

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs



A Week in the Horn



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Search for justice should be pursued in manner that does not jeopardize efforts aimed at promoting peace & reconciliation.

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News in Brief



The House of Peoples Representatives (July 4th) approved a ministerial reshuffle involving the ten ministers nominated by Prime Minister Hailemariam, including a number of new appointments as well as several changes of office. (See article)

Prime Minister Hailemariam, in a press conference last Friday (June 28th), said the Government was giving prime attention to increased productivity in agriculture and other sectors with a view to achieving fully the targets of the five-year Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP). (See article)

Prime Minister Hailemariam has held a meeting with a delegation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) led by Mr. Kal Wajid who underlined the importance of the role of the Government's development policies in the country's rapid economic growth over the past decade.

Foreign Minister, Dr Tedros on an official visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, met with His Royal Highness Saud Al-Faisal, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom. Saudi Arabia has agreed to postpone the deadline for registration of Ethiopian immigrants in the Kingdom. Dr. Tedros also met with Muslim religious leaders from Jeddah and Mekkah to discuss illegal human trafficking and current religious developments in Ethiopia

Foreign Minister, Dr. Tedros, on an official visit to Algeria, signs a Strategic Partnership Agreement (June 30th). He also holds talks with the Algerian Ministers of Commerce and of Agriculture and the President of the People's National Assembly.

Water and Energy Minister, Alemayehu Tegenu, speaking at the opening of a meeting of Working Group III of an Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in Addis Ababa emphasized Ethiopia's interest in working in collaboration with international organizations on climate change.

On Friday (June 28) Addis Ababa University held a high-level symposium on the Nile issue under the theme: "Opportunities for Regional Development."

The US Government announced on Sunday (June 30th) that it was launching a US\$7 billion, five year initiative, to double access to power in sub-Saharan Africa.

A memorial service was held at the Embassy of the Apostolic Nuncio to Ethiopia on Monday (July 1st) for Ambassador Xavier Marchal, Head of Delegation of the European Union to Ethiopia who died unexpectedly in Brussels on May 25th after short illness.



Al-Shabaab announced on Sunday (June 30th) that two of its leading commanders, Ibrahim Haji Jama Mead "Al-Afghani" and Abdi Hamid Hashi Olhayi, both founder members of the organization, had been killed after Al-Shabaab leader Ahmed Abdi "Godane" ordered the arrest of a dozen or more senior Al-Shabaab leaders.

The Somali Federal Government called (July 2nd) for calm in Mogadishu after protesters took to the streets demanding the release of Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys who had been arrested on arrival in Mogadishu at the weekend from central Somalia.

The President of the Somali Federal Government, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, on Tuesday (July 2nd) received the credentials of the new British ambassador to Somalia, Ambassador Neil Wigan.

At least 71 people have been killed and more than 300 wounded in ongoing fighting between rival militias in the Somali city of Kismayo, according to the World Health Organization on Thursday (July 4th).

A delegation from the Somali Regional State of Ethiopia visits Puntland to attend the funeral of the late Boqor Adbullahi Boqor Muse "King Kong" who died in Finland last month.



News in Brief



Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn held talks with President Omar Hassan Al-Bashir of Sudan in Addis Ababa on the sidelines of the “Ending Hunger in Africa” Summit. He proposed the establishment of a committee to verify the accusations and counteraccusations over assisting rebels leveled at each other by Sudan and South Sudan

Sudanese President Omer Al-Bashir met on Thursday (July 4th) with the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping, Hervé Ladsous, to discuss the situation in Darfur and the mandate of the joint peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID). M. Ladsous has been on a three-day visit to Sudan.



Ethio-Djibouti Joint Ministerial Commission meeting held in Addis Ababa on July 4th, following an experts meeting the previous day.



President Isaias Afwerki on Thursday (July 4th) held talks with the Special EU Representative in the Republic of Sudan and South Sudan, Dr. Rosalind Marsden, who is on a two day visit to Asmara.



The African Union’s Anti-Hunger Summit (June 30th – July 1st) was held this week under the theme “Towards an African Renaissance, renewed partnership to eliminate hunger by 2025 in the ambit of the Comprehensive African Agricultural Program (CAADP)”. (See article)



On Monday (July 1st) the Vice-Presidents of Sudan and South Sudan recommitted themselves to resort to dialogue and to resolve any conflict that might arise in the course of implementing the cooperation agreements signed September 27th last year.

In an interview with the UK newspaper the Guardian, South Sudan Vice-President, Riek Machar, has spoken about “time for change” and a need to avoid “authoritarianism”, while indicating his desire.



Kenya’s National Union of Teachers yesterday (July 4th) turned down President Kenyatta’s plea to call off the national strike, saying that the government is refusing to table an offer in the negotiations.

The British Government has banned the use of khat. Britain’s Home Secretary, Theresa May, announced the ban on Wednesday (July 3rd). Khat in the UK is mainly used by immigrants from Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Yemen and Djibouti.



Prime Minister Hailemariam responds to questions in Parliament...

On Thursday, this week (July 4th), the House of Peoples' Representatives approved the appointment of ten ministers nominated by Prime Minister Hailemariam, including a number of new appointments as well as several shifts of office. Members of Parliament raised questions with the Prime Minister on a number of issues, including the performance of the Growth and Transformation Plan, Addis Ababa city administration, the development of micro and small enterprises and the role of the private sector, revenue collection and administration, inflation, infrastructure developments including roads and railways, clean water coverage, electrification, telecommunications and finance for GERD and other projects, and a motion for a budget reduction was also forwarded. The Prime Minister provided a series of answers, explaining the government's efforts to address these precisely and clearly.

On the GTP's performance, the Prime Minister explained that while the growth rates had been set at 11.5% -15%, the achievement of the last two years had averaged 10.5%. This, in itself, was a great success as nowhere in the world had a higher economic growth rate been achieved in this period. Nevertheless, to achieve the goals of the GTP, the government has now identified gaps limiting the implementation of the plan in various areas including agriculture, and industry, particularly in micro and small scale enterprises, because of internal institutional capacity limitation as well as related factors and attitudinal difficulties. Inflation is currently down to single figures but imbalances between supply and demand remained. It was important for competitiveness to play an appropriate role. Here, the government was working to create a conducive environment and encourage different options. The National Bank was also adjusting saving and interest rates to encourage competitiveness, but the market had not yet reacted as expected, the Prime Minister said.

He noted that the government was now planning to give more emphasis in the agricultural sector to natural resource conservation, livestock and animal resources, cattle feed and forestry development. Agriculture would play a major role in economic growth in the coming years. The Ministry of Agriculture had some 2.6 million hectares of land for private sector development if the investors appear. This would allow the doubling of production. Overall, the Federal and the Regional governments plan to give due consideration to the private sector in order to achieve maximum benefit.

On financial administration, the Prime Minister underlined that the Government had started to reform procedures and internal regulations. Studies detailed activities to be done by the government, and the problems that needed to be addressed including people who have been disturbing the system for their benefit. The government was working to deal with this. On the issue of the Addis Ababa city governance, the Prime Minister noted popular participation, the commitments of the leadership and the consultative process that had been established. He thought the government and the people were working effectively together in discussions to deal with the problems over land administration, governance and other related problems.



There had been impressive progress but there was still more to be done. To achieve the expected results, and resolution of short, medium and long term issues, the people should strengthen their popular participation through the established forums. In general, the Prime Minister said, improving the capacity of the government institutions will have the effect of improving the capacity, knowledge and skills of other bodies through a scaling-up strategy.

The Prime Minister said that although the major projects were on schedule, there was still a lot to do to improve efficiency and effectiveness. He noted that preparation to construct 13,000-14,000 km of roads annually had been finalized, and that the national rail network construction to link different parts of the country and the neighbors was underway. He stressed that the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) was a project that was special for the people and the Government. It contributed to the national interest and more widely. Responding to suggestions that there would be not enough money to complete GERD or that it could not be built for US\$4.8 billion or the equivalent and estimated value of Ethiopian birr is not enough to construct the Dam, the Prime Minister emphasized there would be no delays or slowing down. He said the people would be contributing 10-15% of the total cost, while the Government and EEPSCO will cover the remaining 85-90% of the cost of construction. The Prime Minister stressed there were no difficulties over finance or over construction. Construction had currently reached to about 23%.

The Prime Minister detailed the progress made in development of the telecommunication sector with the expansion of landline and mobile telephone subscriptions reaching expected levels. A lot had been done to ensure clean water supplies and achieve required coverage, but many projects had not been functioning well, and as a result the projection of coverage in the water sector had fallen from 78% to 61%. The government was now concentrating on creating effective institutions, improving technical capacity, and expanding awareness to develop the importance of infrastructure developments in telecom, electrification and water supply.

In discussion on the budget and the motion for a budget reduction, and expansion of support for the private sector, the Prime Minister said the government was well aware of the role the private sector could play and the effect this would have on the political economy. Ethiopia offered ample investment opportunities in various sectors, including metallurgy and engineering, textile and garment production, agro-industries, food processing, large-scale commercial farming, extractive industries and other areas. The country was endowed with rich resources. Involvement of the private sector leads to increased competitiveness. The government sees a number of priority areas to support the private sector. One of these is improving the human resources supply, because human resources development is a major problem. This is why the government encourages youth training. Another area is infrastructure development. Quality and accessibility are important to promote the competitiveness of private sector, and in this the government's loan system was of crucial importance for the private sector. Nevertheless, there was some danger of any changes in budget allocation to the private sector causing inflation and endangering the macro-economy. This was why the motion could not be accepted.



Another motion called on the government to reduce the budget of the Broadcast Authority. The Prime Minister told the House to look at the work of the Authority which promotes community TV, and radio; and is at the moment working to change from an analogue to a digital system. Its publicity and regulatory work, of course, had been enacted and established by parliament. This was not, he said, the time for any reduction. In conclusion, following the detailed explanations of the Prime Minister on other issues, the House of people's Representatives endorsed the 154.9 billion birr budget for the coming year. It provides an increment of 12% over the previous last year. 79% of the budget will be raised from local resources. Out of the total, 62.2% is allocated to the regions; 37.8% to the Federal government.



...and meets the press

The Prime Minister met with the members of the press in his first press briefing since he took office on Friday last week (June 28th). In a more than two hour session he responded to different questions on a variety of political, economic and social issues.

On the economy, a number of questions addressed the differences between the economic growth forecasts of the government and of the IMF, the issue of congruity between the Government's policy of massive public investment and its current measure of tightening the monetary supply to fight inflation, the decrease in performance of the agricultural and manufacturing sectors, and on the possibility of continuing to register double digit growth given the poor performance of these sectors.

In response to the first question, the Prime Minister noted that over the past decade there had always been a difference in the forecasts of the IMF and the Government. At the same time, he noted, that "when it comes to actual facts, the IMF has always agreed with our data". It was no surprise that the same thing had happened this year. He said that although "it is true that a forecast is just forecast, our forecast has always been nearer to the truth." The prime Minister said the decrease in growth last year to 8.5% had happened because of the drop in performance of the agricultural sector to 4.9%. The manufacturing sector's reduction in growth was a result of the small and micro manufacturing sector which had registered 13% growth compared to the medium and macro manufacturing sector which had registered 18.6%. He said that following additional focus on the small and micro manufacturing sector, and other changes, as well as a 6% growth in cereals in the agriculture sector which when added to other improvements will increase the agriculture sector output in the coming year to a 7%, "a greater growth is expected this year".

In his reply on inflation control measures, Prime Minister Hailemariam noted that there were two competing theories. The first envisaged measures that could be taken while continuing to register growth. The second necessitated a slowdown in economic growth to provide the control of inflation. The first approach was widely practiced in East Asia and was a proven solution to control inflation. He said that in Ethiopia's case it had been possible to control inflation while registering rapid growth. He noted that the sources of inflation in developing and developed countries were quite different. This made a specifically tailored solution all the more important. He attributed the source of Ethiopia's inflation as arising largely from a hike in food prices. He said the government clearly understood the difference in inflation that comes from pumping money into the economy and the inflation that arises from disparity between demand and supply. He said "We have seen that following the increase in supplies, inflation has fallen very significantly, and we will continue along this line."

Referring to the recent over-reaction and fiery rhetoric from Egypt over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), the Prime Minister said "our desire is to have cooperation based on our desire to prosper together and this position remains unaltered." He said "Ethiopia is ready to work on the principle of cooperation for mutual benefit and on the principle of give and take in resolving any dispute over the Nile water."



He underlined that the International Panel of Experts' report had shown that the Dam would not harm the downstream countries, but he also noted that the final details of some of the EPC (Engineering, Procurement Construction) elements of the contract design had yet to be finalized. The Government was ready to conduct the further studies as recommended by the International Panel. The Government of Egypt had also agreed to continue talks on the matter, and this, he said, Ethiopia considered a welcome sign.

Regarding the recent detention of businessmen and senior officials of the Ethiopian Revenue Customs Authority and the allegation that the corruption allegations were no more than a cover story to hide political divisions. Prime Minister Hailemariam said the Government was not on a temporary spree to detain corrupt officials. It was working on the basis of extensive studies and investigations. The first element in this was to make the system difficult for corrupt officials. This had been done in land administration and now the Government had turned its attention to tax administration.



Conference on Ending Hunger in Africa by 2025

The African Union Commission, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), with the support of the Lula Institute of Brazil as well as Ethiopia, organized the two day conference (June 30th – July 1st) under the theme “Towards an African Renaissance, renewed partnership to eliminate hunger by 2025 in the ambit of the Comprehensive African Agricultural Program (CAADP)”. The African Union Commission, in collaboration with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the Lula Institute of Brazil held a conference at the weekend starting on Saturday, June 29th, on ending hunger in Africa, under the theme “Toward African Renaissance: Renewed Partnership for Unified Approach to End Hunger in Africa by 2025 within the CAADP Framework”. On July 1, 2013 the conference ended with a Summit of Heads of State and Government.

The opening session heard statements from Prime Minister of Hailemariam of Ethiopia, the Chairperson of the African Union, from Dr. Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, founder and Honorary President of the Lula Institute, and Mr. José Graziano da Silva, Director General of the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization. The afternoon session included panels presented and moderated by former President Obasanjo of Nigeria, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission of Africa, Mr. Carlos Lopez, and the Chief Executive of the NEPAD Agency, Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki. Leaders taking part included President Omar Al-Bashir of Sudan and President Boni Yayi of Benin the Vice-Presidents of Uganda and Tanzania, former President Obasanjo of Nigeria and former President Kufor of Ghana and the Prime Ministers of Cameroon, Niger, Algeria and Equatorial Guinea.

Deliberations focused on the efforts exerted by African Governments to end hunger and ensure food security as result under NEPAD’s Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program (CAADP). There was a consensus that hunger could be eradicated from the continent once and for as the right ingredients were available. Countries like Ghana, Senegal, Ethiopia, and Rwanda had already been able to minimize substantially the percentage of their populations suffering from hunger and malnutrition. Ghana is the first and only country that has graduated to achieving the first MDG, but ten other countries have been able to achieve the 10% GDP allocation for the agricultural sector as envisioned under the CAADP framework.

The conference discussions covered food security in Africa, the eradication of hunger, partnerships for the fight against hunger in the African continent, and experiences of African and Asian countries in the fight against hunger, and the aim to end hunger and malnutrition in Africa by 2025. The AU Director for Rural Economy and Agriculture, Abebe Hailegabriel, who stressed the need to build partnerships between the public and private sectors, civil society, farmers associations and academia, said the goal of eradicating hunger in Africa by 2025 was attainable providing that African leaders had the determination to change their words into actions. Another objective of the Summit was to approve a common agenda for the fight against hunger in Africa, encouraging support for African countries, their governments and organized civil society to incorporate the successful experiences of Brazil and other countries.



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Prime Minister Hailemariam emphasized the fact that there was optimism in the continent to end hunger given the improved economic performances of some states. At the same time much remains to be done. 60 percent of the arable land of the continent is still unutilized. Equally, there is much to be done across the continent to commercialize agriculture. Ethiopia, in its efforts to end hunger, has devised an extensive safety net program as part of its five year development plan and launched a coalition for food security. These were successful programs but the Prime Minister noted they were the reflection of an economic growth that had averaged double digit growth over the last decade.

As part of the Jubilee celebrations for the African Union, the continent has vowed to end hunger and bring about prosperity. This is a highly demanding task in the race to the 2015 deadline for meeting the Millennium Development Goals. The meeting noted that food insecurity in the continent was not only the product of a shortage of agricultural produce but also arose from inaccessibility to food stocks, poor storage and reserve supplies, weak and fragmented institution and the inadequacy of governance and policies to address the challenge. There is in fact enough agricultural output in the world to feed all those who are hungry.

Attention was drawn to the lack of political will to provide for all. African countries need to integrate appropriate budget resources into national fiscal policies aimed to alleviate the needs of the poor. This task is imperative to end hunger. And beyond national efforts, regional and continental policy harmonization is necessary for a long term solution. In this connection, there was agreement that boosting intra African trade along with enhanced infrastructural development needed to be dealt with at length. This is particularly the case as nutrition is a multi-sectoral issue that can't be resolved by looking at agriculture alone. Gender is a factor. Women are at the heart of the issue because they make up well over half of the agricultural work force in the continent. In this regard, empowering women is central because in fact women account for a majority of subsistence farmers. They will therefore be decisive in ending hunger across Africa.

The meeting concluded that it is possible to end hunger in Africa, with the full support of governments to inculcate the necessary policy recommendations. The Summit adopted a declaration pledging its political commitment to end hunger in Africa by 2025 by sustaining the CAADP momentum. It calls for strengthened systems for inter-sectoral collaboration; to increase and reprioritize public investment in agricultural development, and to catalyze private investment. The conference reaffirmed its commitment to implement the Maputo Declaration of July 2003 on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa, as outlined in the CAADP framework; to promote access to national funds; encourage contributions to the Africa Solidarity Trust Fund for Food Security, launched in Brazzaville in April 2012 at the FAO Africa Regional Conference; and strengthen actions to operationalize the partnership for a Renewed Unified Approach to End Hunger in Africa through CAADP and related processes. The declaration calls for support for building the Renewed Partnership to End Hunger in Africa by 2025; and for member states in the adoption, adaptation and up-scaling of best practices to advance agricultural progress across Africa and promote South-South co-operation. And it requests development partners to strengthen the Renewed Partnership for Ending Hunger in Africa within the CAADP framework. Overall, the conference committed itself to the roadmap to be implemented primarily with the resources of the continent and the assistance of Africa's technical and development partners.



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Symposium on the Nile at Addis Ababa University

Addis Ababa University organized a symposium on the Nile on Friday last week (June 28th) as part of its aim to create a platform for discussion of current issues in academia, the diplomatic community and development partners. For the Nile Symposium five different themes were selected and scholars from various faculties presented their researches in a total of twelve papers.

The first theme of the symposium was "the past, current and future water resources' base of the Nile." Scientific findings on the hydrology, geology and metrology of the Nile were presented. The Director of the Ethiopian Institute of Water Resources, Dr. Yilma Seleshi spoke about the Hydrology of the Nile, emphasizing that the Nile River Basin riparian countries are all facing water stress. His research findings indicated that the countries in the basin need to utilize their common resource in a reasonable and sustainable manner. He discussed the benefits of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam for the riparian countries and underlined its comparative advantages. From the School of Earth Sciences, Dr. Seifu Kebede presented his research on "Water Resource Base and Water Balances". He highlighted the importance of groundwater as an integral part of the water resource base of a river basin, pointing out that incorporating ground water resources in total water budget accounting could help the basin countries maximize their water availability. Scientific data on the ground water balance in the region clearly shows that Sudan and Egypt have comparative advantages. Dr. Seifu concluded that accelerated ground water development would enable the basin countries to increase the water balance and use the resource for irrigation. The third presentation focused on the Rainfall Patterns over the Nile Basin. Dr. Gizaw Mengestie (PHD) spoke about the climate of the Nile Basin "which is characterized by strong longitudinal wetness gradients." The projected climate changes for the Nile Basin indicate that there will be 2-40c temperature increase. The rainfall pattern in the Basin appears to be uncertain and hence building dams such as the Ethiopia Renaissance Dam can play a positive role in reducing the impacts of irregularities.

The second sub-theme focused on dam-safety and geological hazards. Dr. Asefawossen Asrat (PHD) discussed the rock formations along the Abay Gorge and the area around the site of the GERD. He asserted that the dam was being constructed on a naturally safe and indeed an ideal foundation. He noted that experts from the Institute of Geophysics had carried out further research. According to the presentation, the natural resource base of the Blue Nile Basin is under intense pressure from unsustainable farming practices, water management, population growth and climate change. The livelihoods of many farming communities and pastoralists in Ethiopia face increasing constraint related to land degradation. The sedimentation of irrigation canals and reservoirs in Sudan and Egypt is resulting in soil fertility decline and water scarcity. The current levels of erosion in Ethiopia are causing irreversible levels of land degradation and add a significant cost to Egypt and Sudan for dredging canals and reservoirs due to sedimentation. The conclusion is that there is growing pressure on water resources in the Blue Nile region and this necessitates collaboration. In addition, climate change is also expected to affect the functioning and operation of existing water infrastructure, including hydropower, structural flood defenses, drainage and irrigation systems.



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The third part of the discussion focused on the environmental and socio-economic benefits of the Nile River Basin. The presentation on the environmental impact stressed that cooperation over water is essential if countries are to develop and reduce their vulnerability to climate change. The countries in the Nile Basin need to use water resource sustainably and expand their water infrastructure that requires managing the resources sustainably by considering, reconciling, and synergizing their various interests and activities. In terms of economic benefits, The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam could be seen as a unique opportunity for cooperation for sustainable and equitable utilization of the Nile water. The integrated landscape approach offers a strategy to achieve climate-smart agriculture objectives at full scale and in all dimensions. This approach offers a new opportunity for mutually beneficial engagement among scientists and researchers in Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan and allow for the realization of sustainable development in the region. In addition, it will assist in the expansion and diversification of tourism, one of the fastest growing economic sectors.

The discussion on the hydro policies of the Nile highlighted the current opportunities and challenges. Dr. Derje Zeleke (PHD) noted that the launching of the Nile Basin Initiative had ushered in a new era of hope and optimism, and the decade-long negotiations on a permanent legal and institutional framework, the Comprehensive Framework Agreement (CFA), had resulted in a new legal basis even if there was still a lack of consensus over the concept of "water security". He explained that "water security" was a non-legal, indeterminate concept alien to international water law. He also argued that it had no legal significance in terms of alleged limitations on the use of water by Nile riparian states, or of their sovereign right to equitable utilization of the Nile waters for non-consumptive as well as consumptive purposes.

Dr. Yakob Arsano (PHD) discussed the hydro-politics of the Nile which he said had experienced successive eras of controversies and diplomatic doldrums. However, in recent years the Nile Basin governments had intensively worked towards viable cooperation. He stressed that the new diplomatic initiative of the previous decade was now enshrined in the concepts of agreed "shared vision" and "subsidiary action programs". Dr. Yakob noted that the new era of diplomacy that the Nile riparian nations have embarked on had become irreversible. The upstream-downstream negotiations have followed the ideals of unity, integrity and continuity of the shared Nile waters.

The entire discussion at the Symposium was welcomed by participants who found the research findings regarding the River Basin highly enlightening. There was agreement that the discussions and conclusions clearly demonstrated that the only viable option for the riparian countries was co-operation.



Unjustified statements about GERD by Egyptian “experts”

Recently, a group of academics at Cairo University (the Group of Nile Basin)NB) issued statements about the Grand Ethiopia Renaissance Dam (GERD) claiming that there were problems over the sufficiency of structural studies for the Dam, a lack of hydrological investigations and the absence of any environmental impact assessment for Sudan and Egypt. The group also alleged that the Ethiopian government was not willing to show details of studies concerning the reliability of the Dam and claimed it was unclear whether the Dam met the minimum requirements of international standards for its size.

These allegations were, of course, comprehensively rubbished by the final report of the International Panel of Experts. The claims of the Group of Nile Basin appear no more than a deliberate attempt to jump on the bandwagon of those who have tried to politicize the discussions for short-sighted political reasons, in support of the recent outspoken rhetoric from some senior Egyptian politicians, apparently aiming to instigating direct attacks on the people and government of Ethiopia. The statements are ill-motivated and ill-considered as well as seriously inaccurate. We have already published an article on our website earlier in the week giving details to correct the deliberate misinformation of these comments. The most pertinent facts and obvious truths about the effects of the GERD are also noted here. The GERD will neither consume nor divert water. Water will be stored behind the dam and pass through the turbines more or less uniformly throughout the year and generate energy. It is not planned for irrigation and therefore will not divert water out of the Nile Basin, as have the lower riparian dams at Toshka and Sinai. The evaporation loss that GERD will incur is significantly lower than the amount it will save from evaporation loss. Other savings of water will come from prevention of flooding during high flood seasons and limiting the seepage or dumping of water into the desert through spillways. GERD storage will add over 5% to 10% saving to the system. Overall, the regulated flow produced by the GERD will provide flood protection, irrigation expansion, water use efficiency, sediment load reduction, affordable clean power, energy uplift, improved navigation, and other gains to Egypt and Sudan.

The dam design, construction and management follow international standards. It is not in an earthquake prone area and it poses no such danger as some ill-informed individuals have claimed. Even so, it is designed to meet all possible seismic conditions and any reservoir-induced seismicity due to the weight of stored water. Ethiopia is a responsible member of the international community and is entirely unwilling to risk the safety of its neighbors, nor is it intending to risk the investment of billions of people’s hard earned money. The GERD is being constructed under an Engineering, Procurement and Construction contract arrangement following the highest standards and technology as the International Panel of Experts observed during their four visits to the GERD during their year-long investigation. It is also using flow data recorded at the border with Sudan over more than 90 years identifying the wettest years of 1916, 1917, 1929 and 1988 and the driest years of 1913 and 1984. Other key inflow data, provided by the White Nile at Morgen and the Atbara at Nile Junction, have been used to simulate GERD’s impact on the High Aswan Dam (HAD).



Evaporation and rainfall estimates for the GERD reservoir have also been fully considered, and the spillway design, the Probable Maximum Flood and diversion flood estimates fulfill the highest safety requirements that International Commission on Large Dams recommends.

The GERD will have 74 billion cubic meter (BCM) storage capacity and about 60 BCM live storage, with 14 BCM reserved for filling by sediment. The 60 BCM is mostly made up of renewable water sources to be released every year. If the GERD filling coincides with wet years in sequence there will be no concern for anybody. If, however, the GERD filling coincides with a dry year sequence, then the filling strategy will be revised to minimize downstream impact. In either case, there is no reason to worry that farmers in Egypt will be adversely affected. The High Aswan Dam, with over 130 BCM live storage, is designed to sustain two years water needs for Egypt without any inflow. Any evaluation of the risks needs to factor in the potential of the HAD, and claims that so many hectares will be affected or so many farmers will be out of work, are no more than exaggerated fear-mongering.

The benefits Ethiopia expects from GERD are self evident and there is no need to reiterate them here. The article, however notes a number of specific benefits for the Sudan and for Egypt. For Sudan they include reducing the impact of recurrent floods, saving lives and avoiding flood damage running into millions of dollars along the 1,000 km stretch from the Ethiopia-Sudan border to Khartoum and beyond. Floods in 2007 caused major damage and affected more than 365,000 people, killing over 60. GERD will even out the flow at the Sudan border by approximately 35 %, and the maximum monthly flow at Khartoum by approximately 25 %. It will in fact offer a regulated flow of water which will also allow Sudanese irrigation to be expanded significantly with no additional investment in water storage. Downstream dams and spillways will be relieved from major flood spills, and the safety of the downstream dams (Rosieres, Sennar, Merowi, and the High Aswan Dam) will be assured.

GERD will store 74 billion cubic meters (BCM), with a live storage of about 60BCM able to benefit Egypt and Sudan during drought periods. More constant flows throughout the year will reduce losses from infiltration and evaporation all along the river. GERD will capture sediment, protecting irrigation canals and equipment from damage caused by sedimentation. The life of Roseires, Sennar and Merowe dams' will be extended for at least a century beyond their original design life. Costs of reservoir and canal dredging will drop by more than 60% with the latter alone saving Sudan over US\$30 million a year. Overall, the GERD will improve Sudan's dams' efficiency and optimize water use, and increase the energy generation of Sudan's hydropower dams. GERD will also provide for new energy potential in the Sudan as a number of run-off river plants could be developed and its hydropower system will allow Sudan to put into the grid variable renewable wind and solar energy sources.

There are whole series of similar benefits for Egypt, making complete nonsense of any assertions that Egypt will be negatively affected by the GERD. These include significant water saving and enhanced water management. GERD will increase the total storage capacity along the Nile River, all of which is ultimately available to Egypt. Recent studies show that during drought years, such as 1983-1985, irrigation failure in Egypt would significantly decrease if there was access to the additional system storage created by GERD.

GERD will reduce hydrological variability with sequences of drought and flood years and end any spillage of excess flood water into the desert of the Toshka valley to avoid any overtopping of HAD and the threat of potential disaster for major cities like Cairo. In 1998-2002 spillage through the spillways reached 41 BCM. Overall system storage increase due to GERD will provide storage buffers and new additional sources of water.

The increased routing capacity (flood storage capacity) of the Nile Basin will also be increased with the implementation of GERD. The increased routing capacity will improve the flood control downstream. The risk of HAD overtopping or spillage will be eliminated by the regulation of the flow. HAD inflows will increase from November to June, and decrease from July to October, and will in fact become more constant throughout the year, offering possibilities to optimize water resource management. This will also allow irrigation schedules to be modified to optimize and improve agricultural productivity. There will also be reduced evaporation effects with HAD losses being reduced to 9.5 BCMs a year from about 10.8 BCMs a year. Sedimentation control will extend the design life of the High Aswan Dam by more than a century. GERD regulation of the flow will allow longer periods of navigation on the Nile downstream with important benefits for tourism; and with the power interconnections linked, Egypt will also be able to put additional variable energy sources into the grid.

On the wider regional level GERD also offers the additional benefits of emission reduction and clean energy production and of capturing Climate Change-related Opportunities in managing possible increased rainfall in the Ethiopian highlands. The energy generated by the GERD will enhance regional and economic integration through power trading and interconnections, and provide significant energy contributions to the regional East and Northern Africa power pool. The GERD will in fact pioneer a new era of cooperative regional development and improved water management, significantly increasing the collective resilience of the Nile Basin nations to the anticipated Climate Change impacts.

The GERD, in fact, is a win-win undertaking. Egypt, like Sudan, and like Ethiopia, will benefit in multiple ways. The facts are as detailed above. Ethiopia is a responsible nation, the design of the GERD is adequate and the planned robust filling strategy will not lead to any appreciable harm to the downstream countries.



The Congressional hearing on “Ethiopia after Meles”

Last week, a technical error meant we failed to attach comment on some of the testimony delivered at the hearing of the US Congressional Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, chaired by Congressman Smith on June 20th. The subject of the hearing was “Ethiopia after Meles: The Future of Democracy and Human Rights”. The testimonies given at the hearing provided significant contrast between those who provided careful, unbiased and balanced comment and those members of opposition groups making political statements based on unproven allegations and claims. The former were distinguished by the use of accurate facts provided by impartial observers with accurate knowledge of the situation; the latter included politically involved figures, one of whom has publicly committed himself to the armed overthrow of the Ethiopia Government, to terrorist activities and the solicitation of support from the Government of Eritrea, which is equally committed to efforts to destabilize Ethiopia and is indeed under UN sanctions for its continued efforts to do this and for its support for terrorist activities in Somalia. Dr. Berhanu, the head of Ginbot 7 has been identified as a terrorist by the Government and his Ginbot 7 organization is now proscribed by the government and indeed by IGAD.

Among those who provided comment based on factual information were the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Ambassador Yamamoto, at which we looked at last week, USAID’s Assistant Administrator for Africa, Earl Gast, and Dr. Peter Pham, Director of the Michael S. Ansari Africa Center, Atlantic College. Mr. Gast detailed USAID’s assistance in the Productive Safety Net Program which had successfully prevented over seven million people from slipping into crisis during the 2011-12 drought. He noted the Ethiopian Government’s comprehensive development plans focused on agriculture-led economic growth as a long-lasting solution to chronic poverty and food insecurity, and said USAID programs in Ethiopia had achieved remarkable results in support of the government’s priorities. It had helped to train and deploy over 32,000 health extension workers and 4,000 health officers and worked closely with the Government to improve its education system “with impressive results”. It was also fostering opportunities for dialogue about public participation and transparency, and achieving positive effects.

Dr. Pham said he believed there had been a shift in Ethiopia’s political evolution, but he added this would be “imperceptible to those who do not track developments closely, to say nothing of those who view them through ideological blinders.” He noted that the Prime Minister had recently launched high profile moves against corruption, and offered to talk unconditionally with Eritrea. There had also been a peaceful demonstration by the opposition Semayawi (“Blue”) party, a few days earlier.

Dr. Pham underlined the importance of Ethiopia for US national interests in Africa and for the geopolitically sensitive Horn of Africa, bordering as it does some of the more politically and economically challenged states on the continent. He detailed Ethiopia’s “ambitious hydropower construction program to harness the potential of [the Nile] bearing the promise of clean, renewable energy not only for Ethiopia, but for many of its neighbors” He underlined the way Ethiopia had gone out of its way to reach out to Sudan and Egypt through the International Panel of Experts.



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He said Ethiopia had always been a strong ally against terror; and he noted that while the 2010 election results were lopsided (the EPRDF won 499 seats (not 547), with seven other parties or coalitions and a lone independent picked up 48 seats), he pointed out that Ethiopia's record compared very favorably to its neighbors.

Dr. Pham noted that there were a number of contentious issues but he clarified his comments on these with detailed and accurate information. With reference to "land grabs", for example, he pointed out that many of the reports originated in "the press releases of self-appointed "watchdog" groups seeking publicity for the extended op-eds masquerading as scientific studies which are the stock in trade of a number of these organizations." The facts on the ground, he pointed out, simply do not support the allegations made. In fact, in the several years during which Ethiopia has been leasing land for large-scale agriculture investment (to help assure Ethiopia's food security), the total of land leased, to only 234 foreign investors, including members of the Ethiopian Diaspora, is 395,000 hectare, just over 10% of the land eligible for such leases under the government's program. It sum it amounts to barely half of 1% percent of the total arable land in the country.

Dr. Pham also pointed out that Ethiopia's robust economic growth owed a great deal to the strong performance of its agricultural sector. This made it highly unlikely, indeed implausible, that the "government had it "in" for the estimated 13 to 15 million smallholders who produce more than 95 percent of agricultural output, which in turn contributes nearly half of the national GDP and even larger proportions to employment and export earnings." The Growth and Transformation Plan, he added, aims to double the national economy by doubling agricultural output and, simultaneously, sustainably increase both rural incomes and national food security.

Dr. Pham stressed Africa was more important than ever to the security and prosperity of the international community today, and to the United States in particular and this was equally true of Ethiopia, the host of the African Union. Of course, he said, there were things people might wish to see done differently, perhaps better, with respect to the ongoing social, economic, and political development of Ethiopia. At the same time, he emphasized, policymakers and analysts in the United States and in Ethiopia's other international partners should be politically realistic about their own interests and those of the peoples of Ethiopia. They should temper judgmental impulses, and devote their energies to where they could be most effective to encourage, facilitate, and sustain continued stability and progress in Ethiopia and beyond.

Dr. Pham's comments were sensible and balanced, and above all based on accurate facts. They were in sharp contrast to the inaccurate and politically partisan statements of others who testified. Descriptions of the Charities and Societies Proclamation or the Anti-Terrorism law as "exceptionally draconian" merely make it clear people have not read either these or similar laws in other countries. What is referred to as a "brazen and relentless assault on free expression and access to information" simply doesn't exist as a glance at the output of the free press in Addis Ababa would demonstrate. There is, by any impartial and unbiased interpretation, a free press in Ethiopia. Ethiopia now has 6 television services, four regionally based with national television news and programs in half a dozen local languages as well providing air time for private productions.



There are 3 medium wave stations, and thirty-one FM radio services, almost half privately owned, as well as 16 community radio stations. Transmissions are in nearly 50 languages. Within the next three years another six regional TV stations will be launched as well as several more public, private and community radio stations. There are some 42 privately-owned newspapers and magazines at national level, including weekly and monthly productions. The number of Internet subscribers and mobile phone users are increasing dramatically every year. The reporting and comment of the press, in both English and Amharic, underline the fact that there are plenty of journalists, “brave enough to practice their trade with integrity” in Ethiopia. Suggestions to the contrary are a serious insult to the many hundreds working there.

It is, of course, an outright lie to say that Ethiopia, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, is the leading jailer of journalists in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Eritrea there are an estimated 30 journalists currently detained – all it might be added without trial or charge. Incidentally, nobody can seriously regard the opposition Ethiopian Satellite Television (ESAT) as an independent media outlet after the appearance of a recording of Dr. Berhanu, head of Ginbot 7, issuing orders on its editorial activity. This also shows him apparently briefing officials of Ginbot 7 organization on the receipt of funds from Eritrea, in this case \$500,000 for six months. These funds are apparently to be used for the use of ESAT, and for Ginbot 7 to organize “military and intelligence works” including the setting up of teams for military operation. Ginbot 7, an organization dedicated to violence and to an alliance with Eritrea, a country that considers itself at war with Ethiopia, was proscribed as a terrorist organization after some of its members were arrested while planning a bombing and assassination campaign in 2009. The other use for these funds identified in the recording is “to work on Congress and through lobby groups to create serious doubt and questions about the Ethiopian Government”. Dr. Berhanu makes no mention of any of this or of Ginbot 7 and its activities in his testimony to the Congressional hearing.

It is also worth noting that these detractors are all-too-prepared to twist or deny events in Ethiopia. Parliament, for example, is very obviously not “a rubber stamp” organization, and indeed has demonstrated significant activity as a functional democratic institution, carrying out its duty of questioning government with considerable vigor and aplomb. The claim that one ethnic group and its political party “continues to command an unchecked monopoly on the military and security forces” is very obvious nonsense. The Government did not interfere in any way in the last elections of the Muslim Shura, nor can those arrested after a series of demonstrations at several mosques be considered elected leaders of the Muslim community; they were a self-appointed group involved in a number of violent incidents. Allegations of forced displacement of indigenous people, claimed by opposition sources and advocacy groups, have been repeatedly disproved by independent investigations by donors and others. Advocacy organizations who largely depend upon external sources and exiled politicians including members of such parties as Ginbot 7 all-too-often exaggerate specific incidents into wider generalizations to support their preconceived scenarios of political “relevance”. They frequently use the pattern of the journalist who sees a hundred people crossing a border one day, and writes a story about 3,000 a month “flooding across the border” or the thousands, even tens of thousands fleeing every year. It is a common technique employed by advocacy organizations, journalists or ‘politicians’ alike, to exaggerate their case.



Millennium Development Goals within reach says United Nations but more effort needed

The United Nations report on the progress achieved in Millennium Development Goal (MDG) achievement was released on July 1st. It says that countries have made big strides to meet the eight anti-poverty targets by 2015, but it adds that nations need to step up their efforts in order to fully achieve the targets in the remaining period. Overall, according to the report, the world has already reached the poverty reduction and drinking water targets five years ahead of schedule at the global level. The proportion of people living in extreme poverty has now been halved and the proportion of the global population using drinking water reached 89% in 2010, up from 76% in 1990. The report also shows that between 2000 and 2010, mortality rates from malaria fell by over 25%, preventing the death of some 1.1 million people. Between 1995 and 2011, a total of 51 million tuberculosis patients were treated with 20 million lives being saved.

The report notes that new infections from HIV/AIDS have declined with the provision of antiretroviral therapy increasing, making universal access to treatment reachable and affordable. Despite steep challenges, the report also indicates that a number of countries with very high rates of child mortality in 1990 have now defied the odds. Countries like Ethiopia, Madagascar, Malawi, Niger and Rwanda in sub-Saharan Africa, and Bhutan and Nepal in Southern Asia, have seen reductions of at least 60%. The proportion of undernourished people worldwide has decreased from 23.2% in 1990-1992 to 14.9% in 2010-2012. Given reinvigorated efforts, the target of halving the percentage of people suffering from hunger by 2015 appears to be within reach, says the report.

Nevertheless, despite these achievements, the report indicates that countries are falling short on other targets including those regarding maternal health, providing universal access to education, expanding access to sanitation and achieving gender parity. The report also points out that if the MDG targets are to be met, efforts must concentrate on those countries and regions where the most child deaths occur. Again, according to the report, of the 49 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, only eight (Botswana, Cape Verde, Ethiopia, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Nigeria and Rwanda) are expected to achieve the MDG targets if current trends continue unchanged.

The report indicates that progress with regard to environmental sustainability hasn't been encouraging as the challenges of global emissions of carbon dioxide continue to increase. The report clearly points out that if the world is to reach all targets of the MDGs in the remaining time frame, the international community needs to redouble its efforts to sustain the gains, building on the achievements of the MDGs already made so far.

The report will no doubt help raise awareness of the latest data available with regard to progress made and the challenges that remain in meeting the MDGs. As the international community has already embarked on the path to formulate a Post-2015 Development Framework, the report will be helpful to provide additional insight to deliberations over the next two years. The High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, which was set up by the Secretary-General of the United Nations a year ago, handed in its report last month. The Panel has done a commendable job in laying the foundation for the Post-2015 Development Framework, building on what has been achieved and identifying new and emerging challenges.



The work of the Panel will now be considered by member states and other stakeholders for further deliberation. The intergovernmental processes between now and 2015 will provide opportunities to further refine the recommendations of the Panel's report.



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Ethiopia signs a landmark Treaty for Visually Impaired Persons

The World Intellectual Property Organization's Diplomatic Conference for Visually Impaired Persons concluded on June 28th in Marrakesh, Morocco, with a signing ceremony for the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works by Visually Impaired Persons and Persons with Print Disabilities, to facilitate access to published materials by persons who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled.

The Ethiopian delegation was led by Ambassador Minelik Alemu Getahun, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland. The delegation participated in the negotiations for this historic multilateral treaty that has established copyright exceptions and limitations for blind and visually impaired or otherwise print disabled people.

The new treaty will help in the distribution of specially formatted books for the blind and visually impaired in different countries by removing copyright law constraints and difficulties. It will further promote sharing books in any format for the blind or visually impaired and is expected to alleviate the book shortages experienced by many of the estimated 3.14 million people suffering from such disabilities across the world.

The Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons who are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled, requires parties to adopt national law provisions that permit the reproduction, distribution and making available published works in accessible formats without having to seek permission from copyright holders in each case. The treaty also assures authors and publishers that the system will not expose their published works to misuse or distribution to anyone other than the intended beneficiaries.

This treaty was signed by over 51 WIPO member states, including Ethiopia. Twenty ratifications are necessary for its entry into force. The treaty will have a far-reaching impact on the situation of visually impaired persons in developing countries like Ethiopia.



About

A Week in the Horn, established in 2007, is a weekly online publication dedicated to regional developments in the Horn of Africa. Its aim is to promote good will and brotherly relations between states in the region by highlighting events and publicizing news stories. It features detailed commentary, analysis as well as intelligent discussion of weekly developments throughout the region.

A Week in the Horn is essential reading for policymakers, the diplomatic community, corporate leaders, academia and interested citizens of the region.

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