



Waters of Trans-boundary River Nyimur Connects our Communities



Photo: Communities of Magwi, Ayaci, Pageri Counties of South Sudan, and Lamwo district of Uganda show-off the Trans-boundary cooperation symbol on Nyimur project at Waligo Border point; June 14th 2017. *Courtesy Nile Basin Discourse*

INTRODUCTION

Context

In 2015 and 2016, the NBD, NELSAP-CU, the government of South Sudan, the government of Uganda, and the local communities held with success two (2) in each country's Nyimur project area specific grassroots community meetings; in Magwi - South Sudan and in Lamwo - Uganda respectively. Therefore, the June 14th 2017 trans-boundary meeting now brought together the citizens and communities of the Nyimur project from the two countries.

The trans-boundary community engagement by the Nile Basin Discourse (NBD) on the planned Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program - Coordination Unit (NELSAP-CU) Nyimur Multipurpose Project, took place at Waligo Border Point on June 14th 2017. The engagement drew communities from Magwi and Pageri Counties of South Sudan and Paracele Parish, Palabek Ogili from Lamwo district of Uganda which in total was 60 people in attendance, of which 22 people or 30% were women, and 20 people or 30% were youth. NBD was able to engage given the collaboration, the project background information, and data availed by NELSAP-CU. The success was based on the ground arrangements by the CSOs networks in the project area, on-ground arrangements partnership with NELSAP-CU, Local Government Authorities from the two countries, women group leaders, youth leaders, and cultural leaders. At the engagement, communities' voices were clear on the connection by the waters of the River Nyimur and four key resolutions were made.

The resolutions:

- We are ready for a trans-boundary cooperation and to
- Own the NELSAP-CU project however
- We want to get more out of the project towards the enhancement of our livelihoods.
- However, should the project not be rolled-out, we still would like to cooperate, working closely with our governments to benefit our livelihoods from the waters of River Nyimur.

The NBD is a regional network of civil society organizations established in 2003 to strengthen civil society participation in Nile Basin developmental processes and programs. As a Network of networks, NBD is composed of over 600 member organizations operating throughout the Basin. The NBD received funding from Cooperation on International Waters Africa (CIWA) /World Bank (WB) and is using part of it on trans-boundary citizens and community engagement into grassroots consultation and communication on the NELSAP Nyimur Multipurpose project that is trans-boundary to South Sudan and Uganda. NBD represents CSOs on the regional, national and local multi-disciplinary technical task team to interface and provide guidance to NELSAP-CU and the governments in overseeing the project preparation and implementation phases. NBD in collaboration with NELSAP organized a trans-boundary citizen and community engagement for both Uganda and South Sudan citizens and communities that are likely to be directly or indirectly affected by investments in the Nyimur-Aswa project catchment area.

The Lamwo District - Government of Uganda

Representing the government of Uganda in Lamwo District, the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) for Lamwo, Jonathan Omara Rutabingwa, welcomed the team at the Lamwo's office premises noting that the intervention at ground level was a timely initiative.



Photo: The RDC reiterating the district's and stakeholders' support of the Nyimur Project. RDC's Office Lamwo.

He said, *"I welcome you to Lamwo district and would like to thank you for the efforts so far exhibited. I would like to reiterate the district's and stakeholders' support to both NBD's and NBI's cause to reach the communities of both Uganda and South Sudan. I further thank the Nile Basin Discourse for this initiative and concern to ensure that communities too, can have the same understanding about the project. I also must say that development in the Aswa basin was outlined in and aligned to the medium term district plans. I, therefore, would like to inform you that my office is committed to supporting the project preparation and implementation for as long as I'm still the RDC of Lamwo district, in particular with regard to securing political will and guaranteeing an enabling environment for the project processes beyond the trans-boundary community meeting. Now that you are here, I will first do final security checks together with*

other relevant mobilization requirements within and across the border for the success of this trans-boundary community meeting”.

The key issues:

- *“There is need for the communities to own the project with controlled expectations by promoting regular information sharing through such community meetings, advocacy on teething project-related issues that affect people, whether directly or indirectly”.*
- *“A strong belief is that this trans-boundary project, in nature, should be a good platform to provide communities in particular, and both countries Uganda and South Sudan at large, an opportunity to promote more cooperation and also improve the current fluid security situation between the two countries; but also contributing a whole lot to livelihoods including reducing redundancy, improving existing small scale businesses and providing income generating opportunities”.*
- *“The appeal to the two governments and sponsors of the Nyimur project is to ensure that it starts soon so that community expectations are managed effectively”.*
- *“Be informed of an existing refugee settlement camp benefiting from the Nyimur River despite the fact that it’s approximately 15km from Nyimur River. In fact, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a UN Refugee Agency, was deeply concerned about the compensation of host communities given the use of their irrigable land”.*

Nyimur Project Area Communities

The communities came from Magwi and Pageri Counties (South Sudan) and Paracele Parish, Palabek Ogili, Lamwo District (Uganda).



Photo: Mathias Mulumba coordinating the discourse of communities

Mathias Mulumba, the NBD – National Technical Support Expert (NTSE) – Uganda National Discourse Forum (UNDF) coordinated the discourse with communities which commenced with an opening prayer, followed by a self-introduction of the community members of Uganda, the visiting community members of South Sudan and other citizens present. He highlighted the objectives as being:

- To consult and sensitize on trans-boundary ownership and cooperation on the Nyimur project through awareness creation of both direct and indirect benefits and costs.
- To communicate on the status of the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) and the Re-settlement Action Plan (RAP) studies.

While the expected outcomes of the engagement were:

- A report on the face to face trans-boundary engagement that communicates and consults with communities on NELSAP Nyimur Investment project
- A possible signed communiqué out of the trans-boundary meeting on emerging concerns and resolutions.
- Consult on emerging trans-boundary concerns and resolutions for vertical and horizontal communication



Spiritual Leaders

Representing the spiritual leaders present, Rev. Gerald Ochaya Garasiano of South Sudan Evangelical Church gave the opening prayer.

Photo: The Spiritual Leader Rev. Gerald Ochaya Garasiano standing

Local Council 1 Paracelle Parish, Lamwo-Uganda

The Chairman LC1 Pan Macdonald of Paracelle Parish welcomed participants to the meeting and requested all of them to pay attention so as to give effective feedback to the communities they were representing.

Cultural Leader

The cultural leader of Paracelle Clan welcomed all participants to the land of his ancestors. He confirmed that he had reasonable understanding of the project and had participated at different levels and he committed to continue doing so for the success of the project. He wished all a fruitful meeting.



Photo: Cultural Leader (on green chair) welcomes participants on his ancestral land

The Youth

The youth leader from Magwi South Sudan welcomed the participants and affirmed the interest of the youth in the Nyimur project. He said:

“we the youth are

- seeking employment and*
- would like to participate in the planning and implementation of the project to the benefit of the future of Nyimur trans-boundary waters and our communities”*



Photo: The youth leader from Magwi South Sudan affirms the interest of the youth in the Nyimur project

Grassroots Nyimur - Uganda

Representing the Uganda National Discourse Forum (UNDF) Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Networks, Willy Parmensus Ogwal said: “In a special way, I would like to welcome and thank our brothers and sisters from South Sudan for having managed to find time, energy, and self sacrifice on behalf of the communities to come and attend the meeting in Waligo”.



Photo: Willy Parmenas Ogwal (standing) welcomes participants from South Sudan part of Nyimur to the Uganda side.

He said “The current representatives from Lamwo-Uganda received approval from the government of South Sudan, through the RDC – Lamwo, I believe that we will truly appreciate the fact that the reason we have all managed to gather here in Waligo for this trans-boundary meeting is because of the Nyimur River which we believe will be beneficial to all of us here and to our entire communities”.

The key issues:

- *We believe the Nyimur River is beneficial to our entire communities*
- *Let us cooperate to increase the benefits.*



Photo: Peter Okeny (in purple shirt) speaks to South Sudan Radio Journalist; highlights trans-boundary issues.

Grassroots Nyimur - South Sudan

Representing the Republic of South Sudan National Discourse Forum (SSNDF) Peter Okeny said, “I welcome all present to this special trans-boundary community meeting aimed at engaging us about the benefits, costs, and our roles in the Nyimur project. This is a meeting that is creating a platform to listen to the concerns of both communities. “this is an opportunity of a special trans-boundary community engagement organized by NBD, NBI-NELSAP, and the governments of South Sudan and Uganda.

I believe that this first-ever trans-boundary meeting is meant to bring together, two communities of both Uganda and South Sudan to work together in harmony and also to work together for the benefit of our communities. The Nyimur project is, therefore, meant to serve both communities and we are expected to all benefit from it; even the neighboring communities. With me at this community meeting, are participants from Pageri and Magwi counties. We were unable to meet our brothers and sisters from Ayaci County because of the inaccessible roads to Ayaci and also the political insecurity on the road to Ayaci. The current representatives from South Sudan received approval from the government of South Sudan, through the governor, whose approval notice enabled us to cross the border. We are therefore happy to have successfully made it to

this important meeting and will represent our communities very well; and also inform our brothers and sisters in Ayaci about the discussions of the meeting. I request all participants from both Uganda and South Sudan to be attentive and participate in the discussions.

The key issues:

- To understand all information on the Nyimur project.
- what is expected of us as communities.
- what benefits and costs the project is going to bring to the people of Uganda and South Sudan.



Photo: Hellen Natu, RM NBD guiding discussions on trans-boundary elements of the Nyimur Project

The Trans-boundary Elements of Nyimur Project

Guiding trans-boundary discussions and representing the NBD Secretariat was Hellen Natu, who was accompanied by Herbert Wairugala.

She said: "I start by thanking all for having found time to come and attend this trans-boundary platform that combines both participants from Uganda and South Sudan.

This is a day to remember in the history of the Nile Basin Discourse. I am pleased to observe that participation is inclusive, with the South Sudan's community, Uganda's community, Local Government Authorities, Women leaders, Youth Leaders, Opinion Leaders, Leaders of Religious Organizations and Representatives, and the CSOs network members. Know that the information being communicated on the Nyimur project has received approval and guidance from the NELSAP-CU Nyimur Project Coordinator Eng. Vincent Ssebuggwawo, and the fact that NBD has closely partnered with NELSAP-CU at the 2015 and 2016 grassroots communication and consultation meetings of Magwi-South Sudan and Lamwo-Uganda.

The key issues:

- *"The Nyimur Multipurpose water resources project for the Aswa Basin is planned to be trans-national and consist of a community-based irrigation scheme, a water reservoir, water supply, small hydropower plant, water and soil conservation components that are trans-boundary, sanitation in the adjacent areas, flood mitigation measures, watershed*

management in the areas upstream of the head dam, and aquaculture development in the main reservoir and other ponds and storage facilities. The project has two stages thus the planning stage by NELSAP-CU and implementation stage by the governments of South Sudan and Uganda”.

- *“the project involves construction of a dam at the confluence of Achwa River and its tributary - Limu River”.*
- *“the total duration of the project covering design, construction and start up activities is estimated to be 78 months of which, 30 months are estimated to be devoted to the design, 36 months for the construction of the project and 12 months to be within which, work set-up would be undertaken.”*
- *“ being given priority at the planning stage are the feeder roads, as a follow-up on concerns raised by the communities, especially women at the 2015 and 2016 grassroots meeting. Because access to markets with the agricultural products, is a challenge”.*
- *“Currently, the planning stage is on-going with the draft ESIA (Environmental and Social Impact Assessment) report, draft RAP (Re-settlement Action Plan) and draft Feasibility studies reports almost complete. The implementation stage is the roll-out by the governments of South Sudan and Uganda. At both stages the NBD and the communities are expected to participate”.*
- *“The draft ESIA and draft RAP are to be presented at a forthcoming meeting on 29th June 2017 in Juba, South Sudan”.*
- *The draft Feasibility study report is to be presented at a forthcoming meeting on 26th July 2017 in Kampala, Uganda”*
- *At the planned two meetings of 29th June and 26th July, it has been agreed with NELSAP-CU that NBD presents the emerging issues and resolutions of today’s trans-boundary meeting of the citizens and communities here at Waligo border point.*
- *While on this platform, I would like to take special note of the Ugandan and South Sudan women present and would like them to stand up for recognition. Of the women present,*

discuss among yourselves before the end of this meeting, and come up with three trans-boundary activities out of the trans-boundary Nyimur project, that should investment be made on, they would enhance trans-boundary benefits to women.

Women at Trans-boundary Discourse

The three requests from the women; to consider during socio-economic intervention processes at the implementation stage of the project include:

- A trans-boundary Training School in relation to the project in order to promote skilled women labor for equitable employment and empowerment.
- Trans-boundary small scale/ cottage industries such as a juice extraction firm, and
- Trans-boundary Micro finance or loans program to facilitate production and value addition in income generating projects benefiting from By-products of livestock and fruits and vegetables.



Photo: Women expressing their views and expectations at the Trans-boundary meeting in Waligo

Trans-boundary Emerging Issues

- A procedure ought to be put in place to ensure that peace prevails because, without peace, the project may not succeed.
- At preparation and implementation, a procedure ought to be put in place to ensure that trans-boundary labor from local communities is utilized at all times for non-technical manual labor as may be required.
- At implementation, the project will be expected to sign a trans-boundary MOU or agreement with the community
- Capacity Building at community level to ensure that there is continuity in monitoring.
- Culture of both communities ought to be recognized.

- There ought to be effective compensation of Project Affected Persons (PAPS). A procedure ought to be put in place to address land conflicts that may arise as a result of the project. (In that regard, the meeting was informed of the preparation of a RAP that will ensure all land related issues of Project Affected Persons (PAPs) are addressed mitigated and compensated) prior to project implementation.)
- Communities ought to be encouraged to form groups for easy project implementation. Special categories to include youth groups, women groups and groups for the disabled.
- Trans-boundary exchange visits for communities and their leaders will be a necessity to be considered.

The resolutions:

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- Own the planned Nyimur project however
- We would like to get more benefits out of the project, towards the enhancement of our livelihoods.
- However, should the project not be rolled-out, we still would like to cooperate, working closely with our governments to benefit our livelihoods from the waters of River Nyimur.

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Partners

The Nile Basin Initiative
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The Government of
South Sudan and the
Government of Uganda

Communities

Trans-National
communities of the
Nyimur Project; Magwi of
South Sudan and Lamwo
of Uganda