“