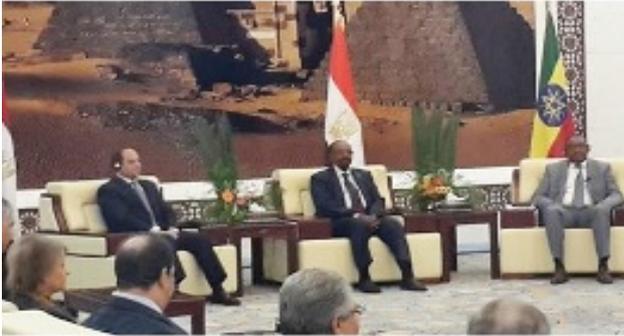


NBI congratulates Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan on signing Agreement on Declaration of Principles on GERD Project



Addis Ababa, 24 March 2015 (WIC) - Three of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) Member States namely Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan have on 23rd March, 2015 signed the Agreement on Declaration of Principles on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Project (GERD). This is a milestone in the history of cooperation on the Nile and NBI takes this opportunity to congratulate the three countries on this great achievement.

The Grand Ethiopia Renaissance Dam is a multi-billion dollar mega project on the Blue Nile River in Ethiopia with capacity to generate 6,000 Megawatt. The NBI congratulates the three countries for this outstanding achievement, expected to have immense significance for trans-boundary water resources management and development in the Nile Basin.

The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) is a 10-member transitional institution established in 1999 to promote cooperative management and development of the Nile Basin water resources to bring about socio-economic development, minimize resource based conflicts, and help change lives of millions of people living in poverty in the Nile Basin countries.

NBI has since its establishment been engaged in building both regional and national level technical and scientific capacities and institutions that facilitate joint understanding of the science of the river, and to promote dialogue and deliberation among Member States in the coordination of their respective national plans and programs. This said though, it should be pointed out that NBI is NOT a

"supranational" entity with basin-wide authority and mandate to "clear" or otherwise "approve or disapprove" national water resources investment plans and programs that sovereign Member States undertake.

NBI has always endeavored to promote dialogue among the Basin states around water resources development and management. The successful direct negotiation among the three NBI Member States is a result of the culture of dialogue, mutual trust, joint consultation and deliberation NBI has been promoting since its establishment. In fact most of the technocrats from the three countries involved in negotiations surrounding the GERD are also active participants in various NBI forums and contributed to their continuous success.

We consider NBI's invitation to this historical event as a clear recognition by the three countries, of the institution's NBI's contribution in as far as facilitating cooperation on the use of the shared Nile Basin water resources among the Nile Basin countries is concerned.

NBI encourages and urges Member States to deepen and expand this culture of joint deliberation to amicably work out any differences that might exist.

Before NBI, it was not unusual for each Nile Basin state to develop its 'own water resource' e.g. building dams without considering the implications for neighboring countries or the effect on the river elsewhere in the Basin. Associated with this was the lack of confidence and trust among the countries to engage in cooperative trans-boundary programs and projects.

Starting virtually from scratch, NBI has built and facilitated various multi-level platforms [project, national, sub-regional and regional] and multi-stakeholder platforms [policy and decision makers, opinion leaders, Members of Parliament, civil society, women, youth, communities, the private sector, media, academia, researchers and scientists] with the aim of raising awareness, promoting an informed dialogue and building a solid foundation for mutual understanding, trust and confidence so as to move forward in a cooperative way to realize tangible benefits.

We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate NBI's readiness to avail, upon the request of Member States, its technical and scientific capabilities to support joint deliberation and dialogue among Member States. (NBI)