



REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE NBDF RWANDA 4TH NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS FORUM ON COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITHIN NILE BASIN PROGRAMS



**NGOMA DISTRICT TOWN HALL
09th March 2012**

**THEME: COMMUNITY BENEFITS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRESS
ON THE RUSUMO HYDRO POWER PROJECT, RWANDA.**

Background

The Nile Basin Discourse (NBD) is a network of civil society organizations from the 10 countries of the Nile Basin -- [Burundi](#), [DRC](#), [Egypt](#), [Eritrea](#), [Ethiopia](#), [Kenya](#), [Sudan](#), [Rwanda](#), [Tanzania](#) and [Uganda](#). This network seeks to achieve positive influence over the cooperation framework, development projects and programmes under the **Nile Basin Initiative** (NBI) and other Nile-related programmes.

The overarching objective of the NBD is to promote sustainable and equitable development, poverty reduction, and cooperation between all stakeholders in the Nile Basin. Working at the level of civil society engagement, the NBD seeks to maximise the social, economic and environmental benefits available to poor people within Nile countries and to ensure that there is a more equitable distribution of these benefits across the Nile basin as a whole.

The Nile Basin Discourse Forum in Rwanda (NBDF Rwanda) is one of the constituent members of National Discourse Forums in the Nile Basin countries that concretize national stakeholder engagement to fulfill the NBD Program Mission, Vision and Objectives. NBDF Rwanda has carried out various activities jointly with its 36 member NGOs that operate within the Nile Basin in Rwanda; these activities include training on project management, alternative energy resources exploitation, community participation strategies in development, environmental impact assessment, watershed management and rehabilitation, integrated water resources management, trans-boundary water resource management. NBDF Rwanda further disseminates skills to grass-root communities in a more accessible language and appropriate cultural context.

in addition to the NBD programs, the Nile Basin Discourse Forum in Rwanda has been actively involved in activities that contribute to the achievement of Government of Rwanda development programmes through raising awareness

and building capacity on climate change adaptation, documentation and identifying best practices on climate change that are feasible in local communities in various locales of the country as well as training media on scientific reporting on climate change.

THE 4TH NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS' FORUM

The NBDF Rwanda's 4th National Stakeholders Forum sought to build on previous stakeholder forums to advance its advocacy mandate; notably the sub-regional forum that identified 'clean energy for sustainable development' and the 3rd National Stakeholders' Forum on deepening community participation and benefits in the Nile: community engagement in clean energy for trans-boundary development

As part of implementing recommendations from the NEL sub-regional workshop and the 3rd National Stakeholder Forum, The focus of the 4th National Stakeholders' Forum was the Regional Rusumo Falls Hydro-Power Project (RRFP); its short and long-term benefits as well as impacts on the socio-economic livelihood of grass-root communities. The 3rd Forum had recommended that the 4th Forum be held at community level hence the choice of Ngoma, one of the districts likely to adversely affected by the Rusumo Project.

The 4th Forum also sought to concretise Nile Basin Discourse mandate of playing a key role in ensuring that the NBI programs and policies are well designed and properly implemented to benefit all communities in the region. NBD with its linkages at the local and grassroots levels, is well positioned to raises awareness at the community level, and ensures ownership by explaining what is occurring and promoting community participation in ongoing NBI programmes and projects.

The 4th National Forum to this effect, targeted at least 130 grassroots participants and 50 participants from all major sectors of Government, Private Sector,

Academicians, Donors, Embassies, CSOs, CBOs, NGOs, Local administrative units in provinces affected, Researchers, Journalists. Over 100 stakeholders participated.

Objectives:

- Provide a platform for dialogue by primary stakeholders on Rusumo project implementation mechanisms.
- Discuss readiness and preparedness of communities and local government to exploit the short-term and long-term benefits that the project offers.
- Sensitize communities on the importance of discussing a sustainable development roadmap within of the Government of Rwanda development processes.
- Explore and refine best adaptive and mitigative measures for adverse impacts of the project and climate change.
- Explore ways of synchronizing community development plans to take advantage of the benefits of Rusumo.
- Map a way forward



Opening Remarks

Mayor of Ngoma, Mr. François Niyotwagira, welcomed participants and thanked them for responding to the invitation for the forum. His Lordship expressed satisfaction that the organizers of the forum had selected Ngoma district to hold the National forum.

Mr. Niyotwagira highlighted the importance of the Rusumo Project to the development of the district. He called upon participants to share ideas and information that would bring the project to fruition. The mayor invited the organizers to formally welcome their guests.

Chairman NBDF Rwanda:

The Chairman NBDF Rwanda, observing protocol, welcomed stakeholders, and took the opportunity to introduce distinguished guests, and participants from Burundi.

Underscoring the importance of the 4th National Stakeholder Forum, the Chair said “This forum is part of our continuing work with civil society, government and partners of the NBI. It represents a milestone in our 5 year strategic plan, based on “empowerment through participation”. It is our belief in NBD that communities should be at the heart of development, for a community-centred and sustainable development”.

Mr. Habiyaremye reminded participants that during NBDF Rwanda’s 3rd National Stakeholders Forum, NBDF stakeholders had recommended that the 4th forum be held in the project area as part of involving communities concerned with the project. He expressed satisfaction that this had come to pass, despite several challenges. The Chairman expressed gratitude to NELSAP for their continued support and participation thanked government for its willingness to involve civil society in development processes

“Ladies and gentlemen, friends, we are privileged to have with us, staff and consultants from the project and local government officials who will not only share with us information on the project, but also guide our deliberations.

JB Habiyaremye Chair NBDF Rwanda

Let me take this opportunity to thank you and wish you fruitful deliberations, in the spirit of “One Nile, One Family” The chairman NBDF Rwanda concluded.

.

The Chairman requested his lordship the mayor of Ngoma to invite the Governor Eastern Province to officially open the forum.

Guest of Honour:

The forum was officially opened by the Hon. Governor of Eastern Province, Madam Odette Uwamariya.

Observing all protocol, Madam Governor thanked NBDF Rwanda for the invitation and active participation in representing civil society. She expressed satisfaction with the selected theme of the forum and confided to participants that the energy question had been of particular importance in the recently concluded government retreat.

In her opening remarks the governor reiterated the importance of public and community consultations as a key for implementing development projects. The governor further underscored that Rwanda's development paradigm shift stressed a 'citizen-centred development approach' as noted in the government retreat.

I would wish to see more participation of the private sector to enhance job-creation activities.

Madam Odette called upon the participants to share information and engage all participants in the support for the development of Rusumo as a way of fostering ownership and accountability across the three countries.

“We need this project. Especially for the development of Ngoma and Kirehe districts, and the whole country in particular if we are going to industrialise our nation. The government has mechanisms to address concerns of its citizens. Your call dear participants, is to see how we can maximise the opportunities and benefits; both short term and longterm of the Rusumo project”

Hon. Odette Uwamariya,
Governor Eastern Province Rwanda

Concluding her address, Madam Odette saluted NBD's slogan "One Nile One Family" as apt if all countries were to work together for the good of the Nile. Wishing participants fruitful deliberations, The Governor declared the 4th National Stakeholders Forum open.

INTERVENTIONS:

The National Coordinator NBDF Rwanda

The National Coordinator Nile Basin Discourse Rwanda, Mr. John Gakumba welcomed participants. He presented the objectives of the forum, and how they were a continuation of work done on community participation in NBI projects. Mr Gakumba further explained the vision, mission, objectives and goals of the Nile Basin Discourse. He gave a background of NBDF Rwanda's mandate and the nature of challenges of livelihoods of societies in the Nile Region.



Mr. Gakumba outlined the sectors in NBDF Rwanda works as well as activities undertaken in the clean energy sector, and climate change. The National coordinator shared with participants identified best practices in agriculture/livestock, Natural Resources Management for mitigation of climate change impacts at community levels.



The Chairman, Nile Media Network, Rwanda Chapter

The Chairman, Nile Media Network, Rwanda Chapter saluted the excellent working relationship with NBDF Rwanda, and all the other stakeholders with respect to the judicious use of the Nile Resources. Mr. Edwin Musoni revealed to participants how NMN Rwanda has actively contributed to the dissemination of positive information on developments on the Nile. Mr. Musoni presented a background of the Nile Media Network and explained the Alexandria Charter that empowered the formation of NMN in the Nile Basin, in recognition of the need for accurate and timely information by the Nile Basin Initiative. Mr Musoni unveiled a

short documentary undertaken by NMN members on a field visit to the project area, with the kind sponsorship of NBDF Rwanda. He reiterated that information therein did not reflect the views of NMN or NBDF Rwanda as organisations, but rather the true voices of the communities who were interviewed.

Regional Rusumo Hydro-electric Power Project Manager

Eng. Abdullah Kabrudin thanked NBDF Rwanda for organising the forum. He said it was timely as Tanzania and Burundi had already held such forums. Eng. Abdullah underscored the importance of such meeting to gather information and provide feedback to the project “this improves the project considerably and guides our implementation” he affirmed.



Eng. Abdullah presented the project background and said it had three components;

- develop a power generation capacity of 90Megawatts shared equally between tanzania, burundi and rwanada.
- Strengthen existing regional interconnection systems between rwanada and burundi and construct a new regional interconnection with tanzania
- Set up a power sharing and management institution by the three countries.

Progress on the project;

- Feasibility of the power generation plant completed
- Study of transmission lines completed
- Institutional and financial arrangements as well as strengthening of the project implementation and operational management undergoing.

Finalisation of the detailed RAP/LADP for draft phase 3 complete by end of march 2012.

Design report for power plant and associated works completed in february 2012

Feasibility and tender documents completed.

Tripartite agreement for Rusumo project signed by the three countries in february 2012.

Setting up of the special purpose vehicle to be done.

Eng. Abdullah informed stakeholders that to minimise impact of the project a decision had been undertake a run-of-the river scheme. A rapid assessment of the run-or-river scenario was being undertaken and the report would be submitted by end of march 2012.

Energy Water & Sanitation Authority (Energy Access Rollout Program)

The Program Manager for the Energy Access Rollout Program of the Country's Energy Water & Sanitation Authority (EWSA), presented the nationwide initiative to extend access to electricity, the Energy Access Rollout Program (EARP) and explained that it was part of the framework of Rwanda's development plan of expanding access to electricity, improving quality and lowering the cost of economic infrastructure. Mr. Kasumba told participants that the goal of EARP was to improve access to reliable and cost effective electricity services for households and priority public institutions. Presenting the current status of the rural electrification program, Kasumba noted that the program had a component for *Green connections* that favored efficient lighting; Energy efficiency, Solutions for low income households- (ready boards).

Plenary session;

Group work involved reflection on three areas of the project:

- Mitigation of possible impacts of the project
- Readiness strategies to take advantage of the short-term and longterm opportunities that would be provided by the project.
- Ways to improve communication and information sharing with respect to implementation of the project.

Way forward;

With the guidance of the project progress and status report, it was observed that the lack of information coordination had led to speculation. Stakeholders resolved to share information and improve communication to allay fears by communities.

The governor's office offered to convene a meeting within a fortnite where the principle actors would be invited to map out a way of improving closer collaboration.

Closure of the Forum:

His Lordship Mr. Protais Murayire, Mayor of Kirehe thanked participants for making the long journey to attend the forum. He further thanked the host and Nile Basin Discourse Rwanda for organising such a forum and was grateful that now the local authorities had credible timely information to allay fears by grassroot communities.

He expressed a desire that once all the reports had been gathered, another forum should be held to enable district planning.

Results of the Workshop

1. The workshop provided a platform for consolidation of information from communities, surveys and assessments on the project.
2. The forum discussed how power development could be a tool for cooperation, climate change adaptation and mitigation best practice as

well as sustainable development, clean water access, food security and job creation within the affected areas around Rusumo.

3. Participants' knowledge and awareness of the project was increased, particularly the timetable of the project and the project status. District authorities acknowledged that the discussion would enable them better plan how to integrate their development activities to take advantage of the benefits of Rusumo.
4. The importance of participation and engagement with communities in at all stages of the Project was greatly appreciated. This served as a primer for discussions on the way forward.
5. Level of preparedness of primary stakeholders to participate in the construction and catchment area protection was scrutinized and ways of improving suggested.
6. Improved ways of knowledge and information sharing on Rusumo Project were explored, and commitment from concerned stakeholders registered.
7. All stakeholders agreed that the forum was a big step in building confidence that different stakeholders could work together.

Key Message:

The forum came out with one key message; notably that all stakeholders, particularly implementers should come up with a comprehensive multi-stakeholder framework that will enable participation of communities.

Accurate Knowledge and information sharing should be done in a timely manner to enable proper planning by districts and to avoid speculation project affected people.

Annex: Program of the Days' events.

Tentative Programme for National Forum:

Day 1 8th March. 2012		
Time	Activity	Responsibility
15:00h-19:00h	Arrival and Registration of participants from outside of Rusumo and organizing team	NBDF Secretariat and Hotel Management
Day 2 9th March 2012		
08: 30h-09:15h	Registration of Guests and Participants	Organizing Team
09:15h – 09:45h	Introductions and Welcome Remarks	NBDF Rwanda Chair
	PHOTO OPPORTUNITY	
09:50h – 10:15h	Official Opening Remarks	NBDF Rwanda Chair
10:20h – 10:40h	Speech of Guest of Honor	Minister of Natural Resources
10:45h-11:20h	Presentation from NBDF Rwanda	NBDF Rwanda Coordinator
11:30h-11:50h	Coffee Break and Group Photo	Hotel Management and Organizing Team
11:20h-11:40h	Media engagement and communication Strategy	Chair NMN
11:40h-12:25h	Status report on the project Development	Rusumo Project Manager NELSAP Consultant/SNC-LAVALLIN

	Opportunities on Rusumo Project	
12:25h-13:00h	Questions and Answers	Facilitator
13:00h-14:00h	Lunch	Hotel Management and Organizing Team
14:00h-14:20h	District Development Plan	Mayor of NGOMA
14:20h-14:40h	District Development Plan	Mayor of Kirehe
14:40h – 15h:20h	Questions and Answers	Facilitator
15:20h-15:35h	Coffee Break	Hotel Management and Organizing Team
15:40h – 16h:05h	Working Groups	Facilitator and Rapporteur
16:10h – 16:30h	Way Forward, Recap and adopting community messages	Facilitator and Rapporteur
16:35h-16:55h	Official Closure	Guest of Honor
17:00h-	Cocktail	Hotel Management /NBDF Rwanda Team.