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Abbay dam propelling Ethiopia's capacity to mega projects execution

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – The construction of Abbay dam has showcased Ethiopians' capacity and commitment to realizing mega projects, Public Participation Coordination Office of the dam said.

The Office of National Council for the Coordination of Public Participation on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam(GERD)- Abbay Dam, Public Relations and Communication Director Hailu Abraham told The Ethiopian Herald that Ethiopians and Ethiopian born Diasporas have been contributing to the success of the construction of Abbay dam through actively participating in fund raisings, public diplomacy activities, bond purchasing and donation among others.

Over the past 13 years, Ethiopians

See Abbay dam .. page 3

Egypt's double standards on display in Nile river

BY YESUF ENDRIS

Egypt is constructing the world-most-longest -114 km long artificial river on the Abbay [Nile] river without consulting or informing upper riparian countries that supply the entire

amount of the water. The cornerstone of the project was laid last July while Egypt was claiming binding agreement on the utilization of the river.

The political and diplomatic fairness of Egypt remained in doubt as the core reasons behind

its hot debate with Ethiopia seem so clear by the ongoing construction of the artificial river.

Egypt had been requesting pre-notifications or no water project on upper riparian countries, and claimed it was almost obligatory. But,

See Egypt's double .. page 3

Flagship dam to change gears on manufacturing industries

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – Abbay Dam, which is on fast track, gives an impetus for developments of manufacturing industries and investments, the Ministry of Industry (MoI) said.

In an interview with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), MoI's State Minister Tarekegn Bululta said that the successful completion of the dam would have a multifaceted significance to the developments of manufacturing industry and investment opportunities that spurs nation's economic growth.

He further emphasized that this flagship project has also the potential to create employment opportunities whilst ensuring



Tarekegn Bululta

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Ethiopia's mega-dam beacon of hope for Africans: Negotiator

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- The completion of the Abbay Dam project could be great news which lights a glimmer of hope for the African continent particularly for neighboring states, the dam's technical negotiator said.

Abbay Dam National Panel of Experts and Technical Negotiating Team Chairperson Gedion Asfaw (Eng.) told local media that the dam under construction by Ethiopia is laudable as it is meant to benefit all the stakeholders and integrate the region.

The chairperson also said that the mega hydroelectric project would also serve as a dependable source of electricity in the Horn of Africa region and beyond and



Gedion Asfaw (Eng.)

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News

Special Edition

Public remains avid to finance Abbay Dam's construction

BY MESERET BEHAILU

Despite the attempts of some interest groups to prevent Ethiopia from utilizing natural resources, its people have kept the momentum of the construction of the Abbay Dam to continue unabated until the completion date as it was during its launching.

Considering the dam as an engine of Ethiopia's industrialization, the public has demonstrated overwhelming participation in bond purchases, donations, lotteries, SMS schemes, and other income-generating programs.

Fanta Mesetsahil, 74 from Debre Markos town, East Gojjam Zone of the Amhara State told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that he has been purchasing Abbay Dam bonds worth 156,000 by allocating 1,000 Birr each month during the past 13 years.

Fanta said, "I have served my country in different capacities for 37 years and keep on purchasing the Abbay Dam bonds even after retirement. I told my family members, if I would die, to continue purchasing the bond in my name and not to quit until the dam's completion."

He advised the youth to learn from his extraordinary deeds for the development of the homeland and to contribute to the execution of the iconic dam financially, professionally, and by other means. "It is crucial to understand the Abbay Dam is not only meant for power generation but it is also important for the development of tourism and enhance Ethiopia's capability to generate substantial forex."

Asnake Mitku, a shoeshine boy making sewing shoes in the Kotebie neighborhood of Addis Ababa, who mentioned his purchase of three 1,000 Birr Abbay Dam bonds years ago, indicated his eagerness to witness the dam's completion and provision of electricity.

Asnake also noted that the people should uphold collaboration with the government to the realization of the mega project which, according to him, is instrumental in lifting many out of poverty.

Tsige Tesefaye, a cleaner in a government office said, "Owing to my aspiration for the speedy completion of the project, I made a portion of my small monthly wage meant for the purchase of Abbay Dam bonds and I will keep my contribution until the end."

Tsige believed that the government needs to utilize the media and other means to ensure the public's active engagement in the timely completion of the hydroelectric dam.

Over 300,000 Ethiopians visit Abbay Dam

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

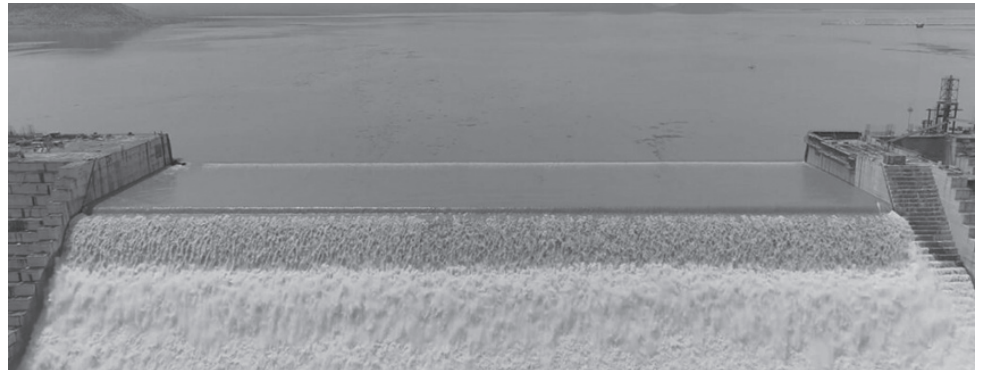
ADDIS ABABA - Since the commencement of Abbay Dam construction, over 300,000 Ethiopians from home and Diaspora, foreign dignitaries and nationals, and over 400 media and diplomatic delegations have visited the Dam, the coordination office disclosed.

Office of National Council for Coordination of Public Participation on the Construction of the (GERD) Abbay Dam Public Relations and Media Communication Director Hailu Abraham told journalists that Ethiopians from all walks of lives visited the grand dam.

Apart from Ethiopians, foreign dignitaries such as Sudan's Former President Omar al-Bashir, delegations from various countries including Saudi Arabia and Qatar and Sudanese and Egyptian journalists paid the visit to Abbay Dam.

Hailu also noted that the people of Ethiopia have been carrying out many tasks to support the construction of the iconic project and among these activities; they have been presented in person at the construction site and observed the project's progress.

"Journalists reported the progress of the



mega dam, investors prepared themselves for additional support, the diplomats advocate for the project in the diplomatic channel, members of the defense, police and other security agencies also promised to ensure the safety of the dam, etc."

Also, a growing number of Ethiopian Diasporas have also been visiting the site. According to the director, the Ethiopian Diaspora all over the world are doing great jobs by organizing themselves in groups, using the modern media options, writing various journals, especially using the Arab media, and expressing their positive point on the dam.

According to him, not only Ethiopian journalists, but also from other countries (Sudan, Algeria) have been participating

in informing the Arab World about the true features of the Abbay Dam and doing a great job of public diplomacy.

To complement this Diaspora's commendable engagement to support the national cause, the office has arranged various programs that enable the formerto visit the dam. In 2024 alone, members of the Ethiopian Diaspora visited the dam in three rounds. During the visits, the Diasporas have expressed their delight over the speedy and meticulous execution of the project that is expected to be the engine of Ethiopia's industrialization, the director remarked.

The construction of the Abay Dam was officially launched 13 years ago on April 2, 2011.

Over 74,000 second-generation Diaspora visit Ethiopia in first round

ADDIS ABABA - More than 74,000 second-generation of Ethiopian Diaspora have visited their ancestral homeland in the first phase alone, according to the Ethiopian Diaspora Service.

It is worth recalling that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) initiated this homecoming program to reconnect the Second-generation Ethiopian Diaspora with their origin and inspire them in order to contribute to the development of the country.

Ethiopian Diaspora Service Community Development Acting Director Nebyu Solomon told ENA that the second generation of Ethiopian Diaspora has been invited to come in three-rounds from 30th December 2023 to the end of September 2024.

According to the acting director, the first-phase homecoming under the motto "Connect to Your Culture" was carried out from 30th December to 8th February 2024.

In the first-round more than 74,000 second-



generation Ethiopian Diaspora have come to their homeland, adding that it is a satisfactory turn out and was imperative to offer informative events about Ethiopian history as well as culture.

Nebyu highlighted that the first-round homecoming program was successful, stating, second-generation Diaspora members have

demonstrated their enthusiasm, and many expressed satisfaction with their experience.

He further indicated that those Diaspora members have pledged to play a role in Ethiopia's development endeavors.

The second-generation Ethiopian Diaspora members have also visited various tourism cities of the country and the ongoing development projects in the country, he indicated.

And the second-round homecoming under the motto "Connect to Your History" has been already launched and will last till 8th May 2024, Nebyu stated.

In this phase, opportunities will be facilitated to the Diaspora members in order to visit heritage sites including the newly built Adwa Victory Memorial museum.

Nebyu underscored that the visit will help them to properly realize Ethiopia's role in Pan-Africanism, stating "we hope to inspire them to carry this legacy forward."

WBG to continue supporting Ethiopia's financial inclusion initiative

ADDISABABA - The World Bank Group (WBG) will continue supporting the National Financial Inclusion Strategy of Ethiopia, which is critical for the growth and prosperity of the country, Bank Senior Economist Michael O'Sullivan said.

The National Financial Inclusion Strategy 2021-2025 was revised in close collaboration with stakeholders across the public and private sectors in an effort to define a coordinated plan to transform financial inclusion for millions of Ethiopians.

In an exclusive interview with ENA, WBG Senior Economist and Africa Gender Innovation Lab Head Michael O'Sullivan, said there is really an important momentum around financial inclusion

in Ethiopia.

Over the last several years, the WBG's data show a growing financial inclusion in Ethiopia.

The WBG has been working with the National Bank of Ethiopia team and other pertinent actors to help accelerate this process, it was learned.

Commending the recently launched Network of Ethiopia's Women in Finance (NEWFin) initiative as a great effort to try to bring together a network of women leaders, he said these types of approach are bringing more women leaders in the financial sector.

"We are happy to partner with the National Bank of Ethiopia, and we are also working closely

with the Government of Ethiopia in women entrepreneurship projects in the country," the senior economist added.

According to him, the National Financial Inclusion Strategy of Ethiopia is going to be critical in terms of bringing more women into the financial space and to the market economy to help contribute to more growth.

So the government leadership on this agenda is very important, and it is also important for the share of growth and prosperity of the country, O'Sullivan said.

Regarding the financial sector reform of the nation, he stated that this is the area that the WBG is keen to support.

"We have seen more entrants into the market, especially in digital financial services, and this is an area where the WBG is keen and collaborates with the Government of Ethiopia."

National Bank of Ethiopia Governor Mamo Mihretu has recently noted that the launch and implementation of Ethiopia's first financial inclusion strategy marked a historic milestone as the second strategy also noted the wider gap between men and women financial inclusion.

Financial inclusion is an essential prerequisite for sustainable development, inclusive growth, and a fundamental enabler for the stability of the financial system, job growth, digital transformation, and continued economic development.

News

Special Edition

Egypt's double standards...

it reverses the case when it comes to itself. The long and huge artificial river is being constructed without the recognition even from Ethiopia which supplies over 86 percent of the river water. So, Egypt is clearly playing as master of the river which will never be recognized in modern world, said Ustaz Jemal Beshir, an activist analyst of Abbay River affairs.

Egypt promoted the name Nile as synonymous with itself and scratched [the river] on world tourism map. In preserving this status quo, it has been constructing the artificial river. The surprising fact behind this is that the water originates from Ethiopia. It was good if Ethiopia was consulted. Consultation would help for precautionary measures. Contrary, Egypt is rehearsing self-serving proverbs like 'Egypt is the gift of the Nile', he commented.

"Of course, their dream [of the Egyptians] is to control the river from its sources. In ancient times, Egypt waged war on Ethiopia but in vain. It is a sad truth to look modern Egypt sticking to old views," Ustaz Jemal said.

They used to conspire and put political pressures on Ethiopia, to preserve their autonomy on the Abbay River. They believe Ethiopia as powerless state to defend its water right. This notion has no longer truth. In any cases, all Egyptian water projects

on Nile River are a matter of concern for Ethiopia.

"They will claim stoppage of Ethiopian projects if they face shortage in the new projects. Therefore, it was their obligation to consult with Ethiopian government while planning new projects," he opined.

Water Researcher and former negotiating team member of the Abbay Dam and Hydro politics Researcher Professor Yacob Arsano (PhD) on his part said that Egypt has never consulted its 86 percent water supplier, Ethiopia while implementing this project.

"During the construction of the Aswan High Dam and other several grand projects; Ethiopia was uninformed and same case happened again last year; the artificial river which will consume the water of Nile river, is being constructed while Ethiopia is officially uninformed yet," he said.

To Yacob, Egypt has rejected the transnational nature of the river.

As a country claiming better water utilization, Egypt should recognize the right of upper riparian countries. If not, they will face the consequence solely. All Nile-basin countries, including Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt, should have multilateral water agreement and policy, he suggested.

The development in Egypt should not be a contradictory to Ethiopia and vice versa, he

added.

Former Diplomat and Member of Parliament, Ambassador Dina Mufti also agrees with Yacob and Ustaz Jemal, and adds that Ethiopia would not be responsible to inform Egypt until Egypt despises the principle of informing riparian countries about its projects.

"They have been using the water for long time while the upper countries were not beneficiaries. ... [] if they [Egyptians] claim notifications from upper-basin countries once again, then the debate will be silly because its multimillion projects are being constructed without the knowhow of others," he said.

In fact, Ethiopia has never questioned Egypt's water projects. It has raised no question when Egypt constructs the renowned Aswan Dam. They were expected to show good gestures to appreciate such manifests. It is also only through cooperation to maximize possibilities of utilizing more water. "But, we are witnessing the reverse," Ustaz Jemal emphasized.

The Ethiopian Green legacy, for example, holds best opportunity to maximize the water volume Egypt is in need of. If not for it, the rain-feed river cannot cover the whole demand as climate change exacerbates droughts each year, he described.

Abbay dam...

and Diasporas played their part raising over 1.4 billion Birr to enable the construction of the dam reach 95% completion, he said.

To him, Abbay dam is a national project which vividly showcases sovereignty and independence.

The mega project attested that Ethiopians can achieve anything they plan once they get committed, he stated, adding that the dam also builds country's image globally in a way that resembles the victory of Adwa.

"Although Ethiopia is never colonized with its sovereign border, but its water resource was not sovereign since it was not utilized for development. Egypt developed a mentality of the sole beneficiary of Nile waters. The construction of the dam would ensure fair utilization. In some extent, the political stance of countries on the project has been improving as the project is in the final phase," Hailu said.

Due to foreign conspiracy, internal conflict and shortage of budget, the country was challenged for long to launch the project. For different reasons, no country or organization was there to support Ethiopia financially or ideally when it laid the cornerstone of the mega dam, he added.

However, he stressed that the country has now completed 98.9% of the civil works of the dam, withstanding all challenges.

The remaining task is accelerating electromechanical works, Hailu said, adding that the nation still requires that 50 billion Birr to the completion of the dam.

Accordingly, about 5 billion Birr is expected from the general public, he expressed.

He hopped that the days will come to develop Abbay River basin together with Egypt and Sudan.

Ethiopia's mega-dam beacon of...

bring significant benefits to the entire continent.

"Despite some interest groups' attempt to obstruct Ethiopia's vision to progress, the country remains committed to the equitable and fair utilization of cross border water that would ensure the mutual benefits of all stakeholders."

Moreover, Ethiopia has made consolidated attempts to resolve differences in the construction of the mega hydro dam through negotiations and has a principled stance not to cause harm to the water share of Nile downstream countries. "In return,

those principles enabled Ethiopia to see the completion of the Abbay Dam construction nearly."

Appreciating those who contributed their energy, knowledge, and money to the successful execution of the mega dam, Gedion argued that more dams need to be built to maintain Ethiopia's economic progress.

"So far, Ethiopia has put relentless efforts to finalize the Abbay Dam talks amicably; however, Egypt's unrealistic demands prolonged the negotiation process. Nonetheless, Ethiopia still has

a keen interest in ending the negotiation harmoniously."

Abbay Dam will not be the last hydroelectricity project that Ethiopia is going to build and more dams and projects will follow. Thus, priority needs to be given to empower and train the youth to make them execute future projects with bigger sizes and complexity.

Equal attention should also be given to utilize the natural resources and execute similar projects that would keep Ethiopia's economic progress, the expert emphasized.

Flagship dam to change gears...

and transforming the benefits of livelihoods in the country and beyond.

Apart from supplying reliable energy, the project also opened doors for the emerging investments and demonstrated their immense economic and financial beneficiary thereby igniting a bright future for Ethiopia's economic and industrial prospects.

Familiarizing the main reason for constructing the dam and the demand for port access, the minister emphasized that Ethiopia needs reliable electric power supply and diversified port access to accelerate its economic endeavors.

Despite its higher economic progress and population, he stated that the country is

still dependent on a single port access that charges the highest amount of demurrage fee, unfair transport tariffs and other related expenditures casting a shadow on the investment and industrial sectors.

He said: "If the country gets access to port, it would manage inflation, balance import and export products facilitation and ensure its sovereignty."

"Currently, the country has about 15,000 large and medium scale manufacturing industries that provide an enormous amount of products and services to local and international markets," Tarekegn indicated.

With regard to the support of the manufacturing sector, he underscored that the sector has long been contributing to the

project in terms of bond sale, donation and others.

Mentioning the minimal beneficiary of the country's stake from the sector that accounted for below 7%, he said, adding that the industry has projected to generate more forex, job creation, GDP growth and import substitution approaches.

So far, the government has prepared manageable industrial policy to create market-led industry with a view of meeting consumers' needs and expediting the sector's development.

Moreover, he emphasized that the involvement of private-oriented industrialization supported by innovation and technology, research and other

productivity schemes are crucial to bring about a consistent, inclusive and competent industrial process.

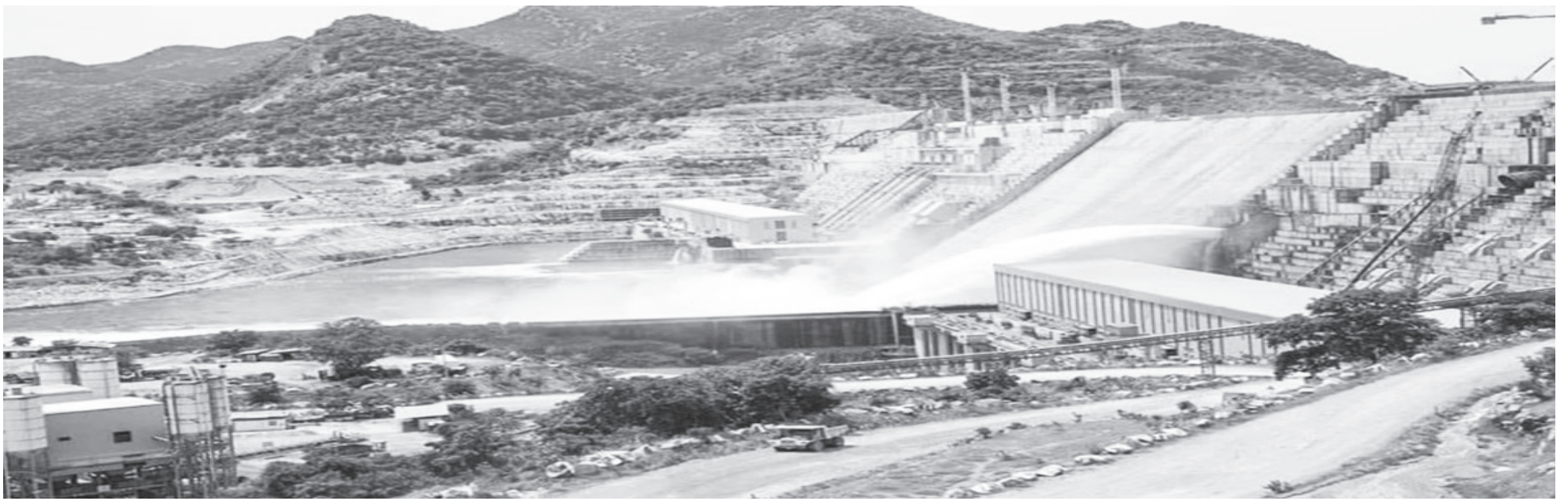
"Inefficient power supply and fluctuation is among the bottlenecks that seriously impact the growth and productivity of the sector," he added.

Up on completion, the dam is highly believed to promote the industrial parks, revive investment alternatives including on the pipeline to join the sector and attract more investment opportunities, he noted.

It was also indicated that about 390 industries, which have long been paused production due to lack of efficient power, input supply and other security problems, have resumed production since last year.

Opinion

Special Edition



Commemorating landmark achievement of Abbay Dam

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

Since the laying of the cornerstone, the Abbay Dam has been making progress in the right direction as a consequence of the concerted efforts of the people of Ethiopia and the government. Despite the fact that the journey of the flagship project is not as easy as falling off a log and shooting fish in a barrel, it is on the way to see the light of day just around the corner.

On the heels of the commitment and hard work of the people of Ethiopia and the federal government, the flagship project is ascending towards the last phase of the completion of the Dam. This circumstances on the ground witnesses in black and white the efforts of each and every one residing under Ethiopian skies and beyond.

It is widely known that albeit the country is the water tower of Africa, just about 60% of the people of Ethiopia reside in blackout. In actual fact, when the Dam becomes operational, the lives of the population would for sure be transformed to the next level of development at the earliest possible time. As this is the truth, the government has been working to alleviate the predicament of the general public making use of the colossal dam as a way out.

No one denies the fact that apart from changing the lives of the people of Ethiopia, the project will play a paramount role in smoothing the path of regional integration. While on the subject, the Dam benefits not only Ethiopians but also the lower riparian nations. In earlier times, though a lot of endeavors had been made to utilize the Abbay River, accomplishing the anticipated goal was tantamount to getting blood out of stone and attempting an impossible task.

However, in the fullness of time, through the concerted efforts of the people of Ethiopia and the government, the nation kick started making history by conquering the Abbay River which has been a bone of contention for many years. At the present time, following the success journey of the Dam, every Tom, Dick, and Harry without exception embarked on pinning hope on the Dam and enunciating their boundless joy.

Notwithstanding the fact that, the Abbay

River is the gift of Ethiopia that arises from Ethiopian highlands and takes away 86% of its rain water and springs, some groups are still not willing to familiarize themselves with the exiting reality on the ground.

For the sake of truth, the Dam has been the talking point of all Ethiopians dwelling under the umbrella of Ethiopia. A lot has been said and written about the Abbay River and the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), however, no matter what pessimists say, Ethiopia turned out to be victorious over the Dam and heading in the right direction.

To the surprise of everyone, government heads of Egypt time and again think that Ethiopia is their never-ending premeditated opponent. They do not seem to know the fact that Ethiopians never cross other's right and give up when their right is crossed no matter what the cost may be. Ethiopians every so often do not hesitate to give their all for their motherland.

To everyone's dismay, Egyptians propagate that Egypt is the gift of the Abbay. They attach importance to their selfish interest over and over again. Bewilderingly, by hook or crook, they do not want Ethiopians to make use of the Abbay River for a wide spectrum of development activities.

Nowadays, following the successful completion of the filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam at different stages, Ethiopians residing at home and abroad have been expressing their infinite happiness in a wide spectrum of ways in addition to vowing to stand by the side of the government more than ever before.

The River Abbay has been serving as a solo blessing of energy for Egyptians whereas lulling the upper stream countries to sleep, particularly Ethiopia the origin of the Abbay. On the other hand, this connection could have turned to an asserting sense of wisdom and peace (such as when the river "lull[s]" the speaker sleeps). The lulling of a river represents the rhythmic sound of the river as it flows down-it is satirical that when a river flows how one sleeps in the face of poverty and deprivation, which the lines of the poem allude to later on, according to sources.

The verse invokes to show the breadth of deprived experience which includes moments of advantages associated with

the pyramids and the Abbay River, and with all moments of trial and tribulation of African people, more specifically the sleeping experience of Ethiopian after the lulling, for example. Ethiopia is now awake; and determined to change the status quo- benefiting fairly and equally from the Abbay River without a significant harm to the downstream countries.

Building a dam was a dream of the Ethiopian leaders and people over the past decades. Irrespective of any political differences, Ethiopian leaders have a common stand when it comes to the Abbay River. Emperor Hailesillase dreamt to build a dam, Late PM Meles Zenawi commenced it and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed maintained to complete it. Like uninterrupted flow of river, so does the vision of its leaders. Rivers represent continuity: they cannot be chopped up into discrete chunks.

To this point, the general public has been working in close collaboration with the federal government with a view to completing the construction of the Dam. The general public raised over 19 billion Birr for the construction of Abbay Dam over the past 13 years, according to the coordination office.

The Office of National Council for the Coordination of Public Participation on the Construction of the Abbay Dam launched Bond Week to augment contribution to the construction of the Dam via bond sales, 8100 SMS, donation and others schemes.

The Office, Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE) and Ethiopian Development Bank (DBE) jointly expressed their readiness to sale bond coupons to public at large. Accordingly, they planned to collect about 100 million Birr in the Bond Week.

Speaking at the occasion, DBE Vice President Getachew Wakie said that over the past 13 years, over 16.8 billion Birr has been collected via bond sale. During the past eight months alone, the country has collected more than 767 million Birr.

He hoped for more fundraising in connection with the special 13th year of the launch of the flagship dam construction. For this year's bond week, it has prepared worth of 9.5 billion Birr bond coupons. The bond coupons are now available in all branches of the CBE, DBE and others across the country.

On her part, CBE Customers' Relations Director Bethel Tadesse said that the bank itself has purchased over 200 million Birr bond during the past 13 years. It also collected over 9.8 billion Birr from bond sales apart from collecting over 319 million Birr via donation. Furthermore, the bank collected 61 million USD, 1.6 million pound and 49 million Euros for the construction of the Dam from members of Ethiopian Diasporas.

In a press briefing she gave, Abbay Dam National Coordination Office Deputy Director Fikirte Tamir said that, the construction of the Dam has been executed carefully, responsibly and without interruption. Accordingly, the Dam has been transferred from water filling to power generation phase in the last four consecutive years.

The government has given top priority to the project, which would be an engine to the industrialization of the country. The successful execution of the Dam has also created a great enthusiasm among the community in replicating such noble achievement in political, economic and social arenas.

Apart from generating power, the project, which is also Ethiopia's policy landmark, is now on the final stage of completion and becoming a means for the society's social cohesion and common legacy.

In a similar vein, Political and Economic Analyst of Africa Prof. Lawrence Freeman told recently local media that the Abbay Dam is a firm showcasing what can be done when people are committed to bringing about development in an emerging economy.

The Dam's massive concrete infrastructure project between two mountains over the water is a big injection for Ethiopia's economy. Without infrastructures like this dam especially in the energy sector, it is difficult to facilitate economic development.

The Abbay Dam is the biggest infrastructure project yet in Sub-Saharan countries. The project is a lesson for Ethiopians to do more for the African continent, even beyond. He also mentioned Ethiopia's electric power export to Sudan, Djibouti and Kenya.

Editor's Note: The views entertained in this article do not necessarily reflect the stance of The Ethiopian Herald

Editorial

Abbay Dam: Key to strengthen regional integration

Both lighting Africa and stimulating regional integration are simultaneously worked out following Ethiopia's firm commitment on hydropower development. Born to Ethiopians' brain and grew up in Guba, BenihagulGumuz state, Ethiopia, a 13-year old child of the nation, the Abbay Dam, is strongly believed to be a feasible means to well foster and cement intercontinental friendship apart from compensating its source, Ethiopia, in all circumstances.

Abbay River has started paying off the nation since its inception as a 6450MW is going to be produced to electrify the entire nation, and other African countries are going to be provided with hydropower.

Interestingly, dark days are at the verge of being seen off for good, ominous scenes will be substituted by bright light and dawn of hope following the construction of the Dam. Not only does this bold move help almost 65% of the population, who have been leading life in sullen epoch, garner electricity and breathe a sigh of relief but is also of paramount importance in reinvigorating regional integration and continental amalgamation.

The experience gained from the construction of the Dam would also enable the nation to sketch possible and plausible path to get other water resources well exploited thereby confidently backing the economic growth across the nation.

This Dam can be regarded as the ever greatest Dam. The country has thus passed through a range of ups and downs to reach at the level it is found right now. Interestingly enough, the Dam is being constructed using own capacity and financial horizon. The country is working hard to light Africa, indeed! The project is significantly useful in fostering the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as it is one of the flagship projects of the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063.

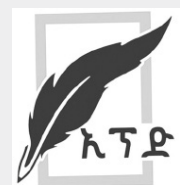
It is well recognized that the AfCFTA is the world's largest free trade area bringing together the 55 countries of the African Union (AU) and eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to create a single market for the continent. The Dam would undoubtedly be instrumental in enabling the free flow of goods and services across the continent and boosting the trading position of Africa in the global market. In so doing, Ethiopia has been well acknowledged and given due credit in this regard.

Upon completion, the Abbay Dam can generate constant electricity via hydropower scheme, and the resource is renewable one. Unquestionably, hydro power can be stored or diverted and is one of the most eco-friendly means of producing power. One of the major advantages of this Dam is its eco-friendly features. The Dam helps reduce emissions of greenhouse gasses like carbon dioxide for this Dam uses a renewable resource. It also serves as a recreational hub as it comprises over 70 recreational centers around.

Ethiopia has been committed more than any time else to exploit its water resources and reap the bounties it has been endowed with since it has been aspiring for growth and prosperity.

Damming the Abbay River is thence a clear manifestation of Ethiopians' long-lasting cooperation, unity and determination since ranging from a woman engaged in a menial street vending to high profile investors have been contributing a lot to the effort geared towards getting the country prospered through this mega project.

In sum, every Ethiopian has to continue contributing what is expected of them to the Dam construction as they did earlier up until the Dam is fully accomplished. Yes, the close to 95 per cent accomplishment of this momentous step has never come out of the blue as all citizens have relentlessly been working to make Ethiopia's vision a success. Bearing in mind that Ethiopia has never had, will never have, any intention to harm downstream riparian countries, every African state has thus to be by the side of this innocent and great nation to grow together.



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Opinion

Together, we can do much better!

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Aslefech Tsegaye, 40, is a resident of Shashemene town in Oromia State. A patriotic woman adores her country more than any other expensive material in the world. She was sad while listening to the radio, watching television, and scrutiny a documentary about the long journey of the river Abbay, which loaded a huge amount of loom soil, crossing the border of its motherland, Ethiopia, to bestow for others free of charge.

The thing that aggravated her anger was that the generation that comes and goes had never come up with the idea of how to make use of the trans-boundary river, which contributes over 86 percent to the Nile.

In a small radio that she always keeps in her hand, the patriotic woman Aselefech was listening to news stories that grabbed her attention just before 13 years ago, and at the end of the story, she jumped up like a person who won a lottery. The news talked about the laying-down of the corner stone to build the Grand Renaissance Dam on the Abbay River.

The statement of former Prime Minister Meles Zenawi to which she gave special attention was, "We are the owner of the project, we are the engineers of the dam, and we are the resource of the project; we will finalize the dam working hand in glove." Since that day on, Aslefech has been searching for different ways and means to contribute to the grand dam that Ethiopia envisaged.

Over the past 13 years, she has bought more than 100 bonds for the Nile Dam, and she confirmed that the dam was hers. "I manage my family by selling plastic bags, charcoal, and so on. As the dam is mine, I have been buying bonds with the money I earn."

She has been buying bonds since 2010, when the foundation stone of the Renaissance Dam was laid. In the first year, Aslefech bought a bond worth one thousand birr and has not canceled it to date. She explained that it was the love of the country that motivated her to buy the Nile Dam bond from my small pocket. The woman explained that she has donated 120 thousand birr apart from buying 640 thousand birr bonds so far, not including this year's.

In the past years, she has motivated many people to buy bonds, she explained, adding that we lead a better life only when our country develops and becomes self reliant. She speaks of a person from Mekele who bought bonds 99 times, and expresses pleasure at being able to buy bonds more than 100 times.

Even though she had no separate income, the woman had withdrawn 30 thousand birr from the bank to buy bonds three times. In 2003, she saw the laying of the foundation stone for the dam on television and screamed and touched the ground. On June 6, 2010, she started by buying the first one thousand Birr bond, and she has not been terminated yet.

In addition to the Abbay Dam, Aselefech would participate in the country's development activities as much as she could. She was very excited when she heard the current status of the dam. Indicating that she had observed the level of Renaissance Dam going back and forth three times since its inception, Aselefech is satisfied with the task and recommends all members of society to participate in the country's development activities as much as they can.

The construction of a dam on the Nile will bring out mothers from the smoke and make them consumers of electricity. The dam will bring great relief to all citizens, including mothers.

Where thousands of mothers are crowded with wood smoke; the Grand Renaissance Dam is a project designed to light thousands of rural villages that are engulfed in darkness, making the day-to-day lives of mothers who use logs in their everyday lives to fry foods easier.

Just before 13 years, the construction of the Abbay dam commenced on March 24, 2010. It was a historic day that aimed at encumbering the river flows for thousands of years and changing its course for local development apart from using it for electric power.

The historic day was also cited as promissory to cover project finance in its own capacity. When the project was launched, no nation and/or international organization was willing to prop up the project. The only option was coordinating the public at large.

Since day one of the project, Ethiopians have been providing relentless support in cash and kind. After 13 years of ups and downs, Ethiopia is on the verge of finalizing the construction of Abbay Dam. Aside from generating electric power, the lake behind the dam will serve as a recreational area that will grab the attention of tourists. It will also be a source of fish.

By realizing the grand dam, Ethiopia is able to squash the thought of colonialists for the second time. Abbay Dam is a manifestation of the sense of "we can." As we defeated territorial invaders on the Adowa front, we can now repeat our victory in the economic realm. Let us stand up, strive, and stretch forward until we catch up with the economically advanced countries. Together, we can make everything possible.

Editor's Note: The views entertained in this article do not necessarily reflect the stance of The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy

Special Edition

GERD:

A showcase, a pathway for Ethiopia's economic development

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Emperor Haile Selassie first had the idea of building a dam on the Abbay River in 1964, but regional bickering over water rights, followed by civil war, a Marxist coup and a devastating famine that killed nearly a million people in the 1980s, meant the plan was put on hold.

However, on April 2, 2011 a paradigm shift was made and Ethiopia announced the laying of foundation stone to build a hydro dam in Abbay River.

Ethiopians of all walks of life here and abroad are marking the 13th Anniversary of the construction of GERD which started by a ground breaking ceremony conducted by the late Prime Minister of Ethiopia Meles Zenawi on April 2, 2011. Tearing down every conspiracy and mendacious propaganda and threats the people of Ethiopia had to face simply because they have resolved to construct a dam that would generate electricity by their own resources. The colonialists and their former colonies in close proximity to GERD thought it was a "mission impossible".

The occasion is expected to be marked with various programs including fund raising, panel discussions and festivities that are directly connected to finishing the project in the shortest possible time over several months.

April 2011 marked a turning point and change of the status quo ante in shattering hydro hegemony that was meant to prevent Ethiopia from using its own water resources from the Abbay River by means of irrational colonial treaties of 1929 and 1959. These treaties were part of the British Scramble for Africa, geared at not only depriving Ethiopia of its rights but also all the Abbay River riparian countries from ever using the water.

Although GERD was intended to be completed in 5 years, due to the protracted conspiracy by Egypt in preventing international funding opportunity for Ethiopia, internal corruption and over stretched cycles of negotiation's based on the Declaration of Principles signed on 23 March 2015 between Ethiopian, Sudanese and Egyptian leaders, eleven round of sessions in global diplomatic pressure and conspiracy at the UNSC and the Arab League to prevent Ethiopia from providing electricity for the needy population, tedious reaches on the safety and security that GERD may cause on downstream countries caused an unexpected delay on the completion of the Dam.

Over the last 5 years of the national comprehensive reform program, the people and the Government of Ethiopia worked in unison, untold tenacity and determination no less than the spirit of valor and determination they showed on the victory at the Battle of Adwa to shatter the above mentioned challenges which also included threats to bombard the Dam. Of special importance were the wisdom and leadership skill demonstrated by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) and his cabinet as well as the efforts exerted by the Ethiopian senior experts on the tripartite negotiations which were stalled on several occasions.



GERD is central to Ethiopia's economic dev't undertakings

From the very beginning, the leadership of the country has made it clear that the construction of GERD is based on the local laws and international conventions on the utilization of Trans boundary Rivers and was not intended to harm the lower riparian countries in any way but is intended to provide light and power for more than 60% of the Ethiopian population who are still dependent on unhealthy bio-fuel resources. GERD has huge potential for lakeside farming and fishery thus contributing to food security in the region and beyond.

Deputy Head of the Benishangul-Gumuz Region Agriculture Bureau, Berhanu Iticha, revealed that some 753 tons of fish have been harvested from the artificial lake of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). He also reportedly mentioned that, four licensed fishery unions are in operation while 38 youth unions have been provided with fishing license.

GERD is undoubtedly a potential tool and means for the development and promotion of peace in the Horn of Africa and Africa at large. It will serve as a means for cooperation and coalition building among African countries and Ethiopia. The future of the economic development of Africa to a greater degree depends upon coalition building for peace to avert any collusion. GERD has a potential for tourist development and sharing renewable energy which is very important for African economic self-reliance by developing continental energy resources.

Ethiopia is still committed to equitable utilization of the waters of the River and the government is ready to negotiate on utilization of the Abbay waters for the development of the riparian countries on the basis of developing joint projects in accordance to the Abbay Basin Initiative (NBI) under the auspices of the AU.

Thanks to the unreserved commitment of the people of Ethiopia and the Government, today, according to the reports from the National Coordinating Committee for the construction of GERD, the flagship Ethiopian and African mega project has reached 95% to be completed in several months.

GERD, the biggest hydropower dam in Africa being built at the cost of 5 billion USD clearly exhibited to the world that united Ethiopia can perform miracles of the highest proportion in remaining the power house of African renewable energy which provides the

necessary power for the continental economic integration.

A study by researchers at the University of Manchester suggests that, the Dam can provide electricity for Ethiopia, flood control for Sudan and drought protection for Egypt — but only if the countries work together.

Ethiopia is building the Dam to generate enough electricity to supply power to about 70% of its 120 million citizens. Even with electricity demand growing by 30% a year, the Dam's 5,150 megawatts would be more than enough for Ethiopia's needs. As power sharing with Sudan, Kenya and Djibouti is already in operation, additional power could be sold to neighboring countries with Tanzania on pipeline

Sudan said in 2021 it was willing to buy 1,000 megawatts of power from the Dam, about five times the amount of power Sudan already buys from Ethiopia.

By regulating most of the water's flow, the Dam also could prevent seasonal flooding, such as the floods that struck Khartoum and other parts of Sudan in August 2022.

When completed, the dam will hold an estimated 74 billion cubic meters of water. Researchers say Egypt can benefit from the Dam's massive stores of water in times of drought, as shifting weather patterns affect rainfall across the region.

Letting a single country maximize the benefits of the Abbay harms its neighbors, the researchers wrote. However, if each country is willing to sacrifice a little for the needs of the others, the entire 11-countries Abbay basin including the eight countries of the White Nile could benefit, they added.

The third filling ended in August 2022 when Ethiopia announced that the Dam was 88% complete. At the same time, the Dam began to generate power amounting to 750 MW from two turbines. The fourth filling was completed in 2023.

The basin-wide annual gain in real GDP due to GERD operation stands at USD 8.07 billion in 2024 relative to the baseline (2020). Ethiopia benefits a staggering USD 6.79 billion in real GDP due to GERD operation while Sudan and Egypt gain USD 1.11 billion and USD 0.17 billion in real GDP respectively.

Researchers said because the water flows through the dam to make electricity, it poses

no risk to countries downstream. In the long run, the project could strengthen ties among the countries that rely on the Abbay, according to researchers.

Abbay Dam is also a vivid indicator of the patience, unflinching desire from the people of Ethiopia who disregarded ethnic, gender, religious, economic status and age difference. Ethiopians ranging from nursery school children to water fetching women and firewood collectors, public servants entrepreneurs, Ethiopians and foreign citizens of Ethiopian origin in overseas contributed to the construction of GERD while local and foreign contractors and engineers labored from dawn to dusk in a hostile climate along with the members of the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) who protected the area from any kind of sabotage and encroachments by paid saboteurs.

The 70 islands that are to be formed after the total filling of the Dam will be open to local and foreign investors in hospitality industry. Already three local companies have expressed their interest in the sector.

Over time, Ethiopia intends to build some 70 dams across the country to generate more power for the growing industry of the country requires annual 30% increment in power needs.

As all Ethiopians here and abroad mark the 13th anniversary of construction of GERD, it is incumbent upon all to continue to support the project through further purchase of treasury bonds and donations that are required.

Ethiopia is ready to share cheaper hydropower energy with other African countries and hopes to secure at least 2 billion USD each year to support the economic development of the country.

Moreover, the Dam is an important input for Africa's economic integration that is based on using African resources for Africans and by Africans. This shows that the biggest dam in Africa will be completed to fulfill Ethiopia's economic solidarity with the rest of Africa.

It must be stressed again that the nation is building GERD in the midst of challenges some of which are out of the control of the country. Although the road is torturous, the world and African countries will soon witness the completion of GERD which is a pathway for Ethiopia's prosperity and unity.

Special Edition

In the Sphere of Diplomacy

Abbay Dam: Ethiopia's diplomatic zenith

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

From the moment of its inception, the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) or Abbay Dam has overcome a number of challenges and reached its 13 years of anniversary. The people and government of Ethiopia paid their arms and leg to finance and finish the dam by their own in order to be free from any external pressures. However, the nation has been subjected to many unwanted diplomatic pressures from both lower riparian nations and their allies.

Ethiopia, on this point, makes itself clear about the aim of building the dam through its diplomatic efforts. The country has let the world know that the sole reason for constructing one of the biggest dams in Africa is to liberate its people from the shackles of poverty and light their lives up not to harm any riparian nation.

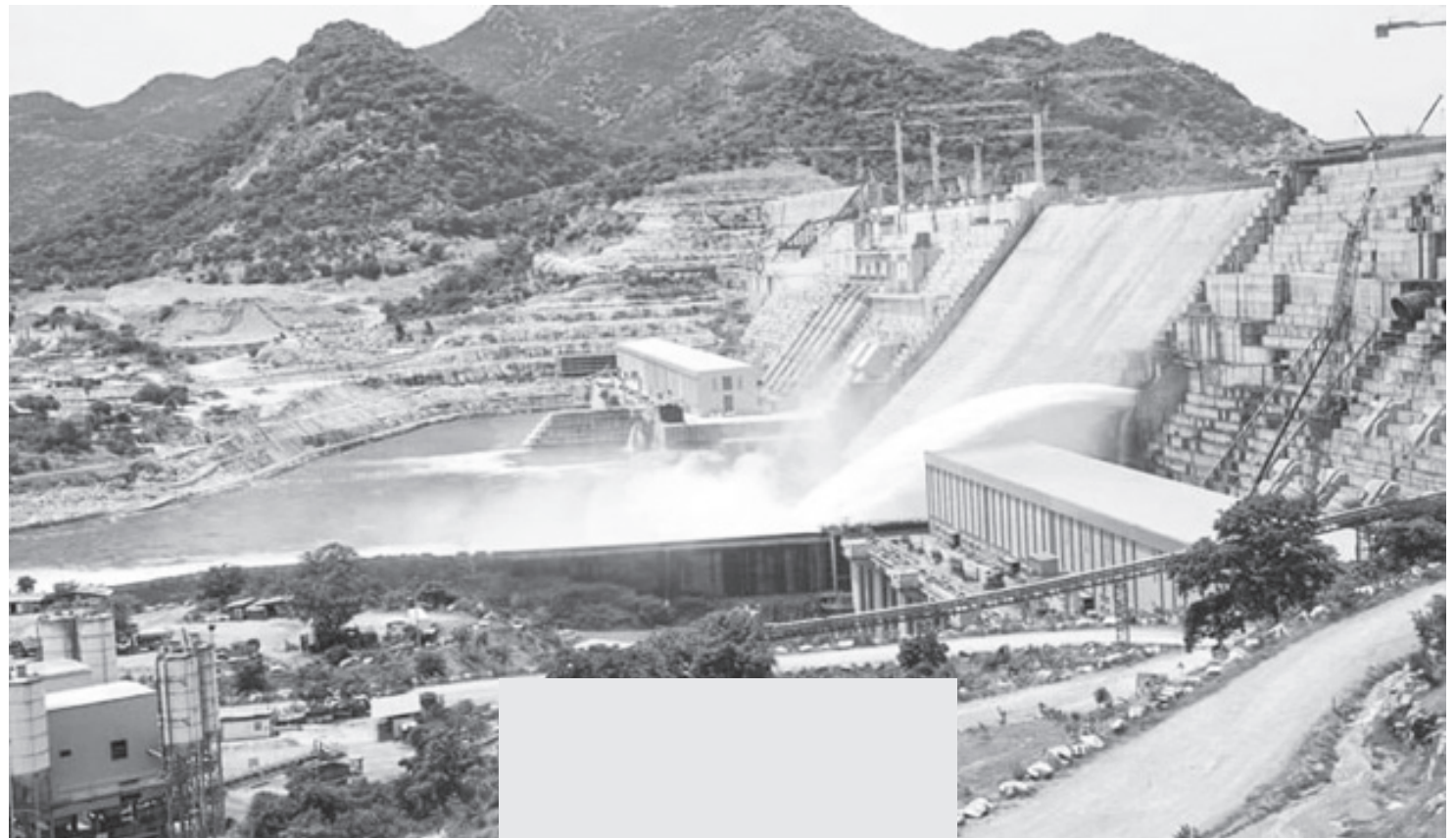
Historically, there are different agreements on the usage and utilization of the Abbay River. The two major agreements have become the best weapon for the lower riparian nations. The 1929, which is a colonial agreement between Egypt and the United Kingdom, and the 1959 agreement signed between Sudan and Egypt aimed at monopolizing and controlling the Abbay. In good truth, both the agreements deliberately ignore the involvement of the upper riparian states especially Ethiopia and give the whole advantage to the lower ones.

The two colonial accords were aimed at giving the ultimate power and benefit to the lower riparian nations by signing the agreement only with those nations and ignore the upper riparian nations that are the source of the water.

Research documents stated that the 1929 colonial agreement was based on the outcome of political negotiations between Egypt and Great Britain in 1920s, and in particular on the report of the 1925 Abbay Waters Commission. The basic objective of the accord was to guarantee and facilitate an increase in the volume of water reaching Egypt.

Again, the 1959 Abbay accord was signed between United Arab Republic, Egypt, and Republic of Sudan is also known as the Abbay Control Projects that was intended to control the whole benefits beget from the water. Besides, the two republics alone agreed to achieve two major objectives: maximizing the two republics' acquired rights of the water and construct two different dams in both nations.

Likewise, in the past many decades, the upper riparian countries had done nothing to use the water resource for their own due to multiple reasons and hand twisting colonial agreements. On the other side, the lower riparian countries have made use of the water for their economic and geopolitical power. They have also been advantageous from their gigantic dams on the Abbay. They still want things go as usual without any difference. Making them the sole beneficiaries is their ultimate goal, and the rest of the nation in the upper part of the river get nothing from the common natural resource that flows on their territory.



After the onset of the Abbay Dam, according to some reports, Ethiopia has not hesitated to call the lower riparian nations, both Egypt and Sudan, for negotiation to form an International Panel of Experts (IPoE) to find understanding of the benefits, costs and impacts of the dam. The IPoE recommended two studies to assess the environmental and socio-economic impacts of Abbay Dam and was interpreted by both the Egyptian and the Ethiopian governments.

Having held numerous tripartite meetings between Ethiopia and the lower riparian nations between 2013 and 2014, the parties could not find a common ground regarding the implementation of the IPoE recommendations and controversies were evolving around the constitution of a trilateral committee.

The negotiating parties had tried to find a way to resolve the dispute on the construction of the dam. Though the dam can bring various economic advantages for Ethiopia, the lower riparian has been resisting to put the argument to the table. According to a report, "The situation seemed to improve in the beginning of 2015 when tripartite negotiations were held in order to determine principles of cooperation. In March 2015, a 'Declaration of Principles' was signed by the leaders of Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia, setting the foundations for an initial cooperation."

Despite the fact that lower riparian nations are still refraining themselves to find a common ground, Ethiopian government is still inviting them for open negotiation and let the African Union mediate the issue. Ethiopia believes that African problems should be resolved by African solutions. To this end, Ethiopia slams the doors for external mediation, but the country is always ready to discuss any point with the concerned bodies including all of the Abbay Basin countries under the umbrella of the African Union.

Accordingly, Burundi's admission into the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) on Abbay waters has boosted Ethiopian hydro diplomacy efforts. Having stayed with *The Ethiopian Herald* Newspaper lately,

Ethiopia, on this point, makes itself clear about the aim of building the dam through its diplomatic efforts. The country has let the world know that the sole reason for constructing one of the biggest dams in Africa is to liberate its people from the shackles of poverty and light their lives up not to harm any riparian nation

Trans-boundary River Senior Advisor and Abbay Dam Technical Team Negotiator Engineer Gedion Asfaw said that Burundi's admission is a significant development for Ethiopia's hydro diplomacy efforts making marking another milestone in the cooperative management of trans-boundary waters.

Eng. Gedion said that the CFA, signed and ratified by six countries, paves the way for the establishment of the Abbay Basin Commission and replaces out-dated colonial-era agreements with a new management framework based on equitable utilization and cooperation. Ethiopian officials have been actively engaged in explaining the benefits and importance of the cooperative framework agreement. Consequently, he said, an increasing number of countries have embraced the CFA, showcasing the growing recognition of the necessity for collaborative water resource management.

By the same token, Abbay Dam National Panel of Experts and Technical Negotiating Team Chairperson Gedion Asfaw (Eng.) said that despite Egypt's recent announcement of discontinuing its involvement in the Abbay

Dam negotiation, Ethiopia has an unwavering commitment to resolve the outstanding technical and legal disparities.

He emphasized the importance of civilized discussion to address the sticking points. "It is crucial to keep the continuation of negotiations to find common ground and address the complexities of trans-boundary water management." The expert pointed out that trans-boundary negotiations, including the Abbay Dam talks, require ample time and patience due to the inherent challenges of balancing national interests and reaching compromises.

Drawing on global experiences, Eng. Gedion indicated similar negotiations on cross-border resources often take more than a decade to resolve, underscoring the complexity of the issues at hand. "Ethiopia recognizes the significance of safeguarding its national interests while acknowledging that other countries are similarly protecting their own concerns."

While convergence and agreement may take time, Ethiopia remains open to peaceful dialogue and firmly believes in the possibility of reaching compromises that address the concerns of all parties involved. He further highlighted that Ethiopia's policy on trans-boundary waters centers around regional cooperation, peaceful resolution of issues, and adherence to internationally accepted principles of equitable utilization and causing no significant harm.

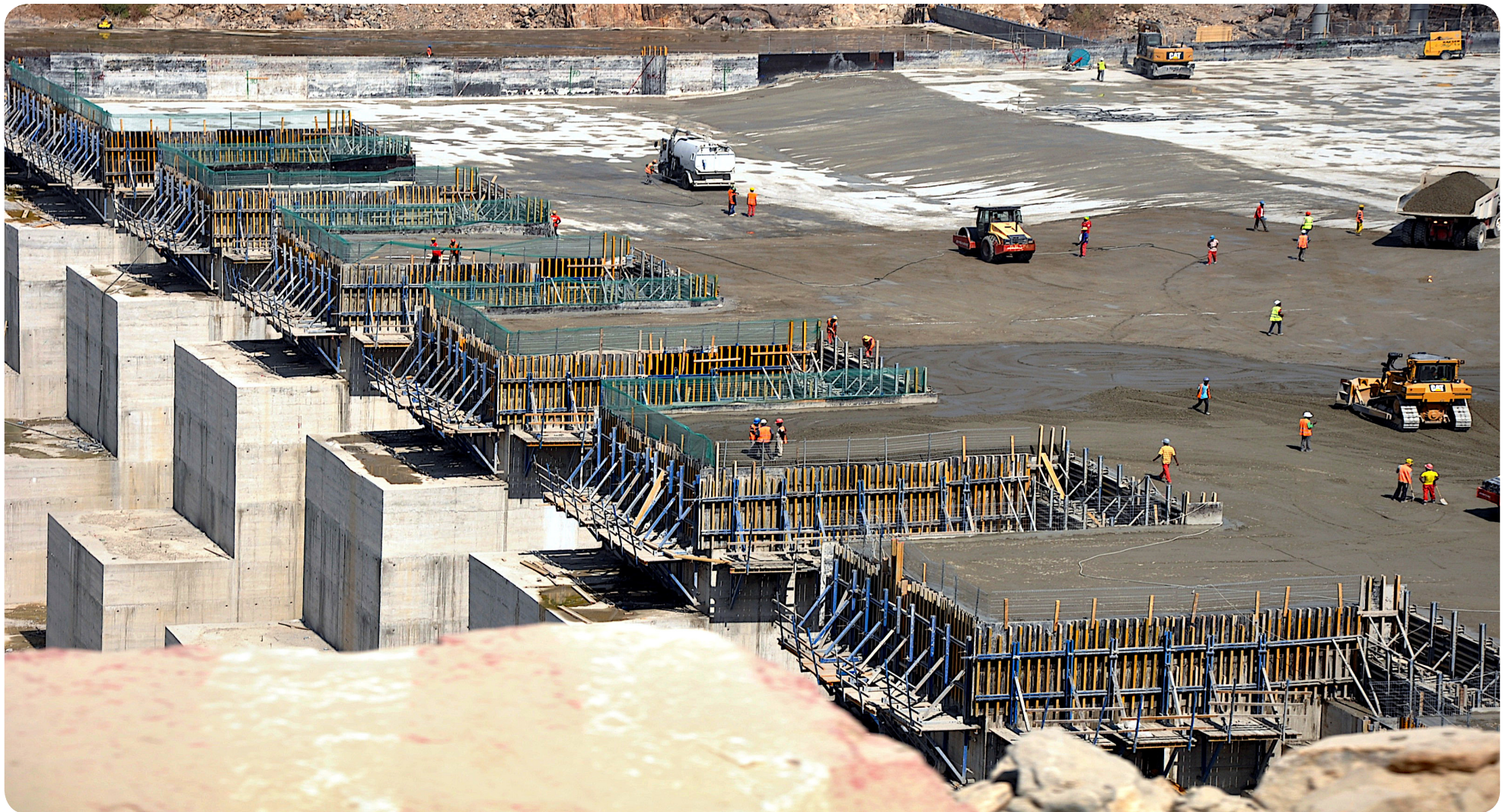
By adhering to its policy framework and promoting peaceful consultation, Ethiopia reaffirms its dedication to constructive dialogue as the primary means to resolve trans-boundary water issues and foster regional cooperation. Looking ahead, the trans-boundary rivers expert emphasized the need to capacitate Ethiopia's human resources in hydro politics and water diplomacy. Efforts to train professionals in areas including hydro-diplomacy, water policy, and integrated water resource management are crucial for effectively representing Ethiopia's interests on the international stage.

Special Edition

Abbay Dam: From its current status to the pre-construction stage



Special Edition



Abbay Dam lights up Africa's Future

BY EYUEL KIFLU

The era of living in darkness and experiencing glitches in factories' production processes due to inadequate electric power seems to be approaching its end. Ethiopia, the beacon of African sovereignty, is making tremendous efforts to improve the country and extend its benefits beyond its borders.

Recently, Ethiopia has made significant strides towards achieving self-sufficiency in electricity, and the nation's commitment to progress further has paved the way for the completion of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) or Abbay Dam, a monumental project that promises to revolutionize the country's energy sector. With the dam expected to reach full capacity in the coming months, Ethiopia is poised to become a major exporter of electric power, spanning from the Horn to South Africa.

The country's electricity exports are expected to double once the GERD reaches to its completion and starts operating in full capacity, which is anticipated to occur within the next seven months. Currently, Ethiopia generates a total of 5,250 MW of energy from diverse sources such as hydro, solar, wind, and steam. This capacity is anticipated to double upon the completion of the Abbay dam project. The mega project, now over 95% complete with the civil work reaching over 98% and the electro-mechanical work at 76%, has been a testament to Ethiopian resilience to achieve its long waited goal. To commemorate the 13th year of the dam's construction, the Office of National Council for the Coordination of Public Participation has been encouraging citizens to contribute through various means.

To support the construction of the dam, the office has initiated the Bond Week campaign, aiming to raise funds through bond sales, SMS donations, and other schemes. With a target of collecting approximately 100 million Birr during the Bond Week, the institution hopes to build on the success of previous fundraising efforts. In fact, over the past 13 years, bond sales have already accumulated an impressive sum of over 16.8 billion Birr, including 767 million Birr collected in the past eight months alone.

Ethiopian Development Bank (DBE) Vice President, Getachew Wakie, expressed optimism for increased fundraising in light of the dam's 13th anniversary. This year's Bond Week offers bond coupons worth 9.5 billion Birr, available at branches of Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE), DBE, and other participating banks nationwide. Bethel Tadesse, CBE Customers' Relations Director, highlighted the bank's significant contributions over the years, having purchased over 200 million Birr



in bonds and collected over 9.8 billion Birr, along with substantial sum through donations.

The success of the campaign is further highlighted by the significant contribution from the Ethiopian diaspora, who have donated 61 million USD, 1.6 million pounds, and 49 million Euros towards the dam's construction. Besides, a new platform is introduced by CBE that allows donations from anywhere in any currency.

At present, the dam generates 540 MW through two turbines, a figure set to exceed over 5,000 MW upon its full completion. This substantial increase will effectively double Ethiopia's current electric power production capacity. The project's progress has been a testament to Ethiopian determination, overcoming obstacles and external hindrances. Despite attempts by Egypt to disrupt the project, Ethiopia has persevered in financing the dam independently.

Egypt's persistent opposition towards the dam, driven by outdated colonial-era agreements, has failed to impede the project's forward momentum. Although Cairo withdrew from the anticipated fourth and final round of negotiations, Ethiopia remains committed to resolving technical and legal disparities through civilized discussion. Gedion Asfaw (Eng.), Chairperson of the Abbay Dam National Panel of Experts and Technical Negotiating Team, emphasized the importance of finding common ground and addressing complexities in Trans-boundary water management.

In an interview with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Tilahun Erduno, an Assistant Professor at Adama Science & Technology University's School of Civil Engineering and Architecture, shared his insights on the Abbay Dam and its

significance for Ethiopia's development. According to Tilahun, the construction of the dam challenges the notion propagated by those opposed to Ethiopia's progress, demonstrating that the country can achieve remarkable feats when it remains united and peaceful.

Tilahun emphasized that the Abbay Dam has overcome numerous obstacles and pressures to reach its current stage. It serves as a practical example that any goal can be accomplished through collective effort.

From a diplomatic standpoint, Tilahun noted that Ethiopia's approach to utilizing the Abbay River is in accordance with international law and promotes cooperation among riparian countries. While some nations have expressed unfounded concerns about the project, alleging potential threats to downstream countries, Tilahun dismissed these claims, stating that the dam poses no harm. Adding, the dam is beyond its role in various developmental endeavours, the dam also serves as a means to mitigate the risk of flooding in downstream regions.

The construction of the dam stands as a monumental achievement, accomplished solely by the Ethiopian people without external support. The journey has been fraught with challenges, but the perseverance and resilience of the Ethiopian people have propelled them to this remarkable stage of development.

Ethiopia's delayed utilization of its water resources has resulted in economic and political difficulties, leading to limitations in its access to maritime trade. However, the Abbay Dam signifies an opportunity for Ethiopia to harness its water resources effectively. The development of these resources not only has economic benefits but also contributes to ensuring long-term

peace and stability within the country, Tilahun elucidated.

While Ethiopia has advocated for a fair and equitable sharing of water resources in the region, some countries have been observed to prioritize individual gains over collective interests. However, the Abbay Dam showcases Ethiopia's commitment to responsible water resource management and regional cooperation, he added.

The country's ambition to export electric power to neighboring nations and beyond has become fascinating especially after the completion of the dam. Currently, Ethiopia sells electricity to Sudan, Djibouti, Kenya, and has agreements in place with Tanzania. Interest from South Sudan, Somaliland, Uganda, Rwanda, and others further underscores the region's eagerness to import power from Ethiopia.

The country aims to connect Eastern and Southern Africa Power pools, ultimately reaching South Africa and even Europe.

Ethiopia's vision for regional integration via electricity underscores its dedication to fostering peace, stability, and economic growth. Ashebir Balcha, Director General of Ethiopian Electric Power, revealed plans to establish a grid connection between the Eastern and Southern Africa Power pools. This ambitious endeavor, once realized, will enable Ethiopia to export electricity worth approximately 200 million USD annually, further enhancing regional integrity.

As the completion of Abbay Dam draws near, Ethiopia stands poised to drive Africa into a brighter future. The dam's completion will not only bolster Ethiopia's energy capacity but also contribute to the development and stability of neighboring countries. Through ambitious projects like Abbay Dam, Ethiopia is solidifying its position as a key player in Africa's sustainable energy landscape.

Society

Special Edition

“Together, we’ve made it possible.”

BY STAFF REPORTER

The construction pace of Abbay hydro dam (the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), whose foundation stone was laid by the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi on April 2, 2011, is progressing well. Currently, the construction is nearing its final stage.

According to information obtained from the Office of the National Coordination for the Construction of GERD, the construction of the Dam has reached 95%; with the civil work has grown 98% while 78% of the electromechanical work has already been completed.

This week, the 13th anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone the GERD is being marked under the theme: “Together, we’ve made it possible.” As part of this, various resource mobilization programs, including holding bond purchasing week, exhibitions, appreciation, recognition and other similar events would be carried out at the capital Addis Ababa and in various parts of the country, it was learnt.

Accordingly, at region level, a 5-km street race was carried out in various cities, zones and districts of Oromia State to rally support for the successful completion of the construction of the GERD.

In her recent press briefing Deputy Director General of the Office of National Coordination for the Construction of GERD, Fikirte Tamiru said that the hydro dam is a symbol of the nation that all Ethiopians have reached a consensus on this mega hydropower project being built on the Abbay River.

Mentioning that close to 19 billion Birr have been mobilized from the public by using various funding raising schemes the Deputy Director announced plan to collect 300 million Birr in the next campaigns from Ethiopians residing at home and abroad. She also urged all Ethiopians to further strengthen their unreserved support and realize the completion of the hydro dam, which is an emblem of their unity, commitment, persistence and pride.

True, the GERD is a seal that stamps the “Yes we can do mentality” among Ethiopians; and it is their pride that they are constructing it with their own money, energy and expertise. Most importantly, it is a Dam that Ethiopians completely thrash “they cannot do it” assumption and can practically demonstrate their unbeatable spirit, persistence and commitment to the world.

Regardless of any differences- religious, ethnic, ideological variances, educational background and economic status, or any other ways- Ethiopians have been backing the construction of the Dam by their own free will, aiming to see and pass on a better Ethiopia to the next generation. They have been backing the construction of the Dam by purchasing Dam bonds, contributing from their salaries as well as giving in the form of gifts. And without any foreign financial support, they have reached the point where they can reap the benefits of their efforts. Currently, standing on the verge of realizing their dream, they are reaffirming commitment to backing the construction of



the Dam till it becomes a reality.

In a 5-km road run organized in Maya Town, Eastern Hararge Zone of Oromia State, in relation to the 13th anniversary of the launching of the Dam project, and to mobilize resources, participants of the competition renewed their unreserved commitment to backing the Dam in the future in every possible way.

At the competition, more than 10 thousand people drawn from East Hararge Zone and Maya town participated, and the ceremony was attended by senior officials of the zone and town administration, ENA reported.

Speaking at the event, Mayor of Maya Town Efraim Wezir (PhD) said that, GERD is an identity of Ethiopians; and the community of the East Hararge Zone and Maya Town Administration are doing their level best in the effort exerted to successfully complete the construction of the Dam.

Stating that the purpose of the road race is to further strengthen the support of the people for the Dam, Efraim called on the community to continue their usual support for the successful completion of the Dam.

It was also mentioned that since the day the cornerstone of the Dam was laid, more than half-a-billion Birr has been gained from East Hararge Zone through bond purchase and gifts.

In similar manner, the commitment and determination of the Diaspora community residing in every corner of the world has been huge and beyond words. Ethiopians in the Diaspora community have been extending all-round support to the construction of the Dam to help achieve the desired ambition- to build the Dam, generate power and address the challenges of those citizens who have no access to electricity (close to 60%) and advance the overall development of the country. The Ethiopian Diaspora, apart from buying special bonds issued for this

same purpose and making donations, played a crucial role in revealing the real intention of Ethiopia and in defending its interest in the global platforms.

According to Communication Director of the Ethiopian Diaspora Service Wondwossen Girma, Ethiopians and foreigners of Ethiopian origin in the Diaspora have been supporting the construction of the Dam financially, professionally, and in other ways.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency, Wondwossen said that, aside from their active engagement in public diplomacy and advocacy activities, the Diasporas have been contributing over 50 million USD for the construction of the Dam in bond purchase, donation, and in some other ways.

As to him, Diaspora community from all walks of life has been demonstrating overwhelming participation in public gatherings, discussions with the Dam negotiating teams, running campaigns on twitter, and other kinds of activities to fight the unjustified pressure of some interest groups.

“Accordingly, the Diaspora community has held massive demonstrations in major cities across the globe and denounced those groups’ unwarranted pressure and the attempt to block their home country’s aspiration to prosper.”

The community has also been actively engaged in awareness- raising campaigns on the positive outcomes of the mega Dam for the downstream countries and communicating Ethiopia’s commitment to ensure mutual benefits in the utilization of cross-border resources.

The Director also extended calls for increased support for the completion of the Dam that has immense capability to transform Ethiopia’s agrarian economy and to expedite development endeavors in their homeland.

The GERD is a seal that stamps the “Yes we can do mentality” among Ethiopians; and it is their pride that they are constructing it with their own money, energy and expertise

Planet Earth

Ethiopia uses EVs for economically beneficial, climate change mitigation, and speed up technology transfer

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

As the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) or widely referred to as Abbay Dam is nearing its completion it comes with multiples of opportunities that can assist the country to beef up its efforts of cleaning its economic development from environment polluting sources of energy.

As a country of about 120 million people Ethiopia has to develop its manufacturing, agro processing, tourism sectors and urbanization to adequately cater for the rapidly growing needs of the people. All these sectors need a reliable, modern, affordable and clean sources of energy. The best sources of energy in this regard is hydroelectric power.

Ethiopia currently obtains vast majority of its electricity from hydropower dams. It is further expanding its generation capacity to meet the ever growing demand at home as well as to supply energy to neighboring countries.

In this regard the most burning issue in harnessing the energy sector to ensure a clean and safe environment for the future is introducing and speeding up the usage of electric vehicles. Motor vehicles are the major reasons for the pollution of the environment as they emit a large amount of carbon dioxide to the environment. Therefore, it is mandatory to encourage the utilization of electrical vehicles for public and private applications.

Electric vehicle (EV) transportation refers to modalities that do not use fossil fuels. These transportation systems are critical for climate change mitigation since they emit no greenhouse

gases. Unlike other forms of transportation, such as motorized cars, which contribute to climate change via the use of fossil fuels, it emits no carbon dioxide.

So, by encouraging the use of electric vehicles, the country may cut carbon emissions and contribute to the fight against climate change. Furthermore, electric vehicle transportation is more energy efficient than motorized transportation since it uses renewable resources, whereas motorized vehicles rely on finite fossil fuels. Countries that transition to electric vehicle mobility can lower their overall energy usage and reliance on fossil fuels. More significantly, electric cars enhance air quality. It generates contaminants that exacerbate poor air quality and respiratory issues.

As a result, governments are recommended to employ electric vehicles (EVs), which run on electricity rather than gasoline or diesel fuel. They run using electric motors and rechargeable batteries, which eliminates the need for traditional fossil fuels. EVs are considered a more ecologically friendly alternative to typical internal combustion engine vehicles since they emit no tailpipe emissions and may be fueled by renewable energy sources. They're growing more popular as technology evolves and charging infrastructure improves.

More and more people are realizing that electric cars are essential to sustainable transportation systems everywhere, even in Ethiopia. It is advantageous for the environment. The potential of electric cars to lower air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions is one of the main arguments in favor of their promotion in Ethiopia. Ethiopia

can drastically reduce its carbon emissions and enhance air quality by switching to electric vehicles (EVs) from conventional fossil fuel-powered cars, particularly in metropolitan areas where vehicle emissions contribute to pollution.

In addition, Ethiopia has made investments in clean energy technologies including solar, wind, and hydropower. By encouraging the use of sustainable energy sources to charge electric cars, the country lessens its need for imported fossil fuels and improves its energy security. It also offers financial potential. Ethiopia may benefit economically from the promotion of electric cars in several areas, including manufacturing, infrastructure development, and employment generation. Reducing reliance on imported cars and fuel while promoting economic growth and innovation may be achieved by developing a local EV sector and supply chain.

It is also vital for the country's health care system. The move to electric cars can benefit public health by lowering air pollution and related health hazards. Cleaner air from the use of EVs may result in fewer respiratory ailments and other health concerns associated with automobile emissions. More importantly, electric cars contribute significantly to climate change mitigation by lowering carbon emissions from transportation. As Ethiopia seeks to achieve its climate objectives and pledges, encouraging electric vehicles may help the country lower its carbon footprint and transition to a low-carbon economy.

Despite the benefits, electric cars require a well-developed infrastructure. To promote electric cars in Ethiopia, investments in charging infrastructure,

grid upgrades, and supporting legislation are needed. Building a comprehensive EV charging network across the country can inspire more people to switch to electric vehicles.

Considering this challenge, the government is working hard to offer charging stations around the country. It also offers incentives for people who import electric automobiles. According to Ethiopia's Transport and Logistics Minister, 60 electric car charging stations have been built around the city of Addis Ababa.

Ethiopian Ministry of Transport and Logistics State Minister Bareo Hassen stated that the number of electric cars imported and serviced in the country has exceeded 100,000. As a result, 60 electric car charging stations have been constructed and are already operational throughout Addis Ababa.

Besides, just like at gas stations, efforts are being made to create an option for electric vehicle owners to charge their vehicles in addition to their homes. Therefore, in Addis Ababa alone, it is planned to install one thousand 176 charging stations within 10 years, he added.

The ministry is focused on expanding the number of electric car charging stations in regional cities. It also introduces long-distance automobiles onto the market. To extend electric power charging stations in other cities around the country, efforts are being made to collaborate with necessary institutions, organizations, and the business sector to find a location for the centers to operate. Because the country will construct 2,335 electric car charging stations across the country in the 10-year developmental plan, he elucidated.