

## **IRC Ethiopia joins hands with partners and Stakeholders in celebration of World Water Day- 22 March 2018**



H.E State Minister, Kebede Gerba making opening speech/March 2018/Melaku Tekola.

World Water Day is observed each year on March 22 to promote the responsible use of water and access to safe water for everyone. This year's theme -nature for Water- is coined to promote understanding on how we can use nature to overcome the water challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Based on the above theme, IRC Ethiopia joins celebration of World Water Day on 22<sup>nd</sup> of March at Ethiopian Water Technology Institute at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The event commenced with various traditional music and infotainment news followed by a welcome speech made by His Excellency Ato. Zenebe Gardew, Director General of Ethiopian Water Technology Institute (EWTI). On his welcome note, Ato. Zenebe recognized high level representatives, delegates and invited guests and the media and provided a brief journey of the institute. He stated that in the past few years, the institute has built the capacity of over 3,565 professionals in various water technologies. According to Ato. Zenebe, the institute aspires to be a centre of excellence in capacity building and technology transfer in water sector in East Africa in the year 2025. He added that the institute mainly focuses on capacity building, research, technology transfer and aspires to be a specialized laboratory centre to improve water pollution and provide multifaceted solutions. He, finally reiterated the theme "nature for water" and highlighted the official inauguration of the new buildings of the institute and launching of new construction of training centre for water management and irrigation to be built in collaboration with the King of Mohammed VI of Morocco.



Mr Arto Suominen, H.E. State Min COWASH CTA and Ato Tesfay Fitchela, Assistant to the Minister of Water observing the event./March 2018/Melaku Tekola.

Then, the event officially opened by the State Minister of Water, Irrigation and Electricity, (MoWIE), His Excellency Ato. Kebede Gerba. Ato. Kebede stated that this event has been observed for the 25<sup>th</sup> times nationally and reiterated the motto of the day. He stated that “our planet as well as our country is in serious danger in relations to water pollution, water waste and climate change issues exacerbated by rapid population growth, industrialization and modernization”.

He added “as we observe World Water Day today, over 1 billion people across the globe still lack safe drinking water and above 2.4 billion people lack access to sanitation services”. As a result the State Minister added “1000 children die due to lack of safe water, sanitation and hygiene”. The Minister continued “In Ethiopia, 30 % of the population lack access to safe drinking water and 70% of the population lack access to sanitation services”. The Minister added “due to the above challenges the population faces various water borne diseases and the quest for education hampered severely”.



Ribbon cutting ceremony and inauguration of the new building of EWTI/March 2018/Melaku Tekola.

In order to curb the above challenges, on the other hand, the Minister highlighted the various efforts done by Government. According to the State Minister, the government has seen promising results in terms of ONE WASH programme, resilient WASH programme, Urban Waste Management and highlighted the various irrigation and Electricity projects under construction. Finally the Minister thanked all the participants and announced official opening of the World Water Day celebration. Subsequently, representatives from Japan International cooperation Agency (JICA), and representatives from Embassy of Morocco made a brief address and official inauguration of new buildings for EWTI's carried out.



Project visit at innovative water technology site/March 2018/Melaku Tekola.



The participants and all the delegations paid a visit to various projects of Ethiopian Water Technology Institute and planted memorial trees at EWTI's compound. At the end, the Minister and the high level delegation officially launched new construction site of a training centre for water Management and Irrigation to be built with support of King Mohammed the VI. Finally, World Water Day celebration concluded with an official opening of exhibition where IRC Ethiopia takes an appealing corner. Here, it is worthy to note that IRC Ethiopia's corner was opened for two consecutive days and number of visitors dropped by and were engaged through a one to one engagement as well as through distribution of mews letters and other information packs.



IRC booth at WWD celebration at EWTI/March 2018/Melaku Tekola.

Various messages about Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) were disseminated and presentation about “implementing nature based solutions to water challenges to restore, protect, and sustainably manage water bodies” was made by the ministry representative. Messages such as “ensure water security”, Protect water from pollution” were some of the major messages sent across.



From right to left, JICA representative, H.E State Minister, Kebede Gerba , H.E Zenebe Gardew, Director General of Ethiopian Water Technology Institute (EWTI)/March 2018/Melaku Tekola.

Overall, the event served as a vehicle to promote understanding on WASH related issues and an opportunity to inaugurate construction of training centre for the institute, supported by JICA. IRC WASH was honoured to take part and engage various representatives and like-minded organizations in celebration of World Water Day 2018