

NBD's face at Nile Day 2011



This is the 10-year-old poet Moise Iyungu from Goma town in DR Congo. His message was clear on Nile Day - What is the Nile Basin?

Moise Iyungu was one of the several children who competed in a Nile Day Poetry contest at Goma Town's Volcanic Observatory premises. He emerged winner with his eloquently recited poem about the Nile Basin in which he engaged his audience. A video of his recitation is posted both on the NBD website and Facebook pages. Visit: www.nilebasindiscourse.org for further details.

During the Regional Nile Day celebrations in Goma, DR Congo, the NBD rared a face of a serious 10-year-old poet, determined to drive his message home. It is true given that issues surrounding Nile Cooperation and Development affect even the babies waiting to be born in the Nile Basin.

On this occasion, the NBD went to Goma with three key messages for the celebrants to:

- i) Increase collaboration in utilization and information sharing for better disaster preparedness and attainment of MDGs in the Nile Basin
- ii) Make community participation meaningful to achieve sustainable water resources management in the Nile Basin,
- iii) Integrate Gender in Nile cooperation processes and programmes for poverty reduction

While the organisers of the celebrations - Nile Basin Initiative made everything possible for NBD to participate, the local Civil society took advantage of every opportunity to make sure the three key messages that NBD was carrying, had to arrive to the intended audience.

The NBD-SEC team at the celebrations included Ms Abby Onencan the regional Manager, Sarah Naigaga the Programme Development, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer and the Communication officer Davis Weddi, all led by the NBD Vice Chairperson Mr. Wesley Chirchir. Together with the local NBD representation in Goma town, they prepared with several activities including competitions based on the people's knowledge about the Nile Basin. Surprisingly, several elequent children showed up and swept the top positions in the competitions organised by a DRC NDF team led by locally based member L. Mutangala.

The issue at hand was to ensure Civil Society issues are heard and with zealous members like Mutangala, the mobilisation of members was effective as it turned out that the NBD messages touched the Ministers from the other Nile Basin countries.

The NBD also took the liberty to donate garbage bins to Goma's famus Virunga market that was at one time covered by lava when the Nyirangongo volcano came alive.

Infact the Sudan Minister of Irigation and Water resources Kamal Ali Mohamed in his closing remarks expressed appreciation to the role performed by the NBD for being a very active network of CSOs. "We hail and salute the efforts their are performing to communités of the Nile Basin," he said.

ALSO IN THIS Issue

- Nile Day in Goma
- Rwanda NDF gets visitors from NBD-SEC
- Speeches of the Ministers and top Nile Basin officials on Nile Day
- Tanzania NDF meets Journalists
- New NBD website launched
- Ethiopian lawyers discuss legal issues about NBI transformation into a Commission

NILE BASIN DISCOURSE

PO Box 185

Entebbe, Uganda

www.nilebasindiscourse.org

Tel: +256414322432

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FROM NBD-SEC

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EDITORIAL

Welcome yet again to the February 2011 edition of Nile Voices newsletter.

There have been many developments since January 2011. The biggest news is that finally the uncertainty over the future of the Nile Basin Initiative has ended with Burundi signing the Cooperative Framework Agreement on February 28th 2011.

This month's publication of Nile Voices is going to highlight some of the developments that took place during the Nile Day celebrations firstly at the regional level in Goma town of DR Congo and then at the various Nile Basin countries. In Focus will be the activities of NBD and how it has engaged its primary targets - creating awareness among the the Civil Society and engaging various sectors including the Media, Academia and the governments.

This issue will also fully publicise the press release about NBD's planned entrance into the newly born state of Southern Sudan, a country through which the River Nile flows majestically.

Back to the Nile Day Celebrations, this issue will bring forth some of the most touching words that were said by both Minister and high-ranking officials from the Nile Basin countries that participated in the Nile Day celebrations in Goma, a border town on the beautiful shores of Lake Kivu.

of course we also will not forget that a picture tells a thousand words, that is why you will notice an increased number of photo stories.

Finally, this issue also brings you a new face of a bold 10-years old Moise Iyungu the poet who became the face of NBD on Nile Day when he recited a moving poem about the Nile Basin.

In case you have good ideas on how to better improve our newsletter, do not hesitate to write to the editorial committee by e-mail to: media@nilebasindiscourse.org. Also if you wish to submit an opinion in relation to our activities or even an important idea regarding the Nile Basin, please use the same e-mail address. However, it is not gaurantee that we shall publish every article in the printed newsletter, others will have to be uploaded to our website: www.nilebasindiscourse.org

COMMUNIQUE OF NILE BASIN DISCOURSE

22 February 2011

On the occasion of the 5th Nile Day celebrations

1. The Nile Basin Discourse (NBD) joins the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) and all the Riparian states in the Nile day celebrations.
2. NBD highly commends NBI for coming up with the strategic theme – "All together for better cooperation."
3. We affirm that the theme is relevant to the current situation emphasizing the profound need for all governments in the Nile Basin to work together, given the emerging challenges, such as Climate change, food insecurity, political instability and declining socio –economic opportunities;
4. We congratulate the NBI and the riparian states for the achievements towards cooperation over the past 11 years, where approximately 12,000 people have been directly involved in the cooperation processes;
5. We recognize that Nile cooperation has evolved and is transitioning to a permanent process that will guarantee benefits to the riparian people;
6. We note that over the past 2 years under the ISP, the Shared Vision has become clear, feasible and visible to all key actors;
7. We express concern that there continues to be a substantial shortfall on strategies to cope with increasing resources degradation across the Nile Basin and a further deficit in the commitment by the states to sustain NBI gains so as to effectively manage shared resources, benefits and costs jointly;
8. We are fully support-ive of the CFA process and want it to reach a successful conclusion. There is much which all the governments have agreed, but there remain areas of disagreement, particularly over the status of earlier agree-ments. Since all parties are already committed to Nile cooperation in principle, discussions should reflect this positive attitude and commitment.
9. We welcome the notable progress by NBI towards designing and establishing an institutional framework and hope that this will establish an institution that will embrace the common vision for managing our Shared Resource;
10. We are convinced that the established collaborations and partnership under the MoU will contribute to the ensuring that everyone benefits from the Nile resources especially the vulnerable and marginalized people in the Nile Basin;

We commit ourselves to:

- Continue developing strategies for implementing the NBD/NBI MoU;
- Continue promoting Nile cooperation by creating awareness among stakeholders to bring on board, constructive perspectives of civil society and affected communities;
- Disseminate NBI stock of knowledge and information to civil society and communities;
- Promote and encourage effective and open communication at all levels of Nile Basin communities about what is going on regarding Nile cooperation and development, especially with Media;
- Pro - actively engage in the Nile Cooperation processes for the developments of policies and guidelines that will enable everyone play their role;
- Build a critical mass of constituents in the different countries of the Nile Basin to play a pro-active role in information gathering for awareness and advocacy on Nile Developments and benefits;
- Document NBD results to inform policy and strengthen our national chapters to synthesize information on issues affecting the communities

We call on the NBI and Riparian states to:

- Create adequate linkage between the shared resources management data and the negotiation process to increase understanding and awareness among non-actors;
- Integrate gender perspectives in the engagements on Nile Cooperation to reduce poverty among the riparian communities;
- Increase media engagement targeting the use and dissemination of popular versions on Nile Cooperation;
- Initiate and increase Private sector and academician involvement; and
- Provide more space, resources and time for stakeholder participation and consultations.

News and Nile Day Speeches

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NBD-SEC visitors at Rwanda NDF



The NBD Vice Chair Mr. Wesley Chirchir, RNDF Coordinator John Gakumba, RNDF Chair Mr. JB Habyaremye, NBD Regional Manager Ms Abby Onencan, NBD Prog. Dev't Monitoring & Evaluation Officer Sarah Naigaga and RNDF Prog. Assistant Joachim Ntunda, in the RNDF resource centre.

BY JOACHIM NTUNDA

On February 23rd, 2011, the Rwanda NDF got a rare opportunity to host a team from the NBD secretariat and the NBD Board.

Despite the surprise, Rwanda NDF coordinator John Gakumba, quickly swung into action ushering the team consisting of NBD Board Vice Chairman Wesley Chirchir, the Regional Manager Ms Abby Onencan, Programme Development, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer Ms Sarah Naigaga and Communication Officer Davis Weddi.

The Rwanda NDF Chair Mr. Jean Baptiste Habyaremye who also doubles as NBD Board Treasurer arrived shortly. Meanwhile John Gakumba took the visiting team around their office located in Remera, a suburb of Kigali city.

Gakumba showed the visiting team around the NDF's resource centre. He particularly pointed the team to the Rwanda NDF publications. They included:

1. Project development, sustainability management and community needs assessment
2. Training report on environmental impact assessment
3. Final report on communities' involvement in the efficient water use in agriculture project (EWUAP)
4. Training report on integrated water resource management and restoration of water sheds
5. Achievement report of the past year 2006 – 2009
6. Training report on skills for enhancing viability of hydropower dams and their alternatives
7. Report on Stakeholders participation in the Nile basin initiative (NBI) project program in Rwanda

Both Ms Abby Onencan and Ms Sarah Naigaga were impressed with the work of the RNDF team and advised them to distribute the publications at the forthcoming NEL Sub Regional Forum due in Kigali this March.

The team also delivered some publications in French language to the desk of the Advocacy officer for the NEL region Mr. Emmanuel Makuza who was away busy organising for the regional forum.

With this impromptu visit to the Rwanda NDF, it will now be very important for the NDFs to always be prepared to host guests from the secretariat any time, just like the Rwanda NDF.

Rwanda Minister says - One Nile - One Family!



Ambassador Stanislas Kamanzi

"It is a distinct honour to extend to the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, warmest greetings from their sisters and brothers in Rwanda.

On this momentous day, we are delighted to be so graciously hosted by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as we celebrate the Nile Day for the 12th time.

This year's theme cannot be more timely. Our Nations have indeed resolved to come together with one same aim to optimally tap the Nile Basin water resources to advance the development agenda of our respective peoples, based on the principles of equity and cooperation.

Since the creation of the Nile Basin initiative we have registered significant progress in implementing the programs that were envisioned in that connection. More is certainly to come, as we move forward in harmony.

We have gone quite a long way towards setting up a permanent framework that will regulate our future actions at national and basin levels. Rwanda firmly believes that the faster we get to operationalise that framework, the most effectively we will be able to deliver, relative to our shared vision and core development objectives. In this endeavour, we steadfastly joined the NBI Countries that signed the Cooperative Framework Agreement as had been agreed under the able leadership of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, represented by Your Excellency Jose Endundo Bononge, then at the helm of the Nile Council of Ministers.

Rwanda still stands by the necessity for having the Cooperative Framework Agreement signed and ratified by all the Nile riparian States with no further delay. We always consider the contemplated Nile River Commission as our common shelter under which our due share will be safeguarded commensurate with our respective needs.

The very spirit of togetherness and cooperation under which we are celebrating the Nile Day today should allay the fears and suspicions that have consistently prevented us from leapfrogging to realizing the dreams of our populations.

As we meet today, Rwanda expresses her hopes that sooner than later we will once again get together to celebrate a new era; with the consecration of the Nile River Commission as a mechanism that will facilitate the effective translation of our ambitions into mutually beneficial outcomes to sustain the socio economic advancement of our respective Nations.

One Nile, One Family.

Thank you very much for your very kind attention."

[Hon. Ambassador Stanislas Kamanzi, Minister of Environment of Rwanda]

NILE DAY 2011 IN GOMA, DRC

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How NBD-SEC staff did it in Goma

NBD's

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LAUNCHED



The NBD smile from Ms. Sarah Naigaga (Prog. Dev't, Monitoring and Evaluation officer) and Ms Abby Onencan (Regional Manager) on arriving at Goma's Ihusi Hotel the venue for the main Nile Day 2011 Celebrations. They immediately held a meeting with local NBD Members to organise the Civil Society's activities to mark the Nile Day in Goma town.

NBD Regional Manager Ms Abby Onencan on Nile day 2011, launched the new redesigned website of the civil society network NBD. The launch coincided with the Nile Basin Initiative's website launch in Goma, DRC.

While launching the website, Onencan said "NBD commends NBI for the joint NBI-NBD launch of the websites. Our journey through partnership has been long with numerous successes along the way. But today, our commitment to participate and renew this partnership is clear when we jointly launch our websites."

The new website brings in new features enabling interaction between the users and the resources available in the website. The following are the new features of the new website:

- The e-resource center which has been revived. With this, the NBD commits itself to continue to promote cooperation by creating awareness among the stakeholders to bring on board constructive perspectives of the civil society and the affected communities.

- The membership section which has a list of all our members and membership guidelines. With this, the NBD commits to disseminate the NBD NBI stock of knowledge and information of all CSO and the communities.

- Where we work - indicating the contacts of NBD and the NDF's in 10 riparian countries. With this, the NBD commits to build a critical mass of constituents in the different countries who know about Nile Cooperation and are working positively to promote Nile cooperation programmes and processes and engage actively in raising issues that will implement the programmes.

- The current news section, which comes with additional plugins featuring social networking abilities for users on Facebook and Twitter, NBD commits to promote and encourage effective and open communication at all levels of Nile Basin communities.

- Discussion forums for all key issues of NBI log in and discuss key issues

- Where to find NBD, - this is very critical part, within this we can actually know what is happening at the National level. we commit we are going to engage proactively in Nile cooperation processes and engage NBI actively at national level.

Ms Onencan said that NBD wants the Civil Society to engage effectively in NBD programs and processes. She called on NBI to also play the role by providing additional resources and time for partnership.



The NBD Vice Chairperson Mr. Wesley Chirchir leading the way with a broom in one hand and the handle of one of the eight garbage bins that NBD donated to Goma Town's Virunga Market. The market was cleaned by Ministers and top officials from Nile Basin countries as part of the celebrations to mark Nile Day 2011.

Nile Day Theme: "All together for better cooperation."

The Civil Society message to Nile Basin Governments



Increase collaboration in utilization and information sharing for better disaster preparedness and attainment of MDGs in the Nile Basin



Make community participation meaningful to achieve sustainable water resources management in the Nile Basin



Integrate Gender in Nile cooperation processes and programmes for poverty reduction

NILE DAY SPEECHES

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What the NBI Executive Director said!

[Edited]

... Today, we commemorate the glory moment when the Nile Basin Initiative was established in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in 22 February 1999.

From the wonderful Province of North Kivu, in Goma, east of the Democratic Republic of Congo; I want to thank all our guests and partners for attending this important event, this is a demonstration of your commitment and strong belief in the NBI's process and successes. The theme for 2011 celebration is "All Together for Better Cooperation" emphasizing the importance of regional cooperation among the Nile Basin countries.

Achievements:

The River Nile, its natural resources and environment are assets of immense value to all the riparian countries and long-lasting cooperation among its nine states. We need to continue to promote integrated management, sustainable development and equitable utilization of the water resources, for the benefit of the present and future generations in the Nile Basin. As we continue to develop our young institution (the NBI) we look forward to a bright future of cooperative management and development of the Nile water resources...

...Today; as we celebrate the Regional Nile Day, we take this opportunity to look back on the progress we have done, reflect, and evaluate our accomplished achievements under the NBI umbrella. NBI has made great strides towards the realization of its shared vision. Within the Shared Vision track, a basin wide capacity building and water resources planning program for large investments to take place on the ground has been conducted in the region. The NBI is currently developing a powerful tool for Basin planning of our common water resources in the Basin. The Decision Support System targets to support decision-makers to select the optimum investment planning options and best water resources management practices at national and regional levels.

...NBI targets key elements that can spur and leverage the desired sustainable development in the Nile Basin. Our governments' institutions have increasingly thinking of transboundary-oriented type of projects, while in planning and investment of our shared water resources. This with no-doubt realizes the consolidation of the gains, the sustainability of the good practices, as well as the achievements acquired during the past twelve years of NBI operations.

The level of trust and confidence among the Nile Basin countries to enrich open dialogue fora and to work together for the common good has tremendously improved. This was manifested as early as 2003 when the Ministers in charge of Water Affairs in the Nile Basin Countries instructed NBI to scale-up the investment's related activities to face the challenges in the region and to improve the livelihood of our peoples. Countries have noted that regional challenges require regional approaches and collective actions in order to have sustainable solutions...

...I would like to reiterate that "Cooperation" on the Nile can generate wider significant benefits for all riparian states (such as poverty eradication, electricity production, economic growth, and environmental protection). In addition, the basin-wide cooperation –without the slightest doubt- helps to minimize the impacts of climate change (e.g., frequent floods & droughts, and rising temperatures), which come with challenges that are so weighty to be overcome

by unilateral actions, but require cooperation at both regional and international levels.

On the investment track, the Subsidiary Action Program of NBI has been scoring remarkable progress in launching a significant investment portfolio to support water development, in establishing a regional institution, and in building capacity for basin-wide water management. More than 20 large projects have been prepared in the different areas that are generic to water resources. The NBI is converting the capacity built during the last 12 years into well-designed development projects that are ready for investment. Notable among those areas are fisheries; Watershed Management, Hydropower Generation & Transmission; Water resources Management and Development; Environment Protection; Agriculture; and Cross-border Trade.

In line with NBI's Strategic Action Plan, NBI is pursuing the development track through the investment preparation activities. The Regional Coordination Centers of NBI (in Entebbe, Uganda, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and in Kigali, Rwanda) have made significant progress towards preparing investment projects and resource mobilization for implementation. To date, the NBI has secured more than USD 76 Million in pre-investment financing used to prepare large joint development investment projects in the Nile Basin that have exceeded USD 784 Million. NBI plans that the cost of investment projects could exceed US\$ 2.4 Billion by 2025. These projects aim at assisting the Nile Countries to manage our key challenges in the Nile Basin (such as: flood hazards, power cuts and power shortage, deficit in agricultural productivity, food security, and environmental degradation), in addition, the overarching goal is to achieve the promising economic growth for our countries...

...Accordingly; I trust you will agree with me that the NBI is strongly contributing to the Nile Countries' long-term efforts towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals through the implementation of its investment projects. Furthermore; the direct benefits achieved from cooperation will likely spur broader benefits 'beyond the river', such as commodity trade and agro-industrial products trade, and helping to establish strong economic ties that bind countries together within a framework of regional integration.

Challenges

As NBI progresses in preparation and implementation of its investment projects, there is a need to identify and secure considerable funding mechanisms for these joint projects. A few of those projects have already secured funding and are currently in the implementation phase. But the majority are still lacking fund and need to be promoted. I call upon our governments to consider prioritization of fund required for the implementation of the NBI projects so that the fruits of the joint hard work in the Basin are realized on the ground for the good of our people.

On its part, NBI has for the last two years been engaged in institutional strengthening efforts aiming at scaling-up its institutional and human capacity in order to deliver on its mandate. Through these efforts, suitable institutional measures will be proposed to the countries; other key deliverables that affect the core functionality of any river basin organization, like financial

management system, human resources policy, and sustainability policy framework, among others are being developed by NBI through regional consultative and participatory approaches. NBI staff and stakeholders need really to applaud for themselves for the remarkable gains they have registered in such a short time.

However; as we move toward the investment phase, NBI needs to have commensurate legal and institutional capacity to leverage the complex and more challenging issues that relate to investments. Countries need to accord NBI such capacity to enable operations related to investment in order to take place smoothly. The human and institutional capacity needs to be continually built to cope with the demands of the development.

Way forward

The journey from 1999 has been long and rugged, but our inspiration is in the hope of achieving the important shared benefits through cooperative efforts among the Nile Basin countries. As we pursue our shared vision, we considered the experiences of shared water resources management in other parts of the world; also other river basins which have faced similar or more challenging bottlenecks and considerably longer time to be matured. In fact; NBI is currently working at a critical time of embarking on its investment projects following which our population will start reaping on the benefits of cooperation in a more meaningful manner. I appeal for continued commitment and support by all our riparian governments and development partners so that our efforts are translated into tangible benefits for all citizens in the region.

Once again, I want to assure you that NBI is a strong vehicle to achieve peace, prosperity, stability and poverty eradication in our countries. Fostering "regional cooperation" and continuing financial ownership to the NBI process are the fastest and certain keys to achieve regional integration, improved livelihood, and economic growth to our countries; this is particularly very important at this critical stage.

I thank very much our governments for their commitments and support to the NBI work so far. I want also to applaud our Development Partners for their continued financial and technical support to the NBI's processes and functions. Let us realize our theme for this celebration of the Regional Nile Day "All together for better cooperation"

Before I conclude; NBI also is aware of the importance to keep all its governance, stakeholders, and partners aware of the updates of the NBI development projects and activities. In this regard; I am pleased to announce the launching of the new Nile Basin Initiative website which will be pursued today.

Finally; I want to give a vote of thanks to the Government, people of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and particularly the Governor of North Kivu Province in Goma for the legendary warm hospitality accorded to our delegations today and yesterday, and also whenever we have assembled in the Democratic Republic of Congo for NBI business.

I wish you all Happy Nile Day Celebrations!

Thank You,

[Dr. Wael Khairy, Executive Director NBI]

“Be Proud of our cooperative achievements” says Egypt Minister

It gives me great pleasure to be with you today in this beautiful city of Goma in the occasion of celebrating the historical occasion of signing the Nile Basin Initiative agreement on the 22 of February 1999.

I would like to thank Honourable Jose Endundo the Minister of Environment natural Conservation and Tourism as well as the Government of D.R. Congo for the warm welcome and the hospitality, we received since we arrived in Goma.

Twelve years ago, the ten Countries of the Nile River agreed to launch the Nile Basin Initiative(NBI), and since then we have all collaborated together to genuinely fulfil the noble and valuable goals of the NBI.

Across the span of those twelve years, extensive efforts have been in alignment to promote our inclusive regional cooperation, and have been a witness to a diversity of outstanding activities at many levels. Under the umbrella of the NBI' operations have been supported by the overarching willingness and sincere commitment of the basin countries for cooperation.

We all should be proud with our cooperative achievements over the last years and since the launching of the Nile Basin Initiative.

In my point of view, remarkable success has taken place in both fields of Shared Vision Program and Subsidiary Action Program. This success is clearly reflected in the unprecedented support and commitment of our cooperative partners towards our vision and SAPs.

However we need to acknowledge at this particular stage that we just laid the foundations and there are still many challenges ahead of us.

I have no doubt that our commitments towards achieving the prosperity and welfare of our people will be a catalyst for optimizing our cooperation in the Nile Basin.

A cooperation that will contribute to achieve our noble goals to enhance the utilization of the Nile waters for the benefit of all our people in the Basin.

I take this opportunity to reiterate the Egyptian People and Government's commitment to cooperate for the welfare of all sister countries of the Nile Basin. We view the Nile Water as a source of cooperation not a source of contention. At this point, I need to emphasize the importance of maintaining the appropriate environment which has been created through the Nile Basin Initiative, such an environment of trust, transparency and strong determination to achieve our common vision.

Before I conclude, I must say that the Nile Basin has great opportunities that have not been tapped yet. Through our collective work, we have achieved a lot over the past 11 years and we have nothing left but to continue our partnership of trust and cooperation as we promised ourselves, our peoples as well as our development partners.

We all look forward to reach a united basin based on the “Win-Win Principle and materialize the interest of all Nile Basin States with no exception.

Finally, it is my pleasure and honour to be with you here today, and I would like to thank Honourable Minister Jose Endundo, the Minister of Environment, Natural Conservation and Tourism, the Government of D.R. Congo, and the people of D.R. Congo for hosting this day and their warm welcome since our arrival.

God bless you all and thank you.

[H.E. DR. HUSSEIN EL ATFY, Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation, Egypt]

The words of the Ethiopian Minister (Nile-COM chair)

...It gives me great pleasure and honour to join you in these regional celebrations of this important day in our calendar, Nile Day, when we commemorate the birth of our cooperation through Nile Basin Initiative, as well as celebrate our common heritage, the Nile Water resources, On behalf of the Nile Council of Ministers and my own behalf, I wish to welcome you all and thank you for finding time to participate in this important vent.

I wish to thank our hosts the Government and People of the Democratic Republic of Congo for the warm hospitality accorded to our delegations and the excellent arrangements put in place for this event.

The journey of Nile Cooperation has been long and rugged and indeed we have overcome many challenges and odds to be where we are as NBI member states. Credible gains have been realised and we are stronger and confident to face the future that when we started. As we start on the thirteenth year of NBI, let me take this opportunity to applaud our predecessors in positions of governance and authority who planned, formed, nurtured and sustained this cooperation through progressive joint efforts in addressing our common challenges. Over the years, we have seen transformations in our perceptions on transboundary issues. We have seen and appreciated our unique conditions in the diverse basin characteristics. Our bonding as sons and daughters of the Nile is stronger that ever as we face the future. While the interventions through our cooperation are commendable and giving hope for better future, the challenges of achieving the shared vision are enormous.

I take this opportunity to rally our governments to double our efforts and commitment in responding to these challenges. Livelihoods of our peoples deserve to be better and free of abject poverty. Our environment is rapidly and continually being degraded. Our predominantly rural based population that depends largely on natural resources for their livelihood deserves to be provided with a broad base of sources of livelihood that does not compromise our mother nature. Sustainable utilisation of natural resources needs to be promoted and adequate resources invested in it. While NBI is supporting regional efforts in these endeavours, the national inputs to this cause are key factor to success. As we celebrate this important day, let us reflect on these important issues of sustainable development in our African context.

Cooperation presents a great opportunity to have impact on the overarching challenges of development in the region. Our common voice as united countries for sustainable development on the Nile is larger and louder than unilateral development agenda. The countries benefit from economies of scale and at the same time achieve holistic solutions to national development. Our diverse setting create comparative advantages that can leverage and compliment each other in our development efforts. Therefore the theme chosen for this year's Nile Day is fitting as it calls for togetherness in our cooperative efforts. We need to learn from each other through sharing of experiences and regional networking of our professionals. Identification of best practices and replacing them in different parts of the region is another avenue of benefit. Through the Cooperation, NBI has been able to partner with key development agencies that have support greatly our development activities, especially through building capacity, and preparing investment projects. For this I wish to applaud our development partners.

While we focus our efforts to the various challenges faces in the basin, let us not lose sight of the climate that is increasingly becoming unbearable. Our economies, which are largely agricultural-based, are highly sensitive to the climate patterns and severity. We are increasingly seeing floods and droughts occurrences, followed by famines. These extreme events damage our vulnerable infrastructure and retard our development trend. The extent of these events does not follow national boundaries. These are regional challenges and therefore need regional solutions. NBI as a water-based institution has a role to play in supporting the regional responses. I implore you, management of NBI, to give attention to this matter in its various facets as we strive to climate proof and institute adaptation measures.

As you are all aware, the Nile Basin countries are at a critical stage of finalising the cooperative legal and institutional arrangements for the holistic management and development of Nile water resources. This exercise has taken over fourteen years and a lot of resources, both foreign and local have been invested in it. Countries have painfully waited on each other patiently, in the hope that feasible and acceptable breakthroughs would be found. At the same time, the need for a more effective institutional structure that can leverage the development plans for the Nile Basin is required. Again we are at a critical stage when we need to secure financing of NBI investment projects that have so far been prepared. Our different approaches, including the institutional strengthening studies are envisaged to provide with good analytical considerations to meet some of these challenges. The spirit of cooperation and zeal to achieve our desired goals supersedes those obstacles.

In conclusion, I wish to once again thank you all for participating in this year's regional Nile Day celebrations. I take this opportunity to also thank our development partners who have unconditionally extended generous support, especially in funding and technical matters to NBI since its formation. I also wish to applaud our countries for the unwavering commitment to the NBI process.

I thank you all.

[H.E. ATO ALEMAYEHU TEGENU MINISTER OF WATER AND ENERGY OF ETHIOPIA AND NILE-COM CHAIRPERSON]

NILE DAY NEWS AND SPEECHES

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Kenya has reaped several benefits from NBI - Minister

... It is my great pleasure for me to have been invited to participate in this year's Nile Day celebration. This day, which is celebrated on the 22nd February each year, is an important event and in my view should be used to reflect on the achievements of NBI.

In relation to this year's theme: "ALL TOGETHER FOR BETTER COOPERATION", This theme should inspire all the Nile Basin countries to seek to develop the River Nile in a cooperative manner, share substantial socioeconomic benefits and promote regional peace and security. Cooperative water resources management is complex in any international river basin. It is particularly difficult in the Nile Basin, which is characterised by water scarcity, poverty, rapidly growing populations and increased demand for water.

In order to address the challenges within the basin, the NBI started with a participatory process of dialogue among the riparians that resulted in their agreeing on a shared vision, i.e. to "achieve sustainable socioeconomic development through the equitable utilisation of, and benefit from, the common Nile Basin water resources."

I wish to let you know that my country has reaped several benefits from the NBI programmes. Several projects have been implemented in Kenya through NBI programmes. These include (i) the Angurai water project, (ii) Sio-Malaba-Malikisi Transboundary Water resources Management project, (iii) Mara integrated watershed management programme which is aimed at addressing watershed degradation and ultimately ensure sustained water flows and long lifespan of water infrastructure.

In Kenya, we all realise that through NBI activities, the country has been able to achieve substantial progress in the management and development of some of our shared river basin. I am therefore pleased to take this opportunity to thank all the key players in this initiative. In this regard, I am pleased to thank our development partners for their continued support for these ongoing projects, as well as putting in place plans for supporting other projects that will contribute toward enhancing socio-economic development, poverty reduction and ensuring sustainable environmental protection in the Nile Basin.

It is important to underscore these tangible benefits that accrue from implementation of these projects and help to dispel suspicions and consolidate relationships between riparian states, hence assist us in making a case for greater cooperation among ourselves. The principles of integrated water resources management (IWRM) and cooperative management of shared water resources are not easily understood by Wanainchi when they are not linked to tangible outputs of the kind that river basin projects of Mara or Sio-Malaba-Malikisi should deliver.

In view of this, the greatest challenge for the riparian countries is to ensure that the shared water resources are sustainably managed. Towards this end, there is need for cooperation in order to reverse the current trend of environmental degradation. Without joint action today, there will be irreversible consequences which include loss of habitat, revenue from tourism as well as fisheries.

In conclusion, I therefore urge all the countries within the Nile Basin to join hands in working towards a better future through sustainable use and management of our resources and conservation of our environment.

Finally, it is my hope that by the end of these celebrations, we will not only be adequately informed but also we will have contributed our views that will lead to the realisation of the objectives of the NBI programme.

Thank you for your attention.

[HON. CHARITY KALUKI NGILU, EGH, MP MINISTER FOR WATER AND IRRIGATION - KENYA]

Transboundary Waters: Very important to Uganda - Minister

... It is my honour and pleasure that I am invited to attend the Nile Day celebrations for 2011 which are held in the beautiful city of Goma in the Democratic Republic of Congo. I would like to thank the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo for the hospitality accorded to the delegation from Uganda ever since we arrived in the city of Goma.

On the occasion of the 2011 Regional Nile Day celebrations, I would like to express my happiness at the great strides that NBI fraternity has taken towards achieving sustainable socio-economic development through the equitable utilization of and benefit from, the common Nile Basin water resources as a vehicle for poverty eradication.

Ladies and Gentlemen, nearly the whole of Uganda's water resources lie in the Nile basin. Uganda receives water from upstream countries of Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, DRC and Burundi. On the other hand, Uganda does not only generate additional water into the Nile river from rainfall and river flow within her territory, but also is the 'tap' where water is released to downstream countries of Sudan and Egypt. With this complicated relationship the government Uganda attaches a lot of importance to cooperation with neighbouring countries who share transboundary water with Uganda.

Without cooperation on transboundary water management, Uganda is constrained in its effort to attract funding in order to put in place large scale investments that require international financing support, such as power dams, irrigation schemes and large scale water supply plants' without seeking consents of other countries. In the absence of transboundary water cooperation, Uganda can do very little with her large scale water resources development for enhancing quality of life of Ugandans.

Fellow celebrants, every country in the Nile basin is seeking to satisfy its water needs from the limited water resources. Coupled with climate change and its associated impacts that are mostly manifesting through the hydrological cycle, some foresee a future filled with conflicts and threats to our prosperous existence as citizens of the Nile Basin.

There is already evidence that both droughts and floods have increased in frequency and severity over the past 30 years. The current drought across the Nile Equatorial countries' a region endowed with great lakes and the Nile Basin in general has led to serious water scarcity and food shortage in several areas. This is causing socio-economic interruption including reduced hydropower and agricultural production a back bone of many national economies.

In the wake of climate change we are likely to see the interdependence of water and societies more pronounced a situation that will lead to increased vulnerability to climate change, water and food security Problems, and conflicts.

However these challenges can easily be overcome if we continue moving together along the path of cooperation as we have done for the passed 11 years under the NBI.

Ladies and gentlemen, today's Nile Day theme, "All Together for Better Cooperation" is a timely initiative to address the challenges that are working against realisation of our vision.

The two pillars on which the Nile Basin Initiative has built its action, that is to say: the Shared Vision Programme that seeks to foster trust and cooperation, and the Subsidiary Action Programme the investment arm; both are still critical in averting the imposing dangers in as far as climate change adaptability, water security and sustainable development are concerned I believe that with better cooperation, if the two programmes of the NBI are well executed, they will go along way to delivering prosperity to our people.

Dear fellow celebrants, with the strides that we have achieved on the negotiations on the cooperative framework, hydropower development and transmission, agricultural development and trade, and so forth, we have all the reasons to celebrate... and as we even seek for more achievements, it is important that we move together as a whole to tackle the enormous challenges that lay ahead of us.

On the same note, let me once again reiterate Uganda's continued support and commitment to cooperation on the Nile.

I wish you good celebrations of the Nile day'

[HON. MAIRA MUTAGEMBA, MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENT OF UGANDA]

“Our common voice as united countries for sustainable development on the Nile is larger and louder than unilateral development agenda.”

H.E. Ato Alemayehu Tegnu, Minister of Water and Energy of Ethiopia and Nile-COM Chairperson

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Double celebration for DRC NDF as new members sign up on Nile Day



The Adou Institute football team clad in NBD T-shirts after beating Mapenzi Institute team in Mahagi town near the DR Congo border with the West Nile Region of Uganda.

While DRC NDF Chair Dr. Meni Malikwisha was in Goma town for the regional Nile Day celebrations, the NDF's National Programme coordinator Mathias Kwabene was busy bringing the celebration nearer to people residing in DRC's Nile Basin areas in Ituri including Bunia and Mahagi towns.

To the delight of the NDF fraternity, Mr. Kwabene registered a growing interest of groups wanting to join NBD. He received 24 new members for the DRC NDF on Nile Day.

Apart from registering new members, the NDF organized some activities including a football match in Mahagi which is a town nearer the border with Uganda's West Nile region. In that Nile day football match, Adou Institute football team of Mahagi emerged winners after beating Mapenzi Institute's team two – zero, sending the entire youthful population in Mahagi into a festive frenzy and a first time Nile Day bonanza of celebration.

It is important to note that it was the very first time that most if not all residents in this part of the Nile Basin, got informed about the NBD and NBI activities including the Nile Day celebrations.

Compiled by Mathias Kwabene

North Kivu minister meets NBD Manager



NBD Regional Manager Ms. Abby Onencan (left) met and discussed various wide-ranging issues, with North Kivu Provincial Minister of Environment Madame Kabimbi (right) at Ihusi Hotel in Goma town on Nile Day 2011.

Tanzania NDF meets Journalists

BY ULRICH MSAMI

TNDF organized a meeting with media people on Tuesday 2nd February 2011 and discussed about the National Multi-stakeholders Forum on the benefits and cost of Nile Cooperation. At the meeting, which attracted the participation of 11 journalists, the TNDF Vice Chairperson Mr. Donald Kasongi spoke on behalf of the TNDF and emphasized that the journalists had an important role in promoting the benefits and cost of Nile Basin Cooperation within riparian states.

He explained that journalists provide awareness education to inhabitants within Nile Basin, helping them to understand the important issues or challenges facing the basin including growing population, climate change, increase of drought due to tree cutting in catchments areas for various purposes and overgrazing, leading to decreasing water levels in lakes and rivers within the Nile Basin.

He said that if media groups do not play this important role, then very few communities understand proper usage of water resources and instead might be doing things without precautions and eventually will face the consequences of depletion of basin water resources.

“Therefore the media people need to educate the inhabitants within the Nile basin about potential risk of cutting trees in catchments area without replacing them, something which may contribute to drought and then decrease water level in rivers and lakes,” he said.

He also called on the journalists to educate the communities about the benefits of proper management of Nile water resources which include among others good water transportation system, irrigation, fishing, tourism and hydropower projects.

The journalists were also told that that the risk of neglecting to tell the truth to inhabitants living within Nile Basin about the potential risks over the use of water resources, may result in shortage of water and thereby jeopardizing their livelihoods, and even promote conflict between downstream countries and upstream countries.

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Ethiopia NDF gets local media membership

BY AYENEW TESERA

The NBD registered five new members from among the media in Ethiopia. This development occurred as the Ethiopian Nile Discourse Forum jointly hosted a workshop with the Ethiopian Nile Media Network, attracting 30 participants.

The half-day seminar with Media houses on “how to increase media engagement in Nile Cooperation,” was held on the 16th of February 2011 at Horn of Africa Press Institute (HAPI).

The seminar that got media coverage from FM radio transmissions had the following objectives:

- To enhance Media awareness about the importance of water in livelihoods of people;
- To promote and sustain Nile cooperation via the involvement of the media;
- To promote NBD and attract more members to it.

During the seminar, NBD membership application forms were distributed and the advantage of being NBD's member was explained. Accordingly, five media houses have joined NBD as members.

The participants got an insight into the NBD activities and programme with several presentations made on:

- 1) the NBD (what NBD is, why NBD was established, NBD's vision and mission, what NBD does, NBD's strategic plan (2008-2013), NBD's 3 year programme, programme goal, programme purpose, programme outputs, programme activities, and the guiding principles of the NBD's future advocacy works),
- 2) the current status, challenges, and prospects of the NBI, and
- 3) the current status, challenges and prospects of the CFA, and
- 4) how to increase media engagement in Nile Cooperation.

The media houses were also advised to give prior and much focus to development in the Nile region than Nile politics. Areas where media can engage other than water politics were identified as

- (1) People- how people live alongside the Nile, true stories of people,
- (2) investments- actual and potential projects in the Nile, social and environmental benefits of Nile cooperation,
- (3) Energy- potential of the Nile for power generation and advantages of power interconnection,
- (4) Challenges of Trans-boundary issues like environment, climate change, deforestation, desertification, resource management, knowledge and experience sharing, knowledge transfer, and technology transfer,
- (5) Agriculture: Irrigation, food security, land management,
- (6) Tourism and border trade between basin countries. It was observed that it is when media focuses on these issues that Nile cooperation would be promoted and enhanced, instead of heightening political disputes in the Nile.

The seminar participants delved into specific and general discussions which ended with identification of key action points as pointed out below:

- 1) strengthening the National Nile Media Network (NNMN) and forge partnership with NBD at the national and regional levels;
- 2) Institutionalize NNMN and hence hold NNMN's GA meeting in a months time where NBD is expected to support the event technically and financially
- 3) Publicize Nile cooperation during the Nile Day celebrations.

Ethiopian Lawyers discuss legal issues about NBI transformation into a Commission

As part of the Nile Day celebrations, the Ethiopian NDF conducted a half day workshop with the members of Ethiopian Lawyers Association on “How to address the legal issues surrounding the NBI transition into a river basin commission”

The workshop, held at Dessalegn Hotel, Addis Ababa on 17th of February 2011 at Dessalegn Hotel, Addis Ababa, was jointly organized with the Ethiopian Lawyers Association. A total of 23 lawyers attended the workshop that was covered by local FM radio transmissions.

The workshop aimed to:

- Enhance Lawyers awareness about the importance of water in livelihoods of people,
- Promote and sustain Nile cooperation through the strong involvement of Lawyers, and
- Promote NBD and attract more members to it.

Ethiopia NDF took the liberty to distribute NBD membership application and explains the advantage of membership. Accordingly, the lawyers association took note and promised to present the NBD's membership application form to their management for decision.

At the workshop, presentations were made on:

- (1) the NBD (what NBD is, why NBD established, NBD's vision and mission, what NBD does, NBD's strategic plan (2008-2013), NBD's 3 year programme, programme goal, programme purpose, programme outputs, programme activities, and the guiding principles of the NBD's advocacy works),
- (2) The current status, challenges, and prospects of the NBI, and
- (3) The Nile Basin Cooperative Framework Agreement: Negotiation History, Future Scenarios and Role of Lawyers in addressing the legal issues surrounding the NBI transition into a river basin commission.

The workshop participants discussed the legal challenges and prospects of Nile cooperation.

On the way forward, the lawyers noted that:

- There was need for more dialogue to resolve the issue at all levels, may be more at the political (diplomatic) level;
- Downstream countries need to change mind-sets domestically;
- External support agencies need to play a more pro-active role in resolving the issue;
- Transparent discussions that involve all sections of the public in and among riparian countries need to be promoted.

They also observed that the role of lawyers association would among others be:

- Creating more active participation of lawyers by continuing to organize similar workshops with a wider audience and different disciplines;
- To actively engage in dialogue and research on different policy and legal issues of the Nile/other trans-boundary rivers;
- To call for papers and articles to be published in its newsletter and journal;
- Establish a network of lawyers' forum in the Basin in order to have a unified position and exchange information;

In the key action points of the workshop, the participants agreed to:

1. Establish network and partnership between NBD and East Africa Law Society composed of Bar Associations from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, and Ethiopia whose office is at Arusha, Tanzania; arrange a follow-up/partnership meeting with the society.
2. Publish articles in Ethiopian Bar Review biannual journal.

"The very spirit of togetherness and cooperation under which we are celebrating the Nile Day today should allay the fears and suspicions that have consistently prevented us from leapfrogging to realizing the dreams of our populations."

Ambassador Stanislas Kamanzi, Minister of Environment of Rwanda

"Informed youth can prevent conflicts in Nile Basin"

The Ethiopian NDF's Nile Day workshop for the Youth has concluded that the youth comprise more than 60% of the population and can serve as the building block of disseminating the culture of peace in preventing the occurrence of latent conflicts by managing citizens' expectations. Otherwise, these networks will be a fertile ground for narrow-minded and a haven of public complacency rather than building a confidence among the basin people. Thus, youth should work in the spirit of shared benefits and win-win scenarios.

The half-day workshop conducted on "the role of the Youth in Nile Cooperation," was held on the 19th of February 2011 at the meeting hall of the Organization for Relief and Development in Amhara (ORDA), Bahir Dar, Ethiopia.

The workshop also concluded that youth who are better informed about issues related to the Nile basin can acquire more knowledge and information on critical issues like water conservation, deforestation and other issues that impact the environment and biodiversity.

Participants also heard that by virtue of their acquired knowledge about the Nile basin and the Nile water, youth will become active participants to the debate and discourse among the Nile basin countries about unresolved issues such as equitable distribution of water.

It should be underlined that the youth can undertake useful activities by way of gathering data, analyzing, publishing, disseminating and managing Nile-related information at local and national levels for diverse use.

NBD publications on high demand at Goma Nile Day Celebrations



Participants rushing to get copies of NBD publications. While NBD tried to bring enough publications to the Nile Day celebrations in Goma, the demand actually outpaced supply. The publications included the French Versions of NBD newsletters, the NBD 5-year Programme, Position statement on the CFA, the Kahrطوم Statement, the NBD Brochure and the Nile Day Communique among others. They got finished as soon as the display desk was opened to the public by NBD Programme Development, Monitoring and Evaluation officer Sarah Naigaga (Left - Back to camera)

NBD-NBI Discuss the Nile Basin on DRC National TV



NBD Regional Manager Ms. Abby Onencan speaking during a talk show hosted by host Tuvur Wundi (4th from left). She is flanked by NBD Vice Chairman Wesley Chirchir (2nd left) and DRC NDF Chair Dr. Meni Malikwisha (3rd left) live at the DRC national TV studio in Goma Town.

Egyptian Journalist impressed by Moise Iyungu's poetry



Egyptian Senior Journalist Mai El Shafy is overwhelmed with emotion over 10-year-old Moise Iyungu's eloquent recitation of his moving Poem about the Nile Basin to a large gathering of basketball spectators/fans in Goma Town on February 21st, 2011. The spectators included NBI and NBD officials and this was during a basketball tourney organised by NBI.

NDF Contact Information

* Burundi

Forum Burundais de la Société Civile du Bassin du Nil
27, Avenue de l'Amitié, ROHERO I,
BP 286 BUJUMBURA-BURUNDI
Tel: +257 22 25 56 86
E-mail: fcbn06@yahoo.fr, burundi@nilebasindiscourse.org

* DR Congo

Offices in Butembo, Eastern DR Congo.
E-mail: drc@nilebasindiscourse.org

* Egypt

EgNDF: 3A Masaken Masr Iel-Taameer, Zahraa El-Maadi Str.
Zahraa El-Maadi, Helwan, Egypt
E-mail: enada2002@yahoo.com, nour_nesma98@yahoo.com, egypt@nilebasindiscourse.org

* Eritrea

ADDIS ALEM ADMINISTRATION
SAHEL STREET Zip 198 No. 25
P.O.Box 3526
ASMARA - ERITREA
E-mail: tokerpro@gemel.com.er, mulughetab@yahoo.com, eritrea@nilebasindiscourse.org

* Ethiopia

Ethiopian Nile Basin Discourse Forum
Kaliti Road, Opposite the Training Centre,
CRDA Building
P. O. Box 5674,
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
E-mail: etnbnfd2005@yahoo.com
ethiopia@nilebasindiscourse.org

* Kenya

Offices set to relocate
E-mail: nancymwakha@gmail.com, kenya@nilebasindiscourse.org

* Rwanda

NBDF Rwanda: P O Box 7216, Kigali-Rwanda
Near Amahoro National Stadium, Opposite Remera Police Station-
Kimironko, Gasabo
Tel:+250788307662/ +250 77 101 876
Email: coordinator@nbdfrwanda.org, rwanda@nilebasindiscourse.org

* Sudan

Arkawit - House No. 182
Block No. 68
Khartoum
E-mail: sudannfd2003@yahoo.com, sudan@nilebasindiscourse.org

* Tanzania

Tanzania Nile Discourse Forum (TNDF)
Nyegezi Near St. Augustin University
P.O. Box 11,242
Mwanza Tanzania
Tel: +255 28 2 502 555
Mobile: +255 754, 579 289, +255 754 830 828, +255 758 186 600
E-mail: tndftanzania@yahoo.com, tz@nilebasindiscourse.org

* Uganda

Uganda NDF: Plot 1521 Mawanda Road,
P.O. Box 7422, Kampala - Uganda,
Tel: 25641 373129
Mob: 256-772-485996/256-392-969634
E-mail: agripnamara@yahoo.com, agrip_namara@hotmail.com,
uganda@nilebasindiscourse.org

Dates and times are subject to change Please check our website for additional information

EVENTS UPDATE

NEL Subregion

* March 10-11th 2011
Subregional Forum in Kigali
Rwanda

* March 16th 2011
DRC NDF national Forum in
Butembo

* April 4-8th 2011
Burundi NDF national forum in
Bujumbura

* April 7-8th 2011
Kenya NDF national forum in
Kisumu

* April 22nd 2011
Rwanda NDF national forum in
Kigali

* April 12-13th 2011
Uganda NDF national forum in
Kampala

EN Subregion

March 17th 2011
Subregional Forum in Cairo
Egypt

* April 4th 2011
Sudan NDF national forum in
Khartoum

* April 14th 2011
Ethiopia NDF national forum in
Addis Ababa

* April 19th 2011
Egypt NDF national forum in
Cairo

NILE VOICES

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Head office:
Plot 32 Nsamizi road (After Medical Stores)
Entebbe, Uganda

EDITORIAL TEAM:
Abby M. Onencan
Sarah Naigaga
Davis J. Weddi

Please feel free to send comments & letters in relation to the content in this newsletter to media@nilebasindiscourse.org

ONE NILE - ONE FAMILY