

OUR GRAND RENAISSANCE DAM (GERD) IS A BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE OF THE NEXT GENERATION

By

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Our Grand Renaissance Dam (GERD) was launched in 2011 and when finished, it will be the largest hydro-electric power plant in Africa and the 8th largest in the world by the capacity of its reservoir and will create the 2nd largest reservoir on the Nile. The GERD is our largest nation building project that will generate energy, provide water for irrigation and control flooding. It is currently 70% complete and expected to start operation in 2017. GERD will have the capacity to generate over 6000 mega watts electricity and our nation can earn \$1 billion a year exporting power from the GERD. Ethiopia is using its own domestic resources to build the GERD. The GERD has become a national pride that will benefit the entire nation. Our late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi called the GERD “An expression of our commitment to the benefit of all the countries of the Nile basin”.

Our Grand Renaissance Dam is our future, the future of our young generation. It is a sign and a symbol of courage, commitment, perseverance and a pride of our nation and our people. It is also a pride not only of our nation and our people but also of our continent as well. GERD is a project that personifies an African talent, an African commitment, an African courage and dignity.. This project is above and beyond a grand project.

For a very long period of time, it has been a dream and a wish of a generation of every Ethiopian from coast to coast to benefit from the Nile. Ethiopians have chanted for it, cried for it, praised it and at times cursed it for not fulfilling their dreams, aspirations and their wishes and out of anger and anguish for not benefiting from this huge resource but their wish and their dream never died despite all odds. Ethiopians from coast to coast here at home and abroad never gave up their dreams and their hope. They always thought that one day their dream will be a reality. One day one great Ethiopian will come

up with a workable, irreversible and implementable solution and will make their dream a reality. That great dreamer who made his dream and his peoples' dream a reality was our late Great leader Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. Meles Zenawi had an accurate depiction, unwavering incites and commitment coupled with high intellectual caliber to his national interest and his country's developmental endeavor. Unlike our previous Great leaders who always thought of making their dreams a reality but unfortunately were not able to see the light at the end of the tunnel in this regard, Meles came up with a workable solution to make his dream a reality. He was the architect, the engineer and the implementer of this great National Project from the very outset and what a dream it has been!

One day, that great man dreamt of one great thing. He dreamt of constructing the largest power dam in the continent and one of the largest in the world. He dreamt of constructing the one and only: The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. He then wanted his dream to come true and to be materialized. As always, he was quite confident and quite sure that his dream will come true but then, there existed variety of obstacles and impediments on the way of putting the dream to action. For the dream to be materialized, among others, it needed time, energy, technical and technological knowhow and more importantly, it needed huge finance., In spite of all those challenges, that great dreamer never stopped believing of making his dream a reality. In fact, he became stronger and stronger and with time he was absolutely confident that his dream will become a reality because that great man always depended and always believed on the capacity and on the ability of his people and his people alone.

The building of the dam is not an easy task. It entails a combination of many things. Most importantly, it needs millions of dollars that will be generated primarily from the people at large and if possible from external funding both in terms of borrowing and/or assistance; however, there are always impediments with regard to external funding or outside finance and at times, those impediments can become total obstacles as well. However, that great man was quite confident of overcoming any and every obstacles that may exist because he was quite sure that with his people, he knew his dream can

become a reality. As a result, he started to design the plan, he started to choose the site and then started to do the main thing i.e. to approach and address the main players of this great dream and great project: his people: The Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and Peoples. As he always depended on his people, he told his people about his dream of constructing the largest dam in Africa and one of the largest in the world: The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. He told his people that Ethiopians using their resources, energy, finance, manpower, technical and technological knowledge; they can indeed depend on themselves and construct this grand hydro-electric power Dam once and for all. Once his people learn about this grand project, they responded positively and delightfully in unprecedented and extraordinary manner here at home and abroad. They felt very proud of themselves, their leader and became more and more resilient of any obstacles that may come on the way and became more and more confident of making the dream a reality. And then, the job has started.

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance dam is now 70% complete and the job goes on twenty four hours nonstop. As the Dam is now nearing to completion, Ethiopians are currently not only seeing the light at the end of the tunnel but indeed getting closer and closer to touch the light at the end of the tunnel. Once completed, the Dam will make significant contribution towards the overall betterment of lives and livelihoods of the public at large here back home and will also assist neighboring countries by providing them low cost power energy much needed for their overall developmental endeavors.

The Ethiopian people are now living and breathing the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam has now become an expression of greatness, dignity, self confidence and pride of the Ethiopian people. In fact, it has physiological bearings, a burning conviction and a unifying spirit amongst the people that it has now become a way of life to all Ethiopians from coast to coast. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam demonstrates confidence, self respect and

commitment. It is the way forward for greatness of our nation and our people. The public at large believes that the Dam is their future and the future of their children and grand children; therefore, they want to stand on guard for it and they are determined more than ever to continue supporting the construction of the Dam in every way, shape or form until they see its completion.

Once completed, the dam will have a mesmerizing impact on the nation and abroad and Ethiopians will be proud of themselves and their accomplishment. Our ancestors made us proud among others by securing our sovereignty and by defeating and driving away foreign aggressors at the battle of Adwa. By doing so, they made history for themselves. Now, this generation has the opportunity to make history. Here is the chance of a life time that must not be missed and that everyone must contribute supporting the construction of the Dam in any way, shape or form.

It is therefore time for this generation to make history for themselves, their children and their grand children. It is now history in the making for all Ethiopians and friends and allies of Ethiopia. What a chance! What an opportunity! No one should let it go; everyone must act and must act right now.

Ethiopians feel that this grand project is the base and cornerstone for greatness and prosperity of our people and our nation as it will scale up and lift up the developmental endeavors of our people and our nation, it is a sign and symbol of unity of the Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and Peoples because the impact of this grand project is varied and enormous. It will among others generate massive amount of electric power that will be used here at home and abroad. Therefore, we should not be complacent about the continuity of the project. The work has to continue with the highest tenacity and vigor in order to finish what we have done already. There is no turning back; the only way to go is to go forward and finish the job. For that, all Ethiopians from within and abroad: the Diaspora community has to join hands to enhance and complete the construction of this Grand National Project. This project will among others bring about socio-economic and political leverage and pride to our people and to our

nation. This project will open the path to Ethiopian greatness and prosperity. This will also remind all friends alike in a clear and unequivocal term that there is no turning back but moving forward towards progress and prosperity. It is a symbol of hope and bright future for our people and our nation.

Here, I would like to thank all the good men and women working at the site who possess the trade mark of commitment, hard work, courage and perseverance. While enduring very hard climatic conditions, they are doing an excellent job with no hesitation and with no compliant. They work day in and day out with joy and jubilation. They are our heroes and heroines and we owe them a lot.