

The Story of Nile River : Past, Present and Future

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Beyond water: Regional economic
integration and geopolitical benefits
of transboundary water cooperation:
Case of the Nile Basin
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Cooperation on the Nile and the Regional Integration

- Bringing down the glass wall: There was a glass wall, we could see each other but we could not communicate(Comments by Andy Tola the then Kenya National Focal point for NBI, Nairobi 2014).
- Cooperation, benefit sharing and regional integration are beyond water sharing.
- During the colonial from 1895 to early 1960s the Nile Basin Regime was based on the colonial agreements whose main focus was water allocation.
- The notable such agreements were the 1929 and 1959 Nile agreements between United Kingdom and Egypt and between Sudan and Egypt respectively.
- This focus on water allocation never worked. It brought tension and distrust between the Nile countries.
- With the focus on water allocation some basin states lost out. There were no developments .
- The result was poverty, lack of investment hence lack of capacity of the Basin States to manage and develop the basin water resources .

1999 ushered in the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI): The journey to cooperation for change

- The Nile Basin States came together through the Nile Council of Ministers in charge of water affairs (Nile-COM) and established the NBI with a shared vision for development of the region based on equitable utilization of water resources.
- NBI faced challenges: There was history of distrust and difference in countries in terms of their politics.
- In this focus the Nile Basin States recognized an opportunity for economic growth for the Nile Basin that could be driven by investments in the shared Nile water resources.
- NBI was therefore tasked of managing the activities of the shared Vision namely:
- Water resources management to ensure the resources availability
- Equitable and sustainable developments of the basin water resources and related resources (hydropower, fisheries and irrigated agriculture) to ensure accessibility of the basin water resources by all.
- Facilitating cooperation: to continue bring the basin States together, building their capacity and demonstrating to them the benefits of cooperation
- NBI is now building the capacity of the Basin States through training, establishment of the hydrometric stations.

Challenges and Action

- There was also no regional institution to facilitate dialogue and information exchange.
- Water resources development did not consider regional implication.
- NBI therefore ushered in a two pronged approach :
- A shared vision programs (SVPs) to build trust, capacity, and create enabling environment for transboundary investments alongside Subsidiary Action Programed (SAPs).
- The two therefore supplemented each other with SVP as a critical foundation to generate the driving force to get the countries to engage in developments of projects, while the projects were prepared by SAPs, one NELSAP CU at Kigali for the Nile Equatorial Lakes region and the other ENTRO for the eastern Nile.
- The two approach demonstrated the quick win win and benefits of cooperation.

NBI as a Vehicle for Regional Integration

- BNI successfully built capacity and generated knowledge around technical issues for watershed management, environmental protection, adaptation to climate change, energy production and trade, areas of irrigated agriculture for food security, tourism and free flow goods through COMESA, and persons through EAC and regional Security through IGAD.
- Today NBI has identified and prepared investments worth 6 Billion USD of which investment worth 1.3 Billion USD are under various stages of implementation.
- Key examples are Rusumo Hydropower between Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania, and power interconnection between Ethiopia and Sudan commissioned in 2013, the inter power connection between Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda DR. Congo and Burundi, inter power connection between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt.
- NBI has become an all inclusive neutral organization saving all the Nile basin States.

- Thank You so Much