

"WE HAVE A BRIGHT FUTURE OF COOPERATION BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES"

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It is an honor and privilege to be among such noted and informed scholars and intellectuals present in this collective event observing Ethiopia-Russia longstanding and historical relationships. This year we are marking 115 years of diplomatic relations between the two sisterly countries. It is also my great pleasure to take this opportunity to express my deepest appreciation and sincere thanks to the Institute for African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences and also specifically to the Director Professor Alexey Vasiliev for their warm welcome and unreserved support to promote Russia-Africa agenda as always.

I hope that today's forum will serve as a platform for politicians, academicians and businesses to exchange views and gain insights into politics, economics, cultures, and people-to-people connection of our countries.

On the outset, I have to refer the special moment of the Russian Government and its people who actively supported Ethiopia, both in times of hardship and tranquility over the decades. In particular I would like to recognize Russian citizens who went to the extent of giving their life for the cause of Ethiopia.

Russian solidarity with Ethiopia was first illustrated when the Russian Red Cross Society came to Ethiopia in 1896, at the time of the Battle of Adwa when Italy attempted to attack the country. It made an outstanding contribution in provision of medical supplies and care to the Ethiopian patriots on the battlefield and subsequently. Again, during the fascist invasion of Ethiopia in 1936, Russia was one of those countries which stood in solidarity with Ethiopia. This



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relationship had continued and indeed extended during the Soviet era with mainly educational and security cooperation reached at a higher level.

In recent years, bilateral relations between Ethiopia and Russia have further strengthened with increased exchanges of visits of high level officials between the two countries. Major visits have included from Ethiopian side the late Prime Minister Melese Zenawi trip to Moscow in December 2001; former Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin visit in November 2007; and current Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros Adhanom visit in March 2013. From the Russian side Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov visit in September 2006, Special envoy of the President of the RF to Africa Mr. Mikhail Margelov visits in 2012 & 2013, and Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov visit in 2013. All these high level visits to Addis Ababa and Moscow reflect the cordial and close relations between the two countries.

On the international arena,

Russia as a permanent member of the UNSC and due to its historical and existing close relationship to Africa have been devoted to promote mutual understanding, encourage peaceful settlement of conflicts only through political dialogue, with full involvement of the African Union and sub-regional organizations of the continent. In this regard, Ethiopia is very much appreciative of the highly effective cooperation in security areas including the fight against terrorism, which exists between the two countries.

Besides this, Ethiopia representing Africa Union have worked very closely with the Russia Federation on G20/G8 format to promote Africa Action Plan on accelerated development programs for debt reduction; funds to combat HIV-AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis & meningitis; to support transport & energy infrastructure and social sectors of education & health.

On the economic front, the establishment of Intergovernmental commission on economic, scientific, trade and technical cooperation in 1999 have certainly provided a bright future of further cooperation between our two countries. Until now the Commission held its regular meeting four times in Moscow and in Addis Ababa and the fifth will take place in Moscow in June 2014.

The main areas of cooperation include energy, mining, transport, agriculture, education, health, tourism and telecommunications. Three major agreements and 3 more sectoral memorandums have been signed to enhance trade and investment of the two countries.

Moreover, since January 2010 Ethiopia has been included in the list of developing countries enjoying preferential treatment by

the Customs Union of Eurasian Economic Community. As a result of these efforts, Ethiopia exports of agricultural goods have diversified and the total trade turnover of the two countries has shown significant growth every year. However, the trade balance is far below its potential and is significantly in favor of Russia.

With regard to Russian Investment in Ethiopia, there are 35 projects with full and partial participation of Russian companies with capital of close to 1 billion USD. The Russian companies engaged in investment in areas of mineral exploration, heavy metals and engineering; hydroelectric & geothermal power generation; railway, manufacturing and agro-processing. These days 3 multinational Russian companies have shown interest to participate in Ethiopia's strategic projects based on concessions.

On the other hand, the two countries have long standing cultural and religious exchange and cooperation which has been encouraging and various events were organized showcasing the breadth and high level of our bilateral ties. The Russian cultural center in Addis Ababa has promoted continuously with range of art and literature performances which brought mutual trust, enhanced communication and deepen cooperation between the two peoples.

Over the past decade, the Ethiopian economy has been growing at twice the rate of the Africa region, averaging, 10.6 percent GDP growth per year between 2004 and 2013. This impressive economic growth has been achieved mainly through agricultural modernization, the development of new export sectors, strong global commodity demand, and government-led development investments.

Moreover, the government of Ethiopia adopted the Five-year Growth and Transformation Plan, which target a yearly economic growth of 11 to 14%. The plan is largely designed to enable the nation to double the agricultural product & ensure food security and also full implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The government has formulated home grown policies

and strategies to eradicate poverty and transform the country to a medium middle income level by 20 years.

To achieve this vision the construction of the **Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD)** on the Nile River has been official launched on 2 April 2011¹. The dam will have reservoir capacity of 74 billion cubic meters of water and will generate 6,000 megawatts electricity. When completed it will be Africa's biggest hydroelectric dam and the seventh biggest in the world. A portion of that energy will be exported to Sudan, Djibouti and Kenya neighbors who already have agreed to secure power from Ethiopia.



Indeed, the GERD project has become a symbol of Ethiopian unity, which was demonstrated not just in words but in actions. This effort will assure the legitimate and equitable right to the use of the Nile water which has been a question of the people and governments of Ethiopia for the last 100 years.

The dam will have many benefits not only for Ethiopia but also for Egypt and Sudan. Egypt and Sudan will benefit from the dam that will ensure more constant flow of water all over the year during drought periods, will reduce losses by infiltration and evaporation along the river, will save much water from flooding along the line which can be used for water management and agriculture.

These efforts show Ethiopia's commitment to cooperation over the Nile waters based on equitable and reasonable longstanding utilization; and is our firm believe that the Nile water is symbol of cooperation and collaboration, but not confrontation.

In conclusion, the government of Ethiopia wishes to elevate the longstanding partnership with Russia by exploring fresh opportunities as well as building a network of activities that strengthen our bilateral economic relationship. Russia is a huge and attractive market for African exports. Russia has the capital and technology needed to develop Africa's infrastructure, help exploit its natural resources and promote

Компьютерная модель «Великой дамбы возрождения».

the industrialization of its economies.

Today as we observe our long standing and time tested relationship, I believe and hope many of you will share my thoughts that our sympathy and closeness is clearly expressing itself in new life. Indeed, Ethiopia as always has high expectations and wishes about the support of Russia in our efforts to eradicate poverty in Ethiopia.

¹ Подробнее см.: Брагин Н.А. Эфиопия: «Великая дамба возрождения» // Азия и Африка сегодня. 2012, № 1, с. 56-58. (Bragin N.A. 2012. Ethiopia: "Grand Renaissance Dam" // Aziya i Afrika segodnya. № 1) (in Russian)