

ETHIOPIA TO START GENERATING POWER FROM BLUE NILE DAM

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Indian River System Including Lakes, and HEPs

Ethiopia will start generating power from its mega-dam on the Blue Nile on Sunday, government officials told *AFP*, a major milestone for the controversial project.

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), set to be the largest hydroelectric scheme in Africa, has been at the centre of a regional dispute ever since Ethiopia broke ground there in 2011.

"Tomorrow will be the first energy generation of the dam," an Ethiopian government official said on Saturday.

A second official confirmed the information. Both spoke on condition of anonymity because the development has not been officially announced.

Downstream concerns

Ethiopia's downstream neighbours Egypt and Sudan view the dam as a threat because of their dependence on Nile waters, while Addis Ababa deems it essential for its electrification and development.

There was no immediate response from Cairo or Khartoum, which have been pressing Ethiopia to sign a binding agreement on the filling and operation of the dam ever since work first started.

The three governments have held multiple rounds of talks. but so far there has been no sign of any breakthrough.

The \$4.2-billion (3.7-billion-euro) project is ultimately expected to produce more than 5,000 megawatts of electricity, more than doubling Ethiopia's electricity output.

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