



Africa 2013 Report, May 21st



The international conference jointly organized by Aqua Media International (Hydropower & Dams), ICOLD (International Commission on Large Dams and EEPKO (Ethiopian Electrical Power Company) was a resounding success.

More than 600 participants from 67 countries gathered in the African Union Congress Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 16 to 18 April. They celebrated the fact that hydropower and water resources development has reached a major turning point across the African continent; Ethiopia was clearly the ideal hosting country for the conference, since it leads the way in dams development. The country which, 2 decades ago was among the poorest in Africa, torn with war and misery, is now a booming economy with many construction projects going on. The country which had the lowest water storage capacity per capita in the 90s has now built tools for development.

But Ethiopia is not an isolated case: the Conference presented many dams projects in the Centre, West and South of the African Continent.

The 44 000 MW Inga project planned in the Democratic Republic of Congo was of course at the centre of discussions. But projects of all size were presented and discussed during the parallel sessions.

The conference was opened by two Deputy prime ministers from Ethiopia, H.E. Demeke Mekonnen and H.E. Dr Debretsion Gebremichael,

H.E. Prof Mamounata Belem Ouedraogrago, Min of Water Resources, Hydraulic Infrastructure and Sanitation of Burkina Faso, ICOLD President Adama Nombre and Ato Miheret Debebe, CEO of EEPKO

After the official declarations, three days of presentations ensued, during which African experts in finance, economics, planning, environment, climate and regional development, were able to exchange their experience with their colleagues from the four other continents on a diversity of questions relevant to future or ongoing water storage development projects.

It should be noted that during the three days of the conference, an international exhibition gathered 70 exhibitors which were able to present innovative technologies for dams construction.

Around 70 delegates participated to the post-conference Study Tour to Gibe II and III dams, organized by EEPKO.

During the closing plenary session, Alison Bartle, editor of Hydropower&Dams announced : "The enthusiasm and feedback from this conference has been so great that we plan that this conference will be the start of a new biennial series of regional events in Africa." ICOLD Secretary General Michel de Vivo and ICOLD President heartily welcomed that announcement and declared that ICOLD will continue to partner with Aqua Media to organize these regional events.

A more detailed report appears on Hydropower & Dams website and a full overview of the conference will appear in Hydropower & Dams.