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“No reason to go for war on the River Nile”: Scholars

BY BELETU BULBULA

ADDIS ABABA – A new book entitled “The Nile River Basin: Water, Agriculture, Governance and Livelihood” revealed that the Nile River, together with its associated tributaries and rainfall, could provide the 11 countries including a new country, South Sudan, and the drought-plagued countries of the Horn of Africa with enough water to support a vibrant agriculture sector.

During the joint launching ceremony of the books at Hilton Addis Monday, scholars stated that there is no reason to go for war on the River Nile as the river has enough water to supply dams and irrigate parched agriculture in all riparian countries.

Dr. Sileshi Bekele, Senior Water Resources and Climate Specialist at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Dr. Simon Langan, Head of the East Africa and Nile Basin Office, International Water Management Institute (IWMI), and Dr. Alan Duncan, Livestock Scientist with International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) indicated on the occasion that though there is enough water in the Nile basin to support development, small farmers are at risk of being marginalised.

Therefore, the scholars recommended that smallholder farmers need improved stake in Nile’s development. Again, improving governance, especially coordination among Nile basin country governments, is one of the crucial aspects in ensuring that the poor benefit from the basin’s water resources, they added.

Dr. Sileshi, who is also the Editor and Co-author of the book, said there is a way to manage the Nile waters by the riparian countries and thereby enhance cooperation among themselves and also bring more regional integrations for example through power trade, agricultural productivity and others.



Dr. Sileshi Bekele Senior Water Resources and Climate Specialist UNECA, Dr. Simon Langan Head of IWMI and Dr. Alan Duncan, livestock scientist ILRI (from left to right)

According to these scholars, the Ethiopian Renaissance Dam will not make change on the flow of the Nile River as it stores water with less evaporation and redistribute available water throughout the year. Rather, the dam would help reduce impact of sediment on the downstream countries, he added.

Dr. Sileshi further indicated that based on the existing potential of the resource, it is temptation for these governments to focus on large-scale irrigation schemes, but more attention must also be given to smaller, on-farm water management approaches that allows to make use of rainwater and stored water resources so as to ensure food security and poverty reduction in the basin.

experience into consideration, it was noted.

According to ERTA, the newly elected leadership promised to work tirelessly to strengthen the unity of the Muslim community and fill development gaps.

The new Council members are drawn from the nine states and two city administrations of the country.

According to Dr. Sileshi, lack of access to water is among the fundamental challenges negatively impacting the lives of poor people in general and women in the basin in particular through forcing them to travel longer distances to fetch water for household consumption.

The book published by the CGIAR Challenge Programme on Water and Food (CPWF), stated that agriculture, the economic bedrock of all 11 Nile reparation countries, and the most important source of income for the majority of the region’s people, is under increased pressu39.00 ptre to feed the basin’s growing population; already 180 million people, half of which live below the poverty line.

According to the book, investing in a set of water management approaches known as Agricultural Water Management (AWM), which includes irrigation and rainwater collection, could help this water-scarce region grow enough food despite these dry growing conditions.

It also argues for the establishment of a permanent international body; the Nile Basin Commission, so that the river would play a key role in strengthening the region’s agriculture, socio-economic development and regional integration.

IWMI’s Addis Ababa Office has promised to donate 300 copies of the book to local water managers, policy makers and institutions in Ethiopia and elsewhere in the region.

Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council elects leaders

ADDIS ABABA (WIC) – The Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council elected Sheik Kiyar Mohamed as President of the Council Monday.

The Council also elected Sheik Kedir Mohamud Vice President and Mohamud Ali Secretary .

The election took educational preparation, religious maturity and work



EPRDF Executive Committee concludes regular meeting

ADDIS ABABA (WIC) – The Executive Committee of the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) concluded its regular meeting Monday.

The Executive Committee, while closing its regular session, evaluated the various activities carried out in rural and urban areas last budget year as encouraging.

The Committee reviewed the basin, irrigation and crop development activities undertaken in rural areas as encouraging, thus contributing a lot in the efforts to improve farmers’ productivity and annual crop production this harvest season.

The Committee added that the wide-ranging and integrated efforts made by parents, teachers and students to ensure education quality have also born remarkable results.

The health extension programme being implemented through public involvement helped maternal mortality rate to decline and produce healthy and productive society, which according to the Committee will enable to expedite the ongoing rapid economic growth and renaissance of the country.

The Committee also evaluated the good governance practice in rural areas as a good condition. Favourable situation was also created for the people to resolve problems by themselves.

The Committee also reviewed the activities carried out to increase income of urban dwellers by creating jobs and expanding small and micro enterprises as notable. It also underscored the need to strengthen this effort this budget year as well.

The Executive Committee also discussed ways of bringing good governance in urban areas by involving the public in addition to implementing civil service and justice system reform programmes.

The Committee also underscored the need to scale up best practices and build capacity of executives to attain the ambitious five-year Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP).

The Executive Committee, which praised the public and members of EPRDF for their determination to realize vision of the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, urged them to continue with this impetus.

Similarly, the Executive Committee also pledged to make all the necessary preparations to make the upcoming Addis Ababa City Council members and local elections free, fair and democratic.

In addition to the endorsed electoral code of conduct for political parties’ proclamation, EPRDF is endeavouring to prepare code of conduct for its members.

The Committee further said that EPRDF, in partnership with members of the national joint council of political parties, will continue its efforts of solving problems.

The Executive Committee also evaluated the preparations for the 9th EPRDF Congress to be conducted this Ethiopian budget year.

The 9th Congress will be an occasion by which EPRDF will evaluate performance of the Growth and Transformation Plan and put forward direction for the coming years.

Moreover, the Congress will review the reform programmes of the Front initiated by the great leader Prime Minister Meles and carried out during the past 12 years to expedite renaissance of the country.

The Executive Committee finally emphasized the need to strengthen the ongoing preliminary activities for the upcoming election.



The Ombudsman and the role of stakeholders

The mission, objectives and activities of the Ethiopia Institution of the Ombudsman are shared by a variety of stakeholders. Most of the key stakeholders, including the three branches of government, civil society organizations (CSOs), the media and, of course, citizens, stand to gain a lot from Institution’s efforts (as much as it needs their cooperation to meet its objectives). This is simply because all of these stakeholders and the institution have one important thing in common: they are all stakeholder of good governance. The three branches of government have the duty to exercise control over one another to ensure accountability; and collectively, to respect the rule of law. CSOs have a variety of principles to promote or such group interests as the rights of the disadvantaged to speak for. And the observance of important policies and the inclusion of the disadvantaged contribute to the overall quality of governance. Like wise with the media, which labor to bring about transparency and build consensus by informing citizens and setting agendas for debate; as well as to ensure accountability and the rule of law through their investigations and reports. All of these contribute to the overall effort to strengthen good governance. And there is the society that faces the true taste of the quality of government and to the strengthening of which it holds irreplaceable power.

EIO has the power to supervise and control administrative offices to ensure observance of the rights of citizens and relevant laws in their directives, decisions and activities. It also has the duty to propose for the amendment of existing laws and the promulgation of new ones. Most importantly, it has the power to receive and probe complaints brought against administrative offices.

The problem comes at the end of the exercise of such supervisory powers, where the Ombudsman comes with recommendations or remedies which it forwards to either of the stakeholders..

The importance of the role of stakeholders is as much a result of the limits in the institution’s powers as the position of influence that the stakeholders command.

Another reason the input of stakeholders could be crucial to the institution emanates from in the very nature of it activities. While the Institution is vested with the power to receive complaints from victims of administrative abuse, the processes involved from investigation up to redress highly depend on the actions and omissions of the offices under its scrutiny.

For instance, take the Ombudsman’s responsibility under Article 26(1), to attempt “to amicably settle” problems that caused complaints. The Institution needs their attention and their remedial actions- all of which could bear fruit only when there is a sense of genuine cooperation. Moreover, as an Institution with the power to recommend for the repeal of bad directives, the Ombudsman’s could be taken as an agent of change [on top of its role as a watchdog of abuses]. This would create the possibility of collusion with the administrative status quo.

No doubt, the Ombudsman’s demand is for nothing more than ensuring that things go according to the law that rights are respected and abuses prevented or rectified. And the duty to respect rights and the law is not a new obligation imposed by EIO on the administration and its officials. Indeed, one would hope that the administrative organs would realize that they too are stakeholders of good governance; or that they are duty bound to respect laws. Ideally, administrative organs would be enthusiastic enough to change bad directives and to see an ally in the ombudsman.

It is mandatory for the Ombudsman to make a proper assessment of the key role of stakeholders and to work to channel their attentions and actions to contribute to the best out come possible.

Institution of the Ombudsman

Vehicles turning roads into battle fields



A case in point in this regard is, according to Road Transport Authority of Ethiopia (RTA), around two thousand people are killed and seven thousand more are crippled due to vehicular accidents yearly in the country.

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Concerted actions needed to rescue Simen Mountains National Park



Simen Mountains National Park, which is located in Amhara State, is one of the oldest national parks that harbours globally important biodiversity and provides key ecosystem services yet, has been suffering from multifaceted challenges for long.

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How to abate stunting in children?



Partners working in the area of nutrition trained over 3,000 Health Extension Workers on preventive nutritional intervention across the country and deployed to raise public awareness.

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Unity in diversity to realize vision of Meles, defend our Constitution!