

Gibe III HEP Launches Satellite Office at Jinka Town

Gibe III HEP, March 2010 (Addis Ababa) -The Gibe III Hydroelectric Project (HEP) Office opened an Environmental and Social Impact Management and Mitigation Team branch office at Jinka town on 23rd February 2010.

On the occasion, Ato Mebratu Teshome, the Gibe III HEP Site Coordinator, said that the branch office is opened of addressing fears and concerns of the downstream agro-pastoral communities and work closely with them creating public awareness in relation to the Omo River and the construction of the Gibe III power generating Dam.

The Coordinator mentioned that employing international consultants the Project office has conducted exhaustive environmental and social impact assessments prior to embarking to implementation .

As per the consultants' recommendation in the assessment, he added, the branch office is realized to secure public understandings and working closely with the downstream population.

Ato Mebratu Teshome

The office's particular focus on the Hamer, Dassenech, Nyangatom and Salamago Wereda agro-pastoral com-



munities of the South Omo Zone.

He further indicated that the Gibe III HEP has much concerns for social developments, and hence the branch office would gather information, develop alternatives and facilitate the communications between the Project Office and the communities identifying their major interests in development activities.

According to Ato Mebratu, the Gibe III HEP has planned to carryout social development schemes like small scale irrigation schemes and modern fishery production as part of the mitigation measures in the aforementioned Weredas taking focus areas of the Administratives and interests of the communities into account.

The branch office is well equipped with



Ato Mebratu explaining about the Gibe HEP for guests & the need for opening the new branch office at Jinka

necessary materials and manpower recruited from the local areas representing the major tribes from the stated Wereda communities to smoothly accomplish its missions and goals, he added.

Ato Mebratu pointed out that the branch office carries out series of public consultations and disclosure programs to create awareness among the agro-pastoral communities about the benefits and impacts of the Project in the short term plan.

On the other hand, Ato Negatu Dansa, the south Omo Zone Chief Administrator, indicated that the misconceptions on the Project are resulted from wrong views of some people who have their own special interest .

“ I don't believe the construction of the Dam will significantly reduce the volume of the Omo River. If that was the case, government would not have planned to construct Gibe IV and Gibe

V on the cascade of the River .” , he said.

According to the Chief Administrator, Gibe III Hydroelectric Project will significantly contrib-

ute to the development of the country in general and to the pastoral



Ato Nigatu Dansa

communities in particular. However, some people (tourists) would not like the improvements of the livelihoods of the pastoral communities since they want to enjoy with the backward living styles practiced by the tribes.

“ If development activities are conducted in the pastoral areas, enjoying with naked people will eventually diminish, directly or indirectly affecting the tourists' interest.”, he remarked.

As far as the opening of the branch office at Jinka town is concerned, Ato Negatu commented that the office will have a great role in addressing the misconceptions by performing series of public consultations and implementation of the development schemes .

He finally said that the Administration is ready assist the office in all respects.

The Jinka branch office is the third office (next to the Addis Ababa ESIA Coordination Unit and Gibe III HEP Site Satellite office) in relation to environmental and social impact management and mitigation measures.

Officials drawn from various department heads of the South Omo Zone were present on the launching ceremony.