

**Press Release N°037/2013****Africa urged to greater collaboration to utilize its water resources for development**

**Addis Ababa, 16<sup>th</sup> April 2013:** Endowed with some of world's greatest waterways, Africa need to unlock its vast potential to alleviate poverty and achieve sustainable socio-economic development. That was focus of the Conference of Water Storage and Hydropower Development in Africa (AFRICA 2013), which kicks off today, Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2013, at the AU Headquarter, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Held under the auspices of the Ministry of Water and Energy of Ethiopia, with support of the African Union and UN Economic Commission for Africa, the three-day Conference is organized by Aqua Media International, in partnership with International Journal of Hydropower & Dams, and International Commission on Large Dams. It aims to discuss in depth Africa hydropower development.



Dr. Elham M.A. IBRAHIM, Commissioner of Infrastructure and Energy of the African Union Commission, stated in her opening remarks that more than half Billion people on the continent have no access to modern energy sources, which constitutes a big challenge for the continent to be competitive and to combat poverty more effectively.

The Africa Union, is celebrating its 50th anniversary under the theme "Pan Africanism and African Renaissance" she added, and it "is now tirelessly directing its efforts to implementing the development and integration agenda by establishing policies and plans of action which will facilitate socio-economic development and stability of the continent", which cannot be realized without working together and joining efforts.

Africa 2013 will discuss integrated regional development as well as issues relating to hydro potential, development activities and priorities, climate change analysis and mitigation of extreme climatic events, financial and economic issues, environment and sustainability issues, including sedimentation management and social issues and public awareness.

There will be a focus on four major river basins of Africa (Nile, Congo, Niger and Zambezi) and some important recent or current projects to review experience of integrated river basin development.

Mr. Alemayehu Tegen, Minister of Water and energy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and host of the International conference emphasized on the fact that decision makers should focus on the resource mobilization and on Innovative project structures favoring cost recovery. He added the Importance of the implementations of a wide mix of renewable energy such as wind, hydro power, solar and biomass as well as improving reliability and affordability.

On his part, Mr. Demeke Mekonen, Deputy Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Minister of Education explained how the absence of electricity is a “gender burden” on rural areas and affecting mostly women. He added that the three pillars, Hydro Power, biomass and reforestation are one of the main priorities.



High on the Conference agenda also will be AU Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA). The PIDA initiative is mainly based on the accelerated implementation of at least eight major regional hydro schemes and their association transmission systems, which are moving ahead as priority projects.

The Conference attended by High-level delegations and experts from water and power ministries and authorities from the Member States of the African Union (AU), and all parts of the world as well as representative from financial institutions including the World Bank, African Development Bank, ICA, EU-Africa Partnership, Agence Française de Développement, and various African regional development banks and others.

The Conference will end its deliberations Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2013.

For further information, consult AU website: [www.au.int](http://www.au.int)