

Ethio-Kenya electric system interconnection economic inputs

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Electricity is not only a tool that turns darkness into light, but it is also a tool that can knock and open the door of civilization and development. It is the essential resource behind everything from menial work done in sheds to massive machines and industries.

It is almost becoming a basic need as it is becoming more closely related to the daily activities of human beings. And it is not a hyperbole to say that electricity plays a critical role in the growth and prosperity of a nation. Consequently, in planning about growth and prosperity, increasing electricity supply is required in advance.

Ethiopia is making efforts to get rid of poverty by increasing its electricity supply from various options enjoying the grace of nature with technology. In a short period of time, producing energy from water, wind and solid waste, it has gone from being accessible to social services and industries to becoming a hope for neighboring countries.

Ethiopian Electric Power Director of Corporate Communication, Moges Mekonen told *Ethiopian Press Agency* that recently it has announced that the 500KV Ethio-Kenya high power transmission lines which have the capacity to connect African countries with electricity, has become operational.

He says that Ethiopia is struggling to reach its development goals by its give and take strategy to enhance regional development through sharing what she has with the neighboring nations. “She does this by designing a policy of living in cooperation.”

The director said that Ethiopia was previously earning foreign currency by providing electricity to Djibouti and Sudan. Besides, recently she started sending electricity worth of 100 million US dollars to Kenya. South Sudan, Somaliland and Tanzania are also interested in buying Ethiopia’s electricity.

“Ethiopia has the potential of natural resources to generate electricity for domestic consumption to ensure her growth and prosperity, besides selling it to the neighboring countries to earn

foreign currency,” he noted adding that such cooperation is strongly in line with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and will contribute to the economic integration of Africa as a model.

In the future, foreign exchange and cooperation will be continued and strengthened by establishing high power transmission lines with the neighboring and bordering countries in all four directions, Moges elucidated it.

The Ethio-Kenya high power transmission line that stretches from Walita Sodo to the Kenyan border is 440 kilometers long. As to the agreement, the electricity sent to Kenya will be reduced to 65 megawatts during off-peak hours and up to 200 megawatts during peak hours, he stated adding Ethiopia can earn up to 100 million US dollars a year.

Further export follows the fulfillment of the domestic demand. Stating that the generating capacity of the facility has reached 5200 megawatts, he said that even when there is a high load of energy during the peak hours, i.e. when there are celebrations and other situations that require the use of electricity services, the maximum power supply used for domestic consumption is not more than 2700 to 2800 megawatts.

“Though it was used to be supplied in shifts, but recently it is provided even large factories are being made to use electricity on holidays without any usage restrictions. And the electricity that is exported abroad is only seven percent of the total energy that the country generates on average and that there is a possibility to export even more,” Moges justified.

However, he mentioned that it was not possible to make electricity available to the citizens as required, not because of the lack of power, but since the electricity infrastructure that benefits the society could not be expanded to the required level. The main mission of EEP is to build power stations, carry out operations, wholesale the generated power and purchase it when necessary.

At last, beyond this, the electricity infrastructure network that has been created will strengthen business and people-to-people connections and increase mutual benefits. It is a confirmation that the rivers used for power generation are not only for one country but also for common benefit.

At last, in particular, following the request made by South Sudan, the technical committees are conducting a study. With this, Ethiopia will become not only East Africa but also the center of Africa's electricity source, he mentioned.