

ON THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NILE BASIN INITIATIVE

The Nile Basin Initiative - 10 Years of Cooperation and Progress

Introduction:

The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) which is an interim institutional arrangement for the cooperative sustainable development, equitable utilisation and management of the Nile water resources was established on 22nd February, 1999 in Dar es Salaam. It is 10 years now. Cooperation on the Nile has a long history. It started as the Hydro meteorological Survey Project from 1967 to 1977 and later as the Technical Cooperation Committee for Promotion of the Development and Environmental Protection of the Nile Basin (TECCONILE) from 1992 to its successor the NBI. The need for cooperation was recognised early by the basin countries in order to understand the available water resources for proper planning and use of the basin resources. Countries are finalising conclusion of the Agreement on the Nile River Basin Cooperative Framework which has been negotiated over the last decade. When signed and ratified it will pave way to the formation of the permanent Nile River Basin Commission.

At its onset, the NBI prepared a Strategic Action Programme with two complementary programmes; the Shared Vision Program (SVP) and the Subsidiary Action Program (SAP). The two programmes have been implementing projects at the regional and sub-basin level respectively. Joint projects between two or among more countries at the sub-basin level have shown tangible benefits to the basin communities.

Achievements:

Projects under the Shared Vision Programme which were structured to create a conducive environment as a strong foundation for joint investment in the basinwide management and development of the Nile resources have produced a number of achievements. These include, among others, the following: The basin now has a reputable capacity of world class professionals in various fields; a well developed knowledge base and technical foundation on the available basin resources for water management; Trust and confidence amongst basin countries has increased, a Nile basin community of interest has been built; the NBI has been strengthened as a trusted institution and an enabling environment for investment in the entire Nile Basin region has been created.

The SVP has conducted various studies and produced reports on hydropower generation potential, irrigation efficiency, sustainability and benefit sharing frameworks. Different networks for women, parliamentarians, elders, academia and the media, among others, have been established.

In other words, the Shared Vision Programme has constructed the building blocks for sustainable river basin management.

In Tanzania, students have been sponsored for both long term studies (M.Sc and Ph. D) in water resources management as well as various short term courses in integrated water resources management, negotiation skills and conflict resolution, communication skills, data management and hydrological equipment instrumentation.

Reforestation and other environmental conservation projects carried out in the lake regions of Kagera, Mwanza and Mara are clear examples of the benefits of cooperation on the Nile.

Under the Subsidiary Action Programme (SAP), a water supply project in Karagwe town is in operation, a reforestation project at Rulenge in Ngara district has been completed and the Bisarwi dam for small scale irrigation in Tarime district is under construction. These were selected as priority quick win projects for Tanzania. Construction of the Rusumo hydropower and multi purpose development project with Rwanda and Burundi is slated to start next year. On completion, it will provide electricity to communities in these countries and beyond through interconnections. A backbone Nile Equatorial Lakes region power interconnection project that will interconnect all East African countries is also advanced in its preparation. Financial resources mobilisation for the two projects is ongoing in addition to the USD160 million grant from the African Development Bank. Once completed, the two projects will enhance energy security in the region. Tanzania will be interconnected to the grid through Singida-Nairobi and Lusahunga-Rusumo. Implementation of phase II of the Regional Agricultural Trade and Productivity Project has started. Agriculture being the mainstay of the economies of most NBI Member States, the project will greatly benefit the people of these countries.

The two joint River Basin Management projects of Kagera (with Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi) and Mara (with Kenya) are preparing institutional frameworks which will facilitate joint investments among riparians and preparation of basin development strategies. Design of regional water infrastructure related to improved storage, irrigation development and watershed management as well as mobilisation of financial resources for implementation has started.

The scaling-up process for both the Nile Equatorial Lakes Water Resources Development and Power Programmes is progressing well. Proposals have been completed and submitted to donors for consideration. These programmes will align trans- boundary interventions with national priorities and will prepare additional regional infrastructure and identify a coordinated infrastructure investment strategy for the region.

These achievements that touch peoples' livelihoods demonstrate the benefits of cooperation, consolidate relationship among riparian states and are the basis of support and legitimacy from the communities for greater cooperation.

From the aforementioned, the Nile Basin Initiative has clearly made tangible progress. Tanzania is proud to have been the country where the Initiative started as we are honoured to host the event to celebrate these achievements.

In respect of our being hosts, it is worth mentioning the following:

- The Initiative was born in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, in 1999.
- Tanzania has been instrumental in providing leadership and guidance since the establishment of the NBI and in the negotiations for the Cooperative Framework Agreement and the future cooperation

- Tanzania is a trusted partner in regional cooperation and economic integration being a member of the East African Community and the SADC.
- Peace and security prevailing in the country is an added advantage.

The 10th Anniversary of the NBI and Show Case will be held at Mlimani City Conference Hall from 6-8th December, 2009. Activities start on 6 December 2009 with the launch of the exhibitions which will run for the three days.

The Anniversary event will be officially opened on 7th December, 2009 by H.E. Dr. Ali Mohamed Shein, Vice President of the United Republic of Tanzania. This will be followed by plenary and parallel sessions on (i). Energy (ii). Agriculture and (iii). Water Resources led by internationally acclaimed speakers and resources persons.

MINISTRY OF WATER AND IRRIGATION