

**Gilgel Gibe III:
No problem! We are now thinking of Gilegel Gebe IV&V
By Ben D**

In his recent press conference in Addis, the Prime Minister was asked about the negative campaign by external forces against the Gilgel Gebe Dam that is under construction. The questions asked were its impact on Ethiopia's relations with Kenya and Lake Turkana, and the alleged flawed environmental study by the government.

To put all this in perspective the PM stated by explaining Ethiopia's development strategy. He implicitly said that Ethiopia can only rely on its own resources to develop. That is using its untapped hydropower, wind power with a 6000 MWT potential, thermo power and biofuels that are all renewable and carbon neutral.

However, International Rivers, a California based NGO is lecturing and campaigning on how dams are bad for Africans. It is sitting in the state of California where there are 1,273 dams, a number more than what 21 Sub-Saharan African countries all together cannot claim. After its dismal effort to stop the Tekeze and the Tana Beles dams in Ethiopia, International Rivers is on a renewed futile campaign, naming its campaign "Friends of Lake Turkana."

International Rivers has created a coalition with its funders again mainly composed of Lake Turkana Wind Power consortium (LTWP) which is poised to provide 300 MW to Kenya's national electricity, a Dutch company and wind turbine manufacturer that is threatened by the possibility Ethiopia exporting cheap energy to Kenya. For further on this click here.
<http://laketurkanawindpower.com/default.asp>.

We should not be deceived with these NGOs that bark about the environment and disguise themselves as if they care for it. For example, International Rivers has done a study on how dam projects are bad for Africa and limited it to only alternative energy sources such as wind that are the solutions. The problem with this is that the study was commissioned by the Dutch government and the Dutch wind turbine manufacturers associations. To read those studies go to the International Rivers web site. The use of NGOs for such purpose is standard. The hypocrisy has even become outrageous as we have recently learned from a wall Street Journal article *Human Rights Watch goes to Saudi Arabia to seek funding*
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124528343805525561.html#>. It is important for us to put this into perspective, we need to care for our environment ourselves and recognize deception and hypocrisy of the merchants of poverty.

After its dismal effort to stop the Tekeze GGI and II, International Rivers is on a renewed futile campaign. According to its own report, International Rivers has created a coalition with Mr. Obang Meto, the self-appointed Anuak Justice Council of America. In addition, a very innocent

sounding seemingly Kenyan group called Friends of Lake Turkana is part of the coalition. Some of international Rivers funders such as the Dutch Wind turbine manufacturers have shown up as friends of Lake Turkana . This list of pretender environmentalist goes on but some of the interesting people include a Dutch vegetable farmer who irrigated Lake Turkana to death. Another one is Dr. Leaky the multi- millionaire Archaeologist, businessman, and corruption fighter; who started the lake Turkan campaign chaired by **Ikal Angele** a young Kenyan girl and employee of the Leaky family business enterprise. Read more about him on Independent leaky accused of blocking fraud case and his connection with ABN a Dutch

bank.<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/kenyas-695389.html>

Issues discussed and how things are orchestrated may not be new for those who already know how NGOs in Africa function. What is amusing are the questions asked by International Rivers and the Leaky group.

The Questions:

Recently, a memo was sent by Ms. Hathaway of International Rivers on behalf of Friends of Turkana., A group of NGOs - Bank Information Center; and those who joined Ms Hathaway's group which are, Indigenous Peoples of Africa Co- coordinating Committee (IPACC) and **Anuak Justice Council** – They initially requested a phone conference to understand the Africa Development Bank's project preparation and to discuss project concerns. The phone conference was canceled instead; the Bank provided written responses to their questions. Below I have pasted the questions and the Banks response that have amused me most. (For more you can click [here](#)) r

Question Inadequate consideration of project alternatives:

ESIA documents only discuss alternative layouts of the Gibe 3 Dam, but neglect any discussion of alternatives to meet the identified needs. Energy supply alternatives should have been identified, including: geothermal potential, a planned **wind farm**, and **Gibe 3 are also an export revenue scheme. There is no discussion of why hydropower exports are the preferred investment for possible export revenue schemes.**

These questions why wind power was not considered as alternative and you can guess whose interest that would fulfill. It also complains about why exporting was needed.

Obviously, this will threaten the Lake Turkana energy consortium that will produce a more expensive energy for Kenya by the Dutch group. The insinuation of this case of free market is only for me not Africa is worth pondering upon. Wind power can not sale for less than 20 cents/kilowatt as GG does.

Question:

Some Hadiya **nomadic households** (about 1,400 people) will lose grazing lands in the reservoir region (as identified in a 2006 version of the EIA) but the current ESIA states they will not be negatively affected, nor will receive any compensation. **Hadiya nomads? Read on.** No need to answer this one:

Bank's Response: Contrary to the information, provided in the 2006 ESIA, these people are not nomads; they are agro-pastoralist communities. To compensate for the loss of grazing land to flooding in these affected weredas, the project will ensure that these communities will benefit from the recommended buffer area development plan, which is integrated with forage improvement and development program. Improvement of the veterinary services in project affected pastoralist areas is also one of the recommended interventions meant to partially offset potential negative impacts stemming from loss of benefits from the natural vegetation in the area. Furthermore, to compensate for the loss of the traditional crossing points, the project will construct a bridge at the major crossing point across the Gibe River that will give the pastoralists an all-year-round access to grazing land, which is not the case at the moment.

Question:

Legitimate fears from within Ethiopia that NGOs, affected communities, and academics who express critical concerns of the project risk government retaliation. No action has been taken to ensure affected communities and the Ethiopian public is well informed and able to express their views on project impacts without fear of government reprisal. Big lie! Read on.

Bank's Response: The PCDDP report documents the Consultant's initiatives to inform and consult with affected communities, with local, regional and national government officials and agencies, and with interested groups and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The report also describes how these efforts will be continued as the project transitions from construction into operation.

What do we learn from these people?

Nothing really but we need to always keep in mind that:

- Western governments and international financial institutions often display a certain hypocrisy when they preach the values of good governance and environmental protection.
- Northern governments would be more credible in promoting good governance if they prosecuted corrupt practices under their own jurisdiction more seriously.
- Western Financial institutions could fight cronyism more effectively if they practiced what they preached to others. As they preach to Chinese financial institutions
- Western export credit agencies would be more credible in their concern about the environment if they more seriously committed to implementing international environmental standards themselves.

Regardless of such hypocrisy, good governance, human rights, environmental protection and social justice is core values of a people-centered development. It is in the long-term self-interest of all actors, whether from China or the West, to promote and protect such values rather than to hide behind the hypocrisy of other actors.