

The Reporter (Addis Ababa)

## Ethiopia: AFDB to Finance Baro-Akobo-Sobat Project

BY NEAMIN ASHENAFI, 1 MARCH 2014

The Baro-Akobo-Sobat multipurpose water resource development study project, after being halted for over ten years, has received financing from the African Development Bank (AfDB) to implement the project. The total cost of the project is 3.4 million dollar.

This information was disclosed in a two-day workshop to launch the project here in Addis Ababa.

The workshop was organized by the Eastern Nile subsidiary Action program (ENSAP) and Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO), a part of Nile Basin Initiative (NBI). Fekeahmed Negash, Director of the National and Transboundary Rivers Directorate at the Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy (MoWIE) told The Reporter that this project would help gather detailed information in the area so as to use the resources for development.

He further added that the project is the only project that focuses on Baro-Akobo. This project was stalled for more than ten years because of the conflict in south Sudan and lack finances, he added.

The project also facilitates to plan sustainable development in the area based on adequate and reliable data. Though the Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO) consists of Egypt, Ethiopia, South Sudan and the Sudan, the Egyptian delegation did not attend the workshop.

In relation Egypt's absence, Fekeahmed said the Egyptians were invited to participate in the workshop but declared that they are not part of it, adding that they are not subject to any decision made under this initiative. AfDB pledges two million dollars and the rest will be covered by the African Water Facility (AWF). The project will be active for a span of three years. The Nile Basin Initiative was launched in 1999 as a transitional cooperative mechanism of the Nile riparian countries. Its objective is to develop the common Nile Basin water and water-related resources for mutual benefits leading to poverty reduction, reversal of environmental degradation, promotion of economic growth and increased regional cooperation, integration and security.

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