

GUARDIAN 7/11/11 - POWER

# Stiegler's Gorge project set to ease power woes

By Guardian Correspondent

A serious power shortage facing Tanzania now could be a history in the near future after the completion of a huge Stiegler's Gorge Power Project, which has the potential of producing 2,100MW.

This was revealed by Rufiji Basin Development Authority (Rubada) director general Aloyce Masanja when talking to reporters in Dar es Salaam at the weekend.

A Brazilian firm, Odebrecht Company Limited, has already shown interest in the implementation of the power project. Stiegler's Gorge is found within the Rufiji Basin.

According to Masanja, a team of experts from the company visited Tanzania in August, this year, to make an assessment of the Stiegler's Gorge Power Project and concluded that the project was a viable one, easily to implement and with the capacity of producing significant electricity.

"An expert report has been presented to Rubada board of directors who have accepted it," Masanja said, adding that the next step was to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Brazilian company and Rubada.

As a sign of the government's commitment to the project and a resolve to ensure that power problems in the country get a lasting solution, Prime Minister Mizengo Pinda led recently a team of experts from Rubada and other government

officials to Brazil to learn about hydroelectricity.

"The PM led a government delegation to Brazil partly to learn about hydroelectricity. Over 85 per cent of power in that country is hydroelectricity," he said.

According to Masanja by 2015, Stiegler's Gorge Power Project will start producing electricity and, therefore, bring about relief to the ongoing power crisis experienced in the country.

Odebrecht Company Limited is reputed to be involved in big and successful construction of big hydropower projects in the world. It was involved in the construction of the world's second power project found in Brazil with the capacity of producing 14,000MW.

Apart from having projects in various parts of the world, it has also ongoing projects in neighbouring countries of Mozambique and Angola.

Once completed, Stiegler's Gorge Power Project will only occupy three per cent of the Selous Game Reserve (1,200 square metres).

According to Masanja, the whole of the Rufiji Basin has the potential of producing 4,000MW.

Currently, Tanzania needs 1,500MW but the country has the capacity of producing only 350MW.

"This is a problem that should be solved immediately for sustainable economic development," the director general said.

Brazil is reputed to have transformed her economy for the past 30 years from the low income country to a middle economy today.