



On the third day of the symposium, the Director of Geological Survey, Mr. Asmerom Mesfin, explained the historical background of traditional mining in the world in general and in Eritrea in particular. He said that this kind of mining is carried out with simple equipments almost all over the world. The most commonly exploited resources through traditional mining are industrial limestone, marble, granite and gold. Artisanal mining has spread in wide areas in 1990s in Eritrea, and there is no data as to how much minerals are mined until now.

In the study paper, detailed information was presented regarding this kind of mining in mineral sites found in all regions. Most of the individuals involved are from lower classes of the society and their profit is minimal despite the hardship required the work. About 11-13 million people are involved in traditional mining in the world out of whom 3.4-5 million are women, according to a study. Farmers, illegal traders, women and children are the main participants in Eritrea. Artisanal mining is considered as hindrance to economic growth in most countries. It can cause environmental damage, soil erosion, convey wrong information to large scale mines, cause health problems, encourage black market, instigate crime in mining sites and the like. Reasons for increasing of such mining practices are the decline of agricultural products, easy availability of gold with simple equipments, rising price of gold and exaggerated rumors. Mr. Asmerom emphasized the need to improve the living standard of artisanal miner, enhancing their awareness, extending technical and management assistance, among others so as to reduce the negative consequence of such kind of mining.

Also, the Director General of Energy Department, Eng. Samuel Baire, briefed the participants with the background of the sector which was formed in 1993. At that time, he said that electricity generation ran at only 30MW. Mr. Samuel disclosed that energy per capital was 16Kwh, and most of energy source was obtained from biomass. The primary objective of this sector is he said: "To avail ample, dependable and sustainable energy for the growing needs of all sectors in Eritrea at an affordable price". The sector is also planning to provide electricity for 50% of the country by 2015.

Moreover, Eng. Samuel pointed out the major energy policies and strategies as well as steps taken towards the development of the sector. He stated: "Power generation capacity has

increased from 30 MW in 1991 to around 134 MW by 2003. The length of transmission lines has increased from 150 km to over 350 km; and this has enabled the inception of an integrated national power grid and commencement of gradual introduction in rural areas.



The general manager of Eritrean Electric Corporation (EEC), Eng. Abraham Woldmichael, on his part elaborated on the introduction and development of electricity in the country. According to the general manager, supply of electricity in commercial form began in 1904 in Asmara. Azienda Electric del Eritrea was founded to supply electricity in Asmara and Massawa. In 1919 Hydro power Plants started producing electricity at Durfo. 25 KW transmission line was constructed connecting Durfo with Massawa. In 1936 SEDAO Power Company was set up in 1935 in Rome to control distribution of electricity in Massawa and Asmara. In 1938, CONIEL was established in

Rome to install electricity supply in Dekemhare, Keren, Mendefera, Adi-Keih and Adi-Quala, besides, other small companies remained activate in Assab, Segeneiti, Senafe and other places. These companies also continued their activities during the British colonial era. After the Ethiopian colonial rulers decided to administrate electricity under Ethiopian Electricity Authority in 1975, the distribution of electricity was weakened and it was almost none existent in the early days of independence.

The Eritrean Electricity Authority was formed in 1991 with mandate to generate, distribute and sale of electricity in the country. In May 2004, the Eritrean Electric Corporation (EEC) was established. Extensive rural electrification works were carried out in villages and towns in different regions. More than 200 villages obtained power supply from 1991-2010.

“EEC inherited highly dilapidated power plant equipment; substations and transmission networks and distribution networks,” the director general said. “Some of the bottlenecks encountered were lack of availability of spare parts and distribution materials, and due to an exorbitant cost of fuel and lubricants the cost of electricity production was extremely high resulting in big financial losses. Ethiopian war planes bombed the Hirgigo Power Plant in May 2000, while it was undergoing final test to begin commercial operation. Consequently, commissioning of the power plant was delayed by more than two years incurring heavy repair cost.”

Eng. Abraham concluded his presentation with short and long-term development plans comprising of rehabilitation and overhauling of generators and auxiliary equipment located in power stations, continuing the work of rehabilitation and upgrading of the interrupted Asmara distribution project, increasing generation capacity of the Interconnected System (ICS) by 50MW, and strengthening introduction of electricity to rural areas. These endeavors are aimed at providing access to electricity to 50% of the population by the year 2015.

In the last paper presented by Eng. Afwerki Woldmichael, general manger of Petroleum Corporation Eritrea, highlighted the efforts undertaken to ensure adequate and sustainable supply of petroleum products for all sectors of the economy. Established in 1964, Assab refinery went operational in 1967 and refined 1540 tons of crude oil daily to meet the demands in Eritrea and Ethiopia. The number rose to 2,400 tons in the early independence days. However, Assab refinery was damaged due toTPLF regime's war of aggression, so it was prerequisite first to outline projects for renovation and expanding infrastructure.