



# GERD Support Group in Belgium

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27 July 2020

Press Release

### **ACCESS TO ELECTRICITY IS ABOUT TO BECOME A REALITY FOR MILLIONS OF ETHIOPIANS**

We are pleased to communicate, to Ethiopians and friends of Ethiopia, the announcement of the completion of the long-awaited first round filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). The statement released by the Office of the Prime Minister on July 21, 2020 stated that the “current rainfall and runoff situation in the region have made it conducive to fill the dam” without causing significant harm to downstream countries. This year’s rainfalls have much exceeded the average rainfall so much so that Ethiopia has been able to accomplish its target of filling 4.9 BCM without closing the culverts of the dam.

The GERD Support Group in Belgium sees this achievement as a historic event and a milestone in the construction, filling, and operation of the GERD. We expect that the test production of electricity from two turbines will commence within a year. This embodies a beacon of hope for 65 million Ethiopians who do not have access to electricity. It means, among other things, access to electricity by schools, reduced burden of firewood collection on women and girls for household energy needs, as well as support the country’s effort in combating climate change by reducing deforestation and boost the country’s effort to achieve by 2030 UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The GERD support group is composed of Belgians of Ethiopian origin and Ethiopians residing in Belgium

It also represents the beginning of the end of decades of injustice during which Ethiopia did not benefit from the waters of the Nile River. We would like to echo the words of Ethiopian President Wzo. Sahle-Work Zewde by asserting that the dream of generations of Ethiopians is becoming true. The GERD has been built by citizen's contributions through direct contributions from Ethiopians from all walks of life. We reiterate our commitment to help finalize the GERD by raising the necessary funds to complete the works.

We appreciate the AU is actively involved in helping the three countries in reaching at a win-win solution on the first filling and annual operation of the GERD. We believe the AU's role, underpinned by the motto 'African Solutions to African Problems', is beneficial not just to the three countries but also all the member states of the Nile Basin. We encourage the AU remains seized of the GERD matter, and call upon Egypt and the Sudan to negotiate in good faith and commitment

We urge the Belgian authorities and the European Union to support Ethiopia's efforts to secure its fair and equitable share of the Nile waters.

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Annex: Communique of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Extraordinary African Union (AU) Bureau:

<https://au.int/fr/node/38891>

For further information: contact GERD Support Group in Belgium

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