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GERD Beyond the Political Lens: An Imputes for the Achievement of SDGs in the Northeastern Africa Region

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Introduction

- In September 2000, the UN held a millennium summit with 189 country leaders and set eight Millennium development goals (MDGs) aimed at reducing poverty and improve the quality of life of developing country citizens in 2015.
- Most developing countries including the Northeastern Africa countries have showed a significant progress in achieving most of the MDGs.
- But, their progress in eradicating extreme poverty and hunger remained slow (ECA, 2016).

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- The recurrent natural disasters, rising food costs, financial crises and the spread of infectious diseases are the major obstacles (JICA, 2015).
- To deal with the underachieved MDGs and mitigate the global issues that hinder the successful progress of the developing countries towards the MDGs, the UN member states initiated a new development framework called sustainable development goals (SDGs) in 2015.

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- Primarily, so as to eradicate poverty, tackle climate change, reduce inequalities and promote peace and justice throughout the world, UN sets 17 SDGs with 169 targets to be adopted by all member states in 2015.
- At this midpoint of the SDGs implementation, the Northeastern Africa countries are in off-track to meet most of 2030 targets.
- Lack of adequate energy is at the center of their failure to meet the 2030 SDGs (OECD, 2023).

Overview of the Northeastern Africa Countries

Progress in Achieving the SDGs of 2030

- For this particular study NEA is a geographical area that includes Egypt, Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia and Kenya.

NEA countries SDGs Achievement (Performance Index, 2023)

Country Name	SDGs Total Achievement (%)
Egypt	69.6 %
Kenya	60.9 %
Sudan	48.6 %
Ethiopia	54.5 %
Eritrea	NA
Djibouti	52.7 %
Somalia	48.0 %
South Sudan	38.7 %

Source: African Energy Chamber, 2023

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NEA countries SDGs Achievement (Level and Trends, 2023)

Country Name	SDGs Achievement Level				SDGs Achievement Trend			
	Achieve	Challenge	Significant challenge	Major challenge	On track	Moderately Increase	Stagnant	Decrease
Egypt		G1	G4,7,9	G2,3,8	G4	G3,7,8,9	G2	G1
Kenya			G4, 8	G1,2,3, 7,9		G4,7,9	G1,2,3,8	
Sudan			G7	G1,2,3,4, 8,9		G7,9	G2,3,8	G1
Ethiopia				G1,2,3,4,7, 8,9		G1,3,7	G2,4,8,9	
Eritrea				G1,2,3,4,7, 8,9		G3	G1,2,7,8, 9	G4
Djibouti			G1,9	G2,3,4,7,8	G9	G1	G2,3,4,7	G8
Somalia				G1,2,3,7,8, 9			G2,3,7,8, 9	G1
South Sudan				G1,2,3,4,7, 8,9			G2,3,7,8, 9	G1

Source: Sachs et al, 2023

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NEA Countries Access to Electricity and Clean Cooking

Country Name	% of population with access to electricity (2020)	% of population with access to clean cooking technology (2020)
Egypt	100	99.9
Kenya	71.4	19.5
Sudan	55.4	54.7
Ethiopia	51.1	7.8
Eritrea	52.2	9.3
Djibouti	61.8	9.7
Somalia	49.7	3.2
South Sudan	7.2	0.0

Source: African Energy Chamber, 2023

Ethiopia's Experience and the Construction of GERD

- Ethiopia tried to integrate the 8MDGs and the 17SDGs with its development plans: Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP), GTP I & GTP II.
- Since 2011, Ethiopia has gave much emphasis to the energy sector.
- In GTP I, Ethiopia planned to increase its power generation capacity to 10,000 MW.
- To meet its plan, Ethiopia announced the construction of GERD in 2011.
- With the Construction of GERD, Ethiopia set to meet its domestic power demand and to export the surplus power production to neighbor states.
- For Ethiopia, alleviating the energy deficit is key to achieve both its MDGs and SDGs and thus, to end poverty and achieve sustainable economic growth.

The Role of GERD in Enhancing the Capacity of NEA Countries to Achieve SDG 1,2,3,4,7,8,9

1. GERD VS SDG 7

- The electricity access to NEA countries (except Egypt) is extremely low
- Energy deficit in the NEA countries obstructs the overall economic activities, thwart provision of basic public services and hinder their progress towards achieving SDG 1,2,3,4,7,8,9 among others (Blimpo and C.D. Malcolm, 2019).
- Majority of the population in the NEA region are depending on traditional biomass fuel, firewood and charcoal for their household consumption (Goitom, 2014).
- Such frequent utilization of biomass, in return, caused for massive soil erosion, land degradation and disease-like trachoma, which couldn't be reversed without providing alternative energy supply.
- GERD as a renewable energy project, therefore, used to provide the NEA countries with affordable, clean, reliable and safe energy.

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- Up on the completion of GERD, Ethiopia set to export electricity to Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, South Sudan, Kenya, Somalia and other clients beyond the region (Maupin, 2016).
- In so doing, GERD will **increase power availability of the Northeastern Africa** countries (IDS, 2013).

2. GERD VS SDG 1,2,3,4,8,9

- Different studies revealed that improvements in the energy supply has a positive spill over effect on the countries progress towards other SDGs.
- Energy provides cross-cutting services that are needed by other development indicators (OECD, 2023)

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Adequate electricity access helps NEA countries to:

- ✓ Stimulate their war torn economy and contribute for their economic growth --- SDG-8
- ✓ Improve basic service provisions such as education, health care, transportation and other infrastructure - preventing injurious indoor pollution from cooking or lighting with traditional fuels or kerosene --- SDG 3, 4
- ✓ Create fertile environment for investment and innovation – SDG9
- ✓ Promote agricultural productivity, expand irrigation (in Sudan) and accelerate the structural transformation of the economy – central to food security and poverty reduction - Reduced risk of seasonal flooding in Sudan because of the regulated upstream flow from the GERD --- SDG 1,2,9
- ✓ the electricity from the GERD can contribute to increased employment --- SDG 8

➤ Recommendations

1. If the North East African countries are to achieve their MDGs, the government, international development partners and the private sectors should aggressively invest on the development of renewable energy. In this connection, mega power generation projects should be initiated and implemented through the support from the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), Power Africa, USAID, EAPP and African Development Bank's .
2. There need to be depoliticization of hydro-power projects like GERD and instead, develop the habit of integrated shared water resource development and management strategy through comparative advantage of water utilization
3. The initiation and implementation of hydro-power projects is not a zero risk task. The concerned actors, therefore, should cooperate and integrate their effort to maximize the benefit and reduce the threat.



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**THANK
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