Dividends of Cooperation in the Nile River: (Geo?) Political Benefits

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The NILE – Hydrology and Politics

- **World's**: longest river; 2nd largest lake (Victoria); largest swamps (Sudd)
- **11 countries**: Burundi, D.R. Congo, Egypt, Eritrea¹, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, South Sudan (joined recently)
- **Population**: Nile states 300m people, 600m in 2025

**Region of extremes:**
- poverty: 5 of world’s 10 poorest
- conflict: 7 countries in 15 yrs
- v. high rainfall variability & climate change uncertainty

**Very limited infrastructure**
- 10% HEP potential developed
- 15% pop. served with electricity
- 40% of irrigable land irrigated

*(Grey, 2011)*
Freshwater Stress and Scarcity in Africa by 2025

Water scarcity in 2025
less than 1000 m³/capita/year

Water stress in 2025
1000 to 1700 m³/capita/year

Global Water Stress and Scarcity
Billions of people affected

Environmental Crisis

Basket of Problems

Desertification
Soil and Land degradation
Deforestation

Conflicts
Civil Wars
Southern-Darfur, Ethio-Eritrea, Somalia,

Water Stress & Scarcity

Population pressure
( will be doubled by 2025)

Climate change
( will hit the hardest)
Nile Basin Cooperation

- **Hydromet** in 1967: Hydro-meteorological survey, Ethiopia and DRC, observer
- **Undugu** 1983: Focused on environment, infrastructure, Ethiopia, Kenya, & Tanzania, Overseers
- **TECONILE** 1992: Focused on Technical cooperation, Nile 2002 Conferences
- **NBI** 1999: Shard Visions, All inclusive, Benefit Sharing, Beyond the river thinking, Peace and security
Nile Cooperation Timeline

Status Quo...

1959 Agreement

Risk-averting Cooperation

1967 Hydromet

Ad-Hoc/Technical cooperation

1983 Undugu

1992 TeccoNile

Risk-taking Cooperation?

1999 NBI

2007 Cooperative Framework Agreement

2010 CFA signed

2011 NBC?

Cascao, 2007
The Vision of NBI:

to achieve sustainable socio-economic development through the equitable utilization of, and benefit from, the common Nile Basin Water Resources.

Action on the ground

- Local
- National level
- Sub-basin level
- Basin level
The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) focuses on:

**Technical Track**
- Socio Economic Development and Benefit Sharing
- Nile Basin Regional Power Trade;
- Efficient Water Use for Agricultural Production;
- Water Resource Planning and Management;
- Confidence Building and Stakeholder Involvement;
- Applied Training
- Nile Transboundary Environmental Action;

**Legal Track**
- The CFA Water allocation negotiation

**NBI**

**SVPs**
- Nile Basin Regional Power Trade;
- Efficient Water Use for Agricultural Production;
- Water Resource Planning and Management;
- Confidence Building and Stakeholder Involvement;
- Applied Training
- Nile Transboundary Environmental Action;

**SAPs**
- NELSAP
- 6 countries
- Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan & South Sudan

**The CFA**
- Water allocation negotiation

**ENSAP ENTRO**
- Watershed Management (WSM),
- Baro-Akobo-Sobat Multipurpose Project,
- Eastern Nile Power Trade Investment Program,
- Ethio-Sudan Transmission Interconnection subproject,
- Eastern Nile Planning Model subproject (ENPM),
- Flood Preparedness and Early Warning subproject (FPEW)
- Eastern Nile Joint Multipurpose Program (ENJM)
- Irrigation and Drainage subproject (I&D),
The Socio-Economic Development and Benefit Sharing (SDBS)

• The SDBS project was designed in 2001, but implementation was started in 2005.

• The development objectives of the SDBS were to:
  • (a) **identify and assess** a range of cooperative development scenarios,
  • (b) develop **criteria, methods, and frameworks** for sharing the benefits and costs of cooperative development scenarios, and for managing attendant risks, and
  • (c) strengthen national and regional capacities for policy and macro-economic analysis, which can support further cooperation opportunities identified through the scenario development process.
Four Types of Benefits Identified for the Nile Basin.

1. **Type 1: Environmental**
   - **Increasing Benefits** *To the river*
   - Improved ecosystem sustainability, conservation and water quality

2. **Type 2: Economic**
   - **Increasing Benefits** *From the river*
   - Improved power & agriculture productivity, navigation, & flood & drought management

3. **Type 3: Political**
   - **Decreasing Costs** *Because of the river*
   - Policy shift to cooperation & development (self sufficiency to security)

4. **Type 4: Indirect Economic**
   - **Increasing Benefits** *Beyond the river*
   - Broader regional cooperation and integration

(Source: Sadoff and Grey, 2002)
Why cooperate?
- Nile does not respect boundaries!
- Geography is “destiny”
- To garner political benefits (at regional, national and local levels)
- Transboundary problems need transboundary approaches;
  - can not be addressed effectively by any single country, alone, no matter how rich or strong a country may be

On what to cooperate?
- Political, legal, institutional, governance levels
- Socio-economic level
- Environment and biodiversity...etc

What happens if we do not cooperate?
- Costs of non-cooperation is very high
- Unilateralism is destructive,
- Everybody loses (lose-lose outcomes)
- Conflict escalation

Why cooperation is difficult?
- The geo-hydro-political-history of the basin;
- International interests in the region;
- Divergent Hydro-Mentaality!!
Main Political Benefits

• Functional and credible regional institution-NBI
  • Contribution to the cooperative process;
  • Institution building

• Improved political will to manage the basin as a Unit;
  • One river system outlook

• Forging to regional dimensions;
  • Interplay of regional-national dimensions

• Relatively, improved, Confidence;

• Trying to harmonizing Water policies;

• Knowledge base strengthened, sharing of information;
  • Mechanism for sharing of information
  • Development of Planning Tools-Nile Basin DSS
Sustaining the Gains?

• Oscillating, unsustainable, Political benefits,
  • Political Stalemate.

• Going to square One?
  • 2010 Nile Basin Cooperative Framework, CFA or Entebbe Nile Agreement;
  • 2011-Grand Renaissance dam of Ethiopia

• Sustaining the regional institutions
  • What is the fate of NBI?
  • Will the Nile Basin Commission, NBC, be established?

• Financing problems, (donors hesitation now)

• Need to up-scaling and accelerating delivery of regional projects & maintaining inclusivity in processing regional projects

• Struggle between Joint versus unilateral actions

• Ensuring wider participation (officials, not the people dominate the Nile landscape)
Communicating Benefits

• The few ‘loose and unstructured’ benefit assessment made have been communicated to the riparian countries, development partners, and other stakeholders through the Nile Conferences, the annual celebration of the Nile Day, press release, and other fora.

• In 2011, the NBI compiled a country specific benefit report under the title: “Unlocking the Nile Basin’s Development Potential, Benefits of Cooperation.”

• But even those communicated benefits have been questioned and less accepted by riparian countries.
Media and Benefits

• The main challenge in the Nile Basin is **sensational reporting** of the Nile issue by the media, both print and electronic. In order to get the public and politician attention, media (print, electronic and social), tend **to focus on the conflict of the Nile, than on the cooperation benefits**.

• To address this reporting problem the NBI under its project-Confidence Building and Stakeholder Involvement (CBSI)-established the **Nile Media Network** of the riparian countries.
  
  • Before it brings any change, this media network almost ceased to exist as the CBSI project was finalized.
What we usual don’t know about the Nile !


• From three Executive Directors, 2002/03 of ENTRO to one Merit Based ED.

• From narrow/national oriented projects to broader visionary projects-
  Move from ENSAP, in late1990s, which was proposed by the three countries, to “no-border’ projects, proposed by ENTRO ( the three countries expert together) using Cooperative Regional Assessments, CRA, Joint Multi-Purpose Project, JMP, in 2006

• From government-to-government, to people-to-people interaction (Parliamentarian, Journalist, experts, etc, exchange visits)
What we usual don’t know about the Nile!

- Egypt-Ethiopia 50% trade increase year-on-year 2003-07 due to Nile dialogue
- Sudanese are the second largest investors in Ethiopia in number, next to Chinese;
- Conflict escalation reduced during the past 13 years, since NBI
  - Number of Threats and Blatant words exchange are reduced
- Even if, unfortunately, you hear/read about ‘Nile War’ on media, it is a less probability in the ‘Nile Room’ and on ‘Nile Landscape’
- emerging basin-perspective among WR professionals and policy makers
- Nile Day Celebration, Feb 22 (brining all Nile stakeholders together)=Celebration not discussing any burning issues-Simply Celebrate as Nile Family!!!
Lesson Learnt

- The nature of cooperation determine the type, quality and intensity of political benefits; (fake, pseudo, coerced, partial, all-inclusive...etc)

- Cooperation at any expense - Not to cooperate is not an option!
  - The International community and development partners commitment to resort/advice member countries to ‘Nile Room’

- A move from the ‘Water Sharing’ to ‘Benefit Sharing’

- The two Track Approaches of NBI: the Political and Technical tracks!

- Two Office/region Approach -
  - Even in the same Basin different gains are possible, NELSAP Vs ENTRO , (more advanced benefits, as they have trust and confidence among them Vs less benefit as there are less confidence among them, respectively);

- Addressing Hydro-Mentality - ‘Psychological Hurdles’ is as important, if not more important, as addressing any other issues in the Nile Basin;

- Media and Benefit: The role media plays in compromising the political (and other) benefit. (negative/sensetional reporting downplay the Nile Gain)
Concluding thoughts:

_Nile Countries do cooperate and engage in Conflict-
But they do it as ‘Nile Family’!

• Generally, disagreements and conflicts among cooperating partners are _NORMAL_— even among couples who establish families;

• Even if Nile member countries engage in spat/conflict, they do it in the _Nile Room_—this is the biggest political achievement and benefit the Nile Basin enjoys now.
Thanks for your attention!