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It is to be recalled the rights organization (Human Rights Watch) in its 14th February, 2017 piece under the title: "Ethiopia: Dams, Plantations a Threat to Kenyans" claimed that the community living in the Omo basin and water level of Lake Turkana could be negatively affected by the Dam that Ethiopia has constructed on the Omo river.

Needless to say that the project was initially conceived after the government of Ethiopia has conducted a series of Environmental and Social Impact Assessments of the Dam and all allegations that are leveled against this endeavor, including by Human Rights Watch (HRW) is flawed and politically motivated. This deliberate misrepresentation of the facts on the Dam is the continuation of similar trends that HRW has been pursuing for the long time and cannot be a big surprise.

The Gibe III hydropower dam took an account of various international standards and policies, and on top of that it has been reviewed and studied further by African Development Bank, The World Bank, European Investment Bank, as well as independent Environmentalists, Sociologists, and other pertinent professionals. Moreover, the Environmental Protection Authority of Ethiopia's requirements and guidelines have also been used to make sure that the Dam would never bring about any social and environmental impacts on such communities and the reservoir of Lake Turkana.

A number of pertinent organizations have expressed the views that Gibe III hydropower dam has been qualified for the environmental and social impact assessment. The studies indicate that the possible negative impacts are very minimal and insignificant compared to the massive and concrete socio-economic development benefits to Lower Omo region. On the other hand, it would enhance the economic and social integrations among the Eastern African countries, and the regulation of the river flow induced by the dam will also contribute to the re-establishment of a positive hydrological balance in the Lake Turkana transboundary system are the benefits that are being delivered and witnessed.

In addition to what has been said, there have been candid consultations with hundreds of thousands of community members in multiple occasions where they shared their views which in due course led to a consensus on the viability of the project. In this regard, even though the fact remains indisputable, concerns and counter arguments can be presented to proper institutions so that genuine and scientific discussions can take place to reach an understanding.

The assertion that the Dam has diminished the water level of Lake Turkana is unfounded and it is deliberately disseminated to shift the blame to Ethiopia. It has to be noted that the water level of Lake Turkana has been historically risen and fallen in response to major climate changes. Moreover, in recent years the East Africa region has been seriously affected by climate change induced drought. Thus, obviously the natural oscillation has resulted in the temporarily reduction of water level of the Lake. However, the artificial release from the Dam helped Lake Turkana water reservoir to maintain almost constant level than expected during the dry season.

Similarly, the sweeping conclusion that the Ethiopian and Kenyan Governments are reluctant to address the impact of the dam is not based on objective accounts. While the fact of the matter is that the two countries have long been initiated a wider range of consultation forums with the view to solve any potential impact of the project, it is misleading to say that both countries are indifferent to address any problems thereof. Basically, the two Governments have been in regular consultations regarding the Gibe III Hydropower Dam since the inception of the project and have shown determination to resolve any outstanding issues through cooperation. Hence, it is possible to say that the two nations are well aware of the benefits of the project that it will



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never have an adverse environmental and social impact to the communities as well as the water level of Lake Turkana. Rather, it is in their best interest of their respective citizens' developmental needs.

In conclusion, it is obvious that on the basis of the facts presented above, the projects are carefully designed to benefit the livelihood of the people of the entire Omo River basin. In this respect, any entity that claims itself to protecting and advocating peoples' right should also support communities deserving right for a better life which should be seen positively by any development-friendly organization, without compromising the adverse effect of environmental and social impact. Whereas, such completely biased, inappropriate and misplaced claim that undermine the reputation and credibility of the institution. This eventually has impede to sufficiently leveraging our mutual interest of promoting and protecting human rights. Therefore, we strongly believe that HRW should be forthcoming to build confident with a view to address any issue of concern based on scientific reasons and logical considerations. We remain confidence that you will publish our comments on your website.

