



Initiatives for the Common Good (IfCG)

An Open letter to Prime Minister David Cameron

**The Rt Hon David Cameron
Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA**

11th May 2014

Dear Prime Minister

IfCG is a network of UK resident Ethiopians, and British citizens of Ethiopian origin who, out of their own volition, agree to forgo their political differences for the sake of the common good. Born on the very morrow of the historic laying of the cornerstone for the 6000mega watt **Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD)** on the Blue Nile, IfCG has quietly but firmly been explaining to British friends of Ethiopia the multi-faceted benefits of GERD not only for Ethiopia, but for Sudan and Egypt as well.

IfCG commends the continued blossoming of Ethiopia-UK relations, and it seems to it singularly appropriate to apprise the UK government of a patriotic pandemic fervour which has now engulfed Ethiopia's seizable community in the UK.

No single development issue in living memory has, therefore, united Ethiopians from all ethnic backgrounds as the GERD has achieved. This is because Ethiopians of today are guilt-ridden by the fact that their nation, which contributes 85% of the flow of the Nile, has until now been unable to harness the Blue Nile for two reasons: dearth of inspirational leadership in Ethiopia and angst of an anachronistic treaty to which even Ethiopia was not a signatory.

This rebarbative state of affairs, IfCG believes, remains a scar on the conscience of Ethiopia until GERD is fully completed and Ethiopia starts benefiting from the dividends of exportable energy.

IfCG commends the Government of Ethiopia's (GoE) unwavering commitment to the Nile Basin Initiative and to the Nile Cooperative Agreement. IfCG's special commendation also goes to the late prime minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi - one of the architects of Ethiopia's transformation to pluralistic democracy and economic growth — for discovering a win-win formula, and for setting up tripartite talks between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt which, in turn, gave birth to an International Committee of Experts (ICE).

While the GoE has fully accepted IFC's recommendations, and Sudan has also followed suit, the position of Egypt, on the other hand, has allowed the green shoots of doubt, indecision, suspense and perplexity to appear on the tripartite turf. IfCG wants to highlight the fact that the ICE's findings had made it crystal clear GERD would not "significantly affect the flow of the Nile to downstream riparian countries."

IfCG believes Egypt's shilly-shallying and ambivalent stands on peacefully resolving its concerns with Ethiopia are crucial to unravelling the unsavoury, not to say wayward behaviour, of Egyptian politicians. Notwithstanding Cairo's spin doctoring when it declares: "the way forward with Ethiopia is through cooperation and not confrontation," one must not lose sight of the fact that Cairo's reaction has so far included an unwarranted display of vuvuzela politics against Ethiopia, turning into a sabre rattling mode, unleashing a diplomatic blitzkrieg against Ethiopia by dispatching Egyptian diplomats to EU states with intent to lobby them to arm-lock Ethiopia into abandoning GERD as well as nudge disgruntled Ethiopians from within and without to destabilise Ethiopia.

Ethiopians everywhere are as sick and tired of war, as they are about the world viewing Ethiopia in the prism of the 1984 famine of "biblical proportion." In the words of a famous citizen of your great country, Bob Geldof, "Ethiopia today has changed incredibly." We now not only cherish our peace and stability, but we have been ably demonstrating our commitment to live in peace with all of our neighbours. Ethiopia's one and only enemy is poverty. GERD has accordingly become the epitome of our national aspiration for a prosperous future, hence the ear-deafening slogan one hears everywhere in Ethiopia: **"It's GERD or nothing!"**

IfCG would, therefore, be most grateful if HMG would turn a blind eye and deaf ear to what for all intents and purposes has now become Cairo's Mickey Mouse politics against Addis Ababa.