



One Nile, One Family

***Ethiopian Nile Discourse Forum Position Statement on Enhanced community participation in and benefits from ENSAP projects for sustaining cooperation in the Nile Basin, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, November 3, 2011***

The Nile Basin Discourse (NBD) is a regional network of civil society organizations established to facilitate and support civil society engagement in Nile Basin Cooperation and development processes in pursuing our shared vision.

Engagement is facilitated by the regional secretariat based in Uganda and through National Discourse Forums (NDFs) in each of the ten countries (Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda), which currently have a total of over 750 civil society member organizations across the region.

The Ethiopian Nile Discourse Forum organized a multi Stakeholder forum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011 to discuss on the level of community participation in and benefits from the watershed and Ethio-Sudan power interconnection projects of the Eastern Nile Subsidiary Action Programme so as to ensure community ownership of shared water resources. Based upon the dialogue and deliberation conducted during the forum the participants of the forum make the following recommendations on the following issues:

- The forum recognizes that the NBI is an ongoing Nile basin countries temporary initiative but to pursue and support the establishment of permanent institutions to continue supporting the Nile cooperation while the NBD through its regional network will work closely with the CSOs to ensure that there is an effective ongoing dialogue on Nile cooperation issues as well as work on information sharing based on MOU with NBI.

- The forum also underlines that stakeholder involvement is cardinal in NBI and that is taken care of by social development office in existing NBI institutions.
- The forum appreciates that the NBI has finalized the gender mainstreaming strategy at two levels: the NBI institutions and NBI projects to ensure that gender is fully integrated in the NBI both process and projects
- The forum noted the efforts exerted by the NBI to include results of the SVP in the new Nile basin sustainability framework but the challenge is to sustain this at the national level through the governments taking their responsibilities
- The forum acknowledges the need to strengthen the involvement of the community in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all NBI projects as well as the right of the community to understand the concept of benefit sharing and be fully informed of their rights and responsibilities
- The Forum believes that confidence on benefiting from cooperation in the EN countries is crucial and that the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) provides an opportunity on benefits of cooperation
- The forum appreciates that the GERD does not adversely affect the local communities around the project site
- The forum supports and acknowledges that there is improved relationship between Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia, and encourages NBD to work in further strengthening the relationship between the people of the EN countries
- The forum urges the NBD to assist in Nile cooperation through raising public awareness for all projects by involving CSOs and other relevant stakeholders and revisiting its role in strengthening the local communities' meaningful participation in all NBI projects using its wider membership.
- The forum seeks the support of the NBD to influence positively the work of other CSOs towards advocating for water and energy development projects in the Nile basin

Ethiopian Nile Discourse Forum 3<sup>rd</sup> national forum position statement, 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov. 2011