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EEP efforts on expanding electricity infrastructure

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The main mission of Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP) is to increase the energy supply and provide the energy required by the economy in a reliable manner. Regarding this, specifically the infrastructure, Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) had a stay with EEP Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Engineer Asheber Balcha.

As to the CEO, constructing power generation and distribution power stations, constructing high power transmission lines with maintaining and operating them, as well as purchasing and selling bulk power are among the responsibilities of EEP. Distribution stations and transmission lines should be expanded in order for the people of Ethiopia to fully benefit from electricity. "EEP is working day in and day out to answer the energy demand of the citizens and to fully exert the significant role of the sector in the nation's economy."

One of the indications of such successes is its being able to access power from small to large industries without

interruption and increasing foreign exchange earnings by selling the excess power to neighboring countries.

He also mentioned that the current electricity infrastructure is not enough to provide power to the over 120 million people of Ethiopia, who are living in a scattered manner. "In order to change this, the institution is carrying out new infrastructure construction and expansion works," the CEO stated.

There is a question of fairness raised by the States in terms of power generation and distribution plants with distribution lines, he mentioned adding: "After consulting with the House of People's Representative, it was agreed that the projects to be built hereafter should be built in a way that ensures the fair use of all the States."

Though EEP has been able to record tangible reforms while building infrastructure to take the energy sector to a higher level, it is facing challenges that hinder its journey and hold back its progress. "The main challenges are related to compensation, theft, security problems, and lack of resources," the

CEO also noted.

As well, he explained that good relations were established with the relevant state administration and security bodies besides the awareness created to the community with the support of the Administrative Boardmembers of the institute. Interesting results have been achieved in some areas where effective works were done though the problem is still visible in some areas.

And there are still difficult conditions to continue infrastructure projects in areas with security problems to repair those that have already been built besides to begin the new ones like in West Wollega.

If these problems cannot be solved, however, the efforts started to make energy accessible to all areas of the country by expanding the development of the electricity base will be hindered.

Consistent with him, the main source of income of EEP is the sale of electricity, but recently it has been earning additional income by leasing fiber optic lines to Ethio-telecom,

Safaricom and other institutions. As the utilization of electric vehicles is becoming accustomed in the country, there is an additional opportunity for the institution to increase its income by building charging options. In this regard, activities have been started to work together with the Ministry of Transport and Logistics and the relevant stakeholders.

It is also working towards increasing its income source by increasing its export capacity. And it is currently exporting ten percent of the energy it produces to Djibouti, Sudan and Kenya, earning thirty percent of its income. The neighboring countries such as Somaliland, South Sudan and Tanzania have the same interest and some of them have made an agreement, he mentioned.

At last, Eng. Asheber called on the community, media, security forces and leadership at all levels to assist EEP make the entire population of the country eligible for electricity and to expand the infrastructure through the sale of energy.

Ethiopia's Electric Power Startup Process

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