



“One Nile – One Family”

CSO POSITION STATEMENT ON IMPLICATIONS OF GENDER ON PEOPLE’S ACCESS TO AND RIGHTS OVER NILE BASIN RESOURCES

Preamble

The Nile is one of the world’s longest rivers, which traverses more than 6700 kilometres and extends for more than 3 million square kilometres. The Nile Basin includes ten African countries and the more than 160 million people who live within the basin expect benefits from the management and utilisation of its shared water resources. Despite the basin’s natural and environmental endowments and rich cultural history, its people face considerable challenges. Four of the ten countries that share the Nile are among the world’s ten poorest countries and poverty is widespread with millions living on less than a dollar a day. Majority of the basin residents face increasing water scarcity, deteriorating water quality, and less than 10% of basin residents have access to electricity. The Nile basin is characterized by uneven levels of economic development, which is a serious problem and many in the region are affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic and malaria. Despite these seemingly formidable obstacles, the Nile holds tremendous opportunities for growth, being one of the least developed rivers in the world. Better management could bring a vast range of benefits including increased hydropower and food production, better access to water for domestic use, improved management of watersheds and reduced environmental degradation, reduced pollution and more control over damage from floods and droughts.

We the Civil society, hereby:

Concerned that in spite of the central role played by women on food production, and water and sanitation issues in the African family, women, still have a very limited role in public and private decision-making when managing water resources, as well as unequal access to water for domestic and productive uses.

Observe that awareness of gender in the water resources and sanitation sector is low and gender issues need to be better understood and addressed within the riparian countries and by development banks and partners.

Appreciate the increased recognition by governments and decision makers to the fact that women and girls are critical to the management of African water resources, especially at the household and community levels, and the growing body of policy frameworks that have made provision for inclusion of gender and women empowerment.

Recall that African member states have made international, regional and national commitments to support equality between women and men and to use a gender perspective in all programs and projects, including those related to water and the environment, as well as other existing commitments, principles and goals in the various regional, continental and international instruments on human and women rights

Recall that during the Pan-African Implementation and Partnership Conference on Water (PANAFCON), held in December 2003, African water ministers committed to ensure that gender concerns are taken into account through a recognized process of consultation with AMCOW, in policy formulation in all sectors of water, sanitation, human settlements, agriculture and food security, including harmonization of policies and laws and the domestication of international treaties, to create equity and equality by 2005.

Believe in the Dublin principles (1992); the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing that women play a central role in providing, managing and safeguarding water and there are

intimate links between gender equality and the sustainable development and management of water for economic and social development.

Endorse the African Water Vision 2025, which calls for an “equitable and sustainable use and management of water resources for poverty alleviation, socio-economic development, regional cooperation, and the environment; the mainstreaming of gender in water resources management and the involvement of women in key positions and functions in decision-making on water issues and for stakeholder involvement in water resources management by, in particular, women and youth and 100% gender sensitive national water policies by 2015.

Reaffirm that effective, efficient and equitable management and development of water resources can only be achieved when their women’s needs and priorities are fully incorporated.

Jointly call on the Nile Basin governments to:

Adopt and mainstream a gender perspective into the policies, strategies, programme/project development and planning process to ensure that the specific needs and concerns of women and men from all social groups are taken into account in development, use and management of water resources and sanitation.

Set up an institutional framework to mainstreaming gender in the assessment, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all Nile Basin programs and projects.

Undertake gender analysis of existing water policies, programmes and investment projects to ensure that they are gender responsive and that all obstacles facing women and men in different categories are identified and addressed.

Ensure that learning on gender mainstreaming at the national level is enhanced, good gender practices are exchanged and better national and regional monitoring of gender impacts in the sector is conducted.

Ensure a bottom up approach to inform decision making at all levels by promoting stakeholder participation and using the wealth of local knowledge that women and men have gained over time.

As per the Africa Water Vision 2025, encourage 30% gender mainstreaming of national water policies by the end of 2005; 100% gender sensitive national water policies by 2015; and the adoption of affirmative action to enable women’s participation and representation in decision making and all other activities of the Nile basin from programme to institutional arrangements.

Adopt and implement the NB/I Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Strategy as an important step towards promoting equitable use, sharing and sustainable development of Nile basin resources.

Mobilise adequate financial resources to implement gender actions highlighted in the NB/I Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Strategy.

Regularly monitor and evaluate the gender actions highlighted in the NB/I Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Strategy to ensure progress on gender equality in the Nile Basin.

Promote cooperation and partnership between governments and civil society.

We, NBD members, hereby commit ourselves to do our part to ensure gender is fully addressed and integrated into policies, strategies, structures and programmes. We will do this by creating awareness, educating our partners and stakeholders, generating information, and sharing best practices with our network.