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Statement of Dr. Elham M.A. Ibrahim

AU Commissioner for Infrastructure & Energy

At the Conference on Hydropower for Sustainable Development 2011

Addis Ababa, 31 March 2011

- Your Excellency Mr. Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia,
- Your Excellency Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, Under-Secretary General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa,
- Your Excellency Mr. ^{الأمير تيجينو} Alamayehu Tegenu, Minister of Water and Energy, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia,
- Your Excellencies Ministers,
- Your Excellencies Ambassadors,
- Ladies and Gentlemen Representing the Diplomatic Missions,
- Distinguished Participants and Guests,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour and privilege for me to represent the African Union Commission and to address this important gathering on the occasion of the Conference on "Hydropower for Sustainable Development 2011".

On behalf of H.E. Dr. Jean Ping, Chairperson of the African Union Commission/and on my own behalf, I would like to pay a well-deserved tribute to H.E. Mr. Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia/for taking the laudable initiative to convene this *important* Conference.

I would like also to express my appreciation to all institutions that have been working relentlessly since four months/to make this Conference a success./I am particularly happy that the African Union Commission/has been associated to this undertaking.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Hydropower
This Conference is taking place at the appropriate time as a number of countries/and their development partners are taking initiatives to launch their hydropower projects, after a long period of uncertainties/and lack of interest from financial institutions in financing hydropower projects.

In this regard, I would like to echo the countries of the Eastern and Southern Africa sub-regions, who are welcoming the current proactive policy, pursued by the Ethiopian Government under the leadership of H.E. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi for the construction of 15,000 MW hydroelectric power facilities in ten (10) years.

These countries will shortly enjoy the clean and cheap hydropower electricity and contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Indeed, the presence of honourable Ministers responsible for Energy at this Conference is a testimony of the great expectations placed in this programme.

This Conference is also taking place at a time when initiatives for the development of Grand Inga hydropower scheme are being launched in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In this regard, the studies on the optimal development of Inga site which are financed by the African Development Bank have just started.

Similarly, the technical assistance to the African Union Commission for the development of strategies for promoting the Grand Inga hydropower project financed within the framework of the Africa-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP) is in place since two months. Consultations held between DRC Authorities, the African Development Bank and the African Union Commission early this month have helped to better coordinate the various interventions.

To this end, I would like to welcome the presence of a senior DRC representative as a testimony of the commitment of the DRC government to develop the vast hydropower potential of the country not only for the welfare of the Congolese people but also contribute to energy integration across the African continent.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In spite of the efforts made by the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, regional economic communities, power pools, river basins organizations and the development partners to develop hydropower projects, many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are still faced with acute

energy crisis and only a small portion of the available hydropower potential estimated at 7% has been developed to date.

This situation compelled the African Union Commission to announce the official launch of the "Hydropower 2020" Initiative on the sidelines of the 12th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union held in Addis Ababa in February 2009. The main theme was on "Infrastructure Development in Africa". The major outcome was the Declaration on "Development of Transport and Energy Infrastructure in Africa"

For the implementation of this initiative, the African Union Commission is committed to support and promote the exploitation and development of the vast hydroelectric potential of the major river basins in Africa, through the construction of hydropower plants and interconnection of high voltage power transmission networks between 2010 and 2020, to ensure African people's access to reliable and affordable electrical energy.

This objective is shared by the Africa-EU Renewable Energy Cooperation Programme launched by the African and European Energy Ministers in Vienna, Austria in September 2010. The objective of this programme is,

among others, to add a capacity of 10,000 MW hydroelectric power facilities by 2020.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to call upon Africa's development partners to support these initiatives through removing all the constraints hindering the development of major hydropower projects in the continent. I would also like to call upon them for removing the constraints associated with the mobilization of financial resources for financing these projects.

On its part, the African Union Commission has commissioned studies on the creation of a continental coordination structure for the development of major integrative hydropower projects. It has also contributed to put in place the Conference Energy Ministers in Africa (CEMA) in November 2010 in Maputo, Mozambique whose main role will be to adopt and coordinate energy policies at regional and continental levels.

It is also envisaged to organize within CEMA auspices, an African Energy Investment Forum and an Africa Energy Week every two years during

which the achievements, the challenges and constraints in implementation of energy projects will be evaluated.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The African Union Commission has also committed to promoting the development of other renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and geothermal energy. These energy sources can significantly contribute to enhancing energy security across the continent. Number of actions has been undertaken by the African Union Commission, including through the partnership with the European Union.

The African Union Commission is also coordinating the studies on the development of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA). The energy sector of this Programme will include an important component on hydropower projects whose first phase will be closely linked to those identified within the "Hydropower 2020" initiative.

Let me conclude my statement by expressing my hope that the Conference will come up with concrete and useful recommendations on how to promote

sustainable hydropower development not only in Eastern Africa region but also across the whole of Africa, supporting and helping the AU Commission in the implementation of the "Hydropower 2020" Initiative.

Wishing the Conference fruitful deliberations and all success,

Thank you for your kind attention.