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Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan have agreed to establish a committee to conduct additional studies regarding the impact of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). The agreement came following a two-day meeting of water ministers of the three countries in Khartoum, Sudan. The proposed Tripartite National Committee (TNC) comprises four experts from each country which will be tasked to conduct two further studies on the GERD. In May last year, an International Panel of Experts (IPoE) which assessed the impacts and benefits of the 6000MW hydroelectric dam on the Nile River recommended further studies (*WIC, Aug. 28*). - Egypt's Irrigation Minister Hossam Mokhazi said Egypt is well aware of the importance of the time factor in the tripartite negotiations on Ethiopia's controversial Renaissance Dam. He told that a timetable was set to put into effect items agreed upon by Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia at the end of the fourth round of talks that was concluded lately. Within two weeks, the three countries will decide on the international consultancy office that will conduct necessary studies called for by the international expert committee formed over the dam, the minister said. Also, the three countries will form a national committee to aid the international consultants, he said, adding that each country will be represented by four experts in the national committee. The consultancy office is supposed to finish within six months studies on the impact of an Ethiopian hydropower dam. He said Egypt is keen that all differences on the dam will be settled in 2 or 3 months from the day the studies are prepared. He noted that the first stage of the \$4.2 billion Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, scheduled to be finalized in Dec of 2015, does not harm Egypt or Sudan either in terms of water quotas or social and economic effects (*MENA, Aug. 28*).

The German Government has pledged that it would assist the Somali refugees who live in Ethiopia together with the other refugees from Horn of Africa with €750,000. The government of Germany said it would give the money through the WFP so that food aid can be delivered to the Somali refugees in the refugee camps in Ethiopia. Together with the Somali refugees, the German government will also assist the Eritrean and South Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia. According to the German embassy in Ethiopia, the assistance is for boosting the activities of the UNCHR at the camps in Ethiopia where Horn African refugees live. There are about 247000 South Sudanese refugees, 245,000 Somali and 113,500 Sudanese refugees as well as 99,000 Eritreans in the refugee camps in Ethiopia. This figure is on the increase as there is an ongoing crisis in South Sudan (*Dalsan Radio in Mogadishu, August 24*).

East Africa Bottling Share Company disclosed it is will make an investment greater than U.S \$ 250m in Ethiopia during the next five years for the purpose of increasing the company's capacity. The new production line of East Africa will be launched in Sep. 2014 and 2015, the General Manager noted. In addition to this there will also be an additional investment on a new production plant. He said investments on trucks as well as coolers will be made to enable transport and supply the company's products in different areas of the country (*Capital, Aug. 24*).

Montero Mining and Exploration Ltd. has entered into a binding agreement with Hulager General Import and Export plc, an Ethiopian company, to acquire up to an 80% interest in its wholly owned Moyale Graphite Project in Ethiopia (the "Property"). The agreement provides Montero six months to complete legal and technical due diligence to its satisfaction and is also subject to regulatory approval. Under the terms of the binding agreement, Montero immediately earns a 51% interest in the Property by committing to define and complete a report prepared in compliance with NI 43-101 within 2 years with a minimum expenditure requirement of US\$ 1.5 million. Montero may earn a further 29% interest by completing a Feasibility study within 3 years to a maximum expenditure of US\$ 10m (*Marketwired, Aug. 26*).

According to Ethiopia's Ambassador to Japan, Markos Tekle, Japan plans to provide loan for the Aluto-Langano Geothermal Power Plant and other power generation projects. He said the Japanese government mostly provided aid to Ethiopia in the form of assistance and technical support. This has now changed as the country has been registering rapid economic growth and its ability to refurbish loans has been strengthened, he said. As a result, the minister added, Japan plans to extend loan to Ethiopia so that it could complete various projects. Among the projects that will benefit from the loan are the Aluto-Langano Geothermal Power Plant and other hydro-power projects (*Ethiopian Herald, Aug. 27*).

The second shipment of wheat, purchased by the Ethiopian government from Ukraine is expected to reach the Port of Djibouti by the beginning of September. The total amount of the wheat is 2 million q. The shipment is expected to leave on August 25, 2014. The purchase was made via an international tender floated by the Government Procurement & Property Disposal Services (GPPDS) which cost the government 2.4 billion Birr. The first shipment is being stored at the central warehouse of the Ethiopian Grain Trade Enterprise (EGTE) (*Fortune, Aug. 28*).

China provided 44 postgraduate scholarship opportunities to Ethiopian students this academic year, the Chinese Embassy in Ethiopia said. At a briefing ceremony held at the Embassy, State Minister of Education Kaba Urgessa said that China has been supporting the human resource development program efforts of the government of Ethiopia by providing long and short term training opportunities. He hoped that the students would acquire new knowledge and learn the rich culture of the Chinese people during their stay in China. The students are required to focus on their study, take a great responsibility of bringing home the knowledge and contribute to the development and well being of Ethiopia, the State Minister added (*WIC, Aug. 26*).

The Ethiopian government has decided to turn the residential house of Ethiopian presidents, the National Jubilee Palace, into a museum and move the Jubilee Palace to Prince Mekonnen compound located in Sidist Kilo, where new buildings will be built. The design of the new buildings has been completed and the construction contract has been awarded to a contractor, Zamra Construction, which will construct the new buildings and rehabilitate the ancient Prince Mekonnen building. The timeless building will be rehabilitated without making changes to its original architectural beauty. New buildings with similar architectural design will be built in the ancient premise (*The Reporter, Aug. 20*).