Rwanda takes on leadership mantle of NBI

The 28th annual Nile Council of Ministers (Nile-COM) meeting was held on November 12, 2020 under the new chairperson, Hon Dr Mujawamariya Jeanne d’Arc, the Minister of Environment in Rwanda.

The Nile-COM, comprised of Ministers in charge of Water Affairs in the 10 Member States, is the highest political and decision making body of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI).

The outgoing chairperson Hon Sicily K. Kariuki (EGH), who is also Kenya's Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Irrigation, underscored the importance of NBI’s 10-year Strategy (2017 – 2027) “in the achievement of our core objectives and in realisation of the outcomes of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI)’s 10-year Strategy.”

Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) Member States have worked together to negotiate, agree, prepare and in some cases, implement investment projects, which are more than 84 and worth more than USD 6.5 billion? Find out more: https://bit.ly/349N1DE
Dear Reader,

It is yet another year gone by. I hope that you all are safe and healthy wherever you are.

The year 2020 has been a challenging one for all of us and my heart goes out to everyone affected by the Covid-19 outbreak. The safety, health and well-being of our staff and their families is our number one priority. We strive to comply with guidance and regulations from our host government Uganda as well as public health authorities.

Although the circumstances have been quite challenging to work in, the Secretariat did not lose sight of its priorities and continued to implement its work plan as much as possible. Among the key highlights, we organised the annual regional Nile Day on February 22, hosted by The Sudan, implementation of the groundwater project was launched during the year and we held our annual governance meetings - the 54th and 55th Nile Technical Advisory Committee meetings as well as the 28th annual Nile Council of Ministers meeting. This is in addition to a number of capacity building activities conducted, including in river flow and drought forecasting as well as negotiation skills and conflict management.

We also finalised preparation of a new project, the Nile Cooperation for Climate Resilience project, worth USD 28 million funded by the World Bank for the years 2021-2025 and look forward to start its implementation in 2021. Preparation of the 6th phase of German Government support to Nile Cooperation with an indicative budget of Euros 6 million is underway, with the projected implementation start date of July 2022.

A number of studies have been concluded such as the wetlands studies assessing the functioning of Nile Basin wetlands, their ecosystem and environmental services as well as the desired level of conservation.

New publications namely the State of River Nile Basin Report 2020 which will be launched early next year and the consolidated benefits of Nile cooperation – ‘Our Nile-Our Benefits,’ were prepared.

To be soon finalised is the development of the Integrated Knowledge Portal, which will enable stakeholders access the scientific data, information and knowledge base as well as communication products generated by NBI including all the above studies and publications.

The Secretariat premises has been refurbished, taking into consideration the Covid-19 pandemic and the need to assure a healthful and safe working environment for both the staff and our stakeholders and reduce the impact of the outbreak.

I am looking forward to 2021 and while it will bring its own challenges, I feel certain that it will also come with great opportunities for the Nile Basin. Working together, keeping focussed on our priorities as enshrined in the NBI 10 year Strategy (2017 – 2027) will help us overcome the challenges and tap into the various opportunities so as to transform lives of the citizens in the NBI Member States. Indeed, the Secretariat remains focussed, passionate and determined to provide services that will impact change.

I wish you and your family all the best during the holidays and call upon you to observe the Covid-19 regulations wherever you are.

Best wishes for a healthy and fruitful New Year 2021.

Prof Seifeldin Hamad Abdalla
of our Shared Vision Objective.” She added that this is because the Strategy provides clear linkages between the key development goals of water, food, energy as well as environment and focuses on win-win harnessing of our natural resources.

The Executive Director of the NBI Secretariat, Prof Seifeldin Hamad Abdalla, noted that while the pandemic had disrupted implementation of many of the Secretariat’s activities, the organisation embraced the new normal, implementing activities virtually as much as possible. “A case in point is the launch of implementation of the new five–year project on enhancing conjunctive management of surface and groundwater resources in Nile Basin.”

The ministers approved the Secretariat’s annual work plan and budget for the Financial Year July 2020/June 2021 and directed it to advance in efforts to apply its tools and analysis developed in enabling Member States to respond to climate change such as the floods experienced in many parts of the Basin during the year.

On the issue of the second Nile Basin Heads of State Summit, the Ministers provided strategic guidance on plans towards its successful implementation.

Speaking on behalf of NBI’s Development Partners, Ms Catherine Tovey, Water Practice Manager, Africa East at the World Bank, noted the improved environment for cooperative investment projects in the Nile Basin. She singled out the 80 MW Regional Rusumo Falls Hydro-electric project jointly implemented by Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania as a good example.

In the context of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and the efforts to prevent its spread, the meeting was held virtually to ensure the health and safety of all parties.

The 28th Nile-COM meeting was attended by Ministers in charge of Water Affairs from NBI Member States, members of the Nile Technical Advisory Committee, representatives of development partners and the Nile Basin Discourse as well as management and staff of NBI.

Jane K. Baitwa
Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Specialist
Nile-SEC, Entebbe
The 55th Nile Technical Advisory Committee (Nile-TAC) was held on 11 November in preparation for the 28th annual Nile Council of Ministers (Nile-COM) scheduled for 12 November, 2020.

Presided over by the new Nile-TAC Chair, Ms Jacqueline Nyirakamana, the meeting reviewed key NBI reports, plans and policies to be presented to the Nile-COM for strategic guidance and direction. These included the annual work plan and budget for the Financial Year 2020/2021, the Nile Basin Heads of State Summit as well as issues related to sustainable Nile cooperation. Members also discussed some of the regional challenges affecting Member States such as flooding as well as NBI institutional challenges.

Regarding the Nile Basin Heads of State Summit, the Secretariat (Nile-SEC) was instructed to mainstream decisions of the first Summit in its planned activities.

The meeting noted progress made in implementation of planned activities despite the challenges caused by the unprecedented Covid 19 global pandemic. The midterm review of the NBI Basin wide Programme report

ed a moderate satisfactory rating and Nile-TAC called upon the Secretariat to analyse the findings, implement the key recommendations and remedial actions pointed out.

Furthermore, key technical recommendations from the Strategic Water Resources Analysis study were presented, including supplemental irrigation, rainwater harvesting as well as impacts of climate change.

Nile-TAC also took note of progress recorded by NBI’s investment programmes’ offices, the Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO) and the Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Programme Coordination Unit (NELSAP CU), as well as NBI’s strategic partners namely, the Nile Basin Discourse (NBD) and Global Water Partnership Eastern Africa (GWP EnA).

The meeting was preceded by meetings of subcommittees on technical as well as finance, human resource and audit.

The Nile-TAC offers technical support and advice to the Nile-COM on matters related to the management and development of the Nile waters. It also acts as an interface between the Nile-COM and development partners and between Nile-COM and the Secretariat, and provides oversight for NBI programmatic activities.

Tom Waako
Programme Officer
Nile-SEC, Entebbe
Capacity of Member States to prepare climate change datasets for impact studies over the Nile Basin enhanced

The Nile Basin is one of the most critical transboundary water basins in Africa with the River Nile playing a crucial role and resource for most of the economic and social activities for the countries in the Eastern and North-Eastern Africa. That said it is equally facing adverse effects of climate change, which is expected to worsen in the future should little or no efforts be done to avert the current trends.

Some of the associated challenges of the river Basin include: more often droughts and flooding, heavy siltation, deterioration of water quantity and quality, worsening variability and affecting distribution, etc. This is within the backdrop that the region has high population growth, strong emerging economies and huge demand for its environmental services; all which place an unprecedented demand on the water and environment resources within the Basin.

The climate is changing, putting a range of natural and human systems at risk and prompting communities, governments and organisations to step up their efforts to adapt. The learning curve can be steep, but certainly manageable given the wealth of methods and information to support adaptation planning. The goal is to manage current and future negative outcomes and capitalise on opportunities that may present themselves under a changing climate.

For this purpose the NBI Secretariat (Nile-SEC) provided high quality climate change data, information and knowledge to support water resources decision makers. The state of art Oracle virtual box was used as a mean to conduct the training workshop as shown in Figure 1. Grads and CDO free tools were used for post processing and displaying climate change data.

The training was organised with the support of the World Bank’s Cooperation in International Waters in Africa (CIWA) project and prepared and conducted by Nile-SEC.

Modathir Zaroug
Regional Water Resources Modeler
Nile-SEC, Entebbe
Meet our new leaders

The Secretariat recently welcomed its new leaders at both the political and technical level. The change is in keeping with the NBI tradition of rotating both positions among the NBI Member States on an annual basis.

Dr Jeanne d’Arc Mujawamariya who is the new chairperson of the Nile Council of Ministers (Nile-COM) is the Minister of Environment in Rwanda.

Dr Mujawamariya, who is passionate about environmental science and sustainable natural resources management, will chair the Nile-COM, the highest decision-making body of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), for a one year period. The Nile-COM is responsible for providing overall policy direction and strategic guidance on the joint management and development of the common Nile Basin water resources.

Prior to her appointment as Minister of Environment in Rwanda on November 4, 2019, Dr Mujawamariya served as the Ambassador of Rwanda to the Russian Federation and non-resident Ambassador to the Republic of Belarus from 2013.

She also served as Rector of Kigali Institute of Science and Technology (KIST) from 2011 to 2013; Rwanda’s Minister of Gender and Family Promotion from 2008 to 2011; Minister of Education from 2006 to 2008; Minister of State in charge of Higher Education from 2005 to 2006 and Minister of State in charge of Primary and Secondary Education in the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Scientific Research from 2003 to 2005 as well as a Lecturer at the National University of Rwanda from 2001 to 2003.

Minister Jeanne d’Arc Mujawamariya is a PhD holder in Physical Chemistry from the Indian Institute of Technology-IIT Roorkee. She also holds a Master’s degree in Chemistry from the Russian Peoples’ Friendship University, Moscow-Russia.

Mrs Jacqueline Nyirakamana is the new Chairperson of the Nile Technical Advisory Committee (Nile-TAC). She will chair the Nile-TAC for a one year period, leading technical support to members of the Nile-COM in providing the overall policy direction and strategic guidance on the joint management and development of the common Nile Basin water resources.

Mrs Nyirakamana who has got more than 10 years’ experience in transboundary water resources management and cooperation, is the Transboundary Water Resources Cooperation Specialist in the Ministry of Environment, Rwanda. Among her responsibilities she represents Rwanda on NBI’s technical advisory committee and previously, on Lake Kivu and Ruzizi/Rusizi River Basin (ABAKIR) from 2018 to 2019.

Prior, Mrs Nyirakamana worked in the Ministry of Natural Resources as NBI Focal Point as well as Liaison Officer for Kagera Integrated Water Resources Management Project from 2008 to 2014.

Earlier from 1996 to 2006, she worked in the Ministry of Infrastructure, National Planning Unit as Personal Assistant.

Mrs Nyirakamana is a holder of a Master of Business Administration (MBA) in Strategic Management from Mount Kenya University and a Bachelor in Administrative Sciences obtained from the Université Libre de Kigali (ULK).
Nile Media Awards 2021 - Entries closed!

The Secretariat would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who submitted their entries to the Nile Media Awards 2021, thank you very much!

We will now embark on the selection process and winners will be recognised during the 6th Nile Basin Development Forum, due to take place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in April 2021. Those selected from the various categories will walk away with a cash prize and a recognition certificate. The categories are:

- Print
- Radio
- Television
- Photography
- Digital

Unlike the previous two editions, Nile Media Awards 2021 will also recognise two other entries:
(i) Best female entry
(ii) Best collaborative story

Nile Media Awards is organised by NBI Secretariat with support from GIZ, on behalf of the German Federal government. This 3rd edition is organised in partnership with Ethiopia’s Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Electricity, European Union, Global Water Partnership Eastern Africa, IHE-Delft Institute for Water Education, International Water Management Institute, Nile Basin Discourse, Media in Cooperation and Transition, as well as Water Journalists Africa/InfoNile.

The Nile Media Award was created in 2015 and is presented every three years to Nile Basin journalists who demonstrate excellence in reporting on Nile cooperation and Nile Basin issues.

For updates on the process:
Please visit the dedicated website https://nilebasin.org/mediaawards/the-nile-media-awards/
Follow us on facebook (Nile Basin Initiative) and twitter (@nbiweb)

Jane K. Baitwa
Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Specialist
Nile-SEC, Entebbe

Our Nile - Our Benefits

This publication captures benefits Member States are deriving from working together as countries that share the world’s longest river - the Nile, under the auspices of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) for the last 21 years. Nile Basin cooperation has achieved an array of results and benefits for the region, thanks to the untiring efforts of Member States, the NBI leadership and staff, as well as the sustained commitment of development partners.

Download the document and find out more:
Preparations for the annual Regional Nile Day 2021 Event kicked off in December 2020. The government of the Republic of Uganda will host the event, the 15th in its series since 2007 when the inaugural event was held.

The theme for 2021 is **Rethinking Regional Investments in the Nile Basin**. Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) Member States have worked together to negotiate, agree, prepare and in some cases, implement investment projects with shared regional benefits and the potential to ultimately benefit millions of inhabitants. The investment projects, which are more than 84, are worth more than USD 6.5 billion. The sectors covered include: hydropower development; power transmission interconnection and trade; irrigation and drainage; lake/lake environment management; integrated sub-basin/catchment/watershed management; fisheries; water resources development; flood protection and early warning; multi-sector investment opportunity studies; and inland waterway transport.

Nile Day 2021 will be organised as part of pre-event activities to start the conversation around and create interest in the theme for the 6th Nile Basin Development Forum: **Rethinking Regional Investments in the Nile Basin. Water | Food | Energy | Environment | Climate**

The Secretariat will take the opportunity to officially launch the 6th NBDF during the Ministerial Roundtable, thus kick-starting a series of webinars scheduled to take place over a period of two months before the virtual/physical event at the end of April 2021.
The objectives of Nile Day 2021 are three-fold:

► To raise awareness and visibility of the Nile Basin Initiative, its achievements and benefits of Nile cooperation
► To enable Member States and friends of the Nile to start the conversation regarding a new approach to regional/basin planning and investment agenda.
► To attract the support and collaboration of regional and international strategic partners with regard to coordinated basin planning and regional, transformative infrastructure investments.

Due to the unprecedented Covid-19 global pandemic, the 2021 regional event will be attended by stakeholders and friends of the Nile, based in Uganda only.
The NBI logo can be interpreted as the spirit of unity in the Nile Basin, showing the Nile winding between a field of green on the left, symbolising the lush vegetation of the upstream countries, with a field of light green on the right, symbolising the more arid lands of the downstream countries. On the right hand side is the Nile Basin Initiative’s name in both English and French, the two dominant languages of the region.

Key upcoming events

Nile Day 2021

The Regional Nile Day 2021 event will take place on February 22. The 15th in its series, the annual event will be hosted by the government of Uganda. As has been the tradition, the event will be organised in partnership with the Nile Basin Discourse (NBD), a civil society organisation. The theme for the event is: Rethinking Regional Investments in the Nile Basin.

6th Nile Basin Development Forum

The 6th Nile Basin Development Forum postponed from October 2020 due to the global Covid-19 pandemic is now planned to take place at the end of April 2021 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The event will kick start with a series of webinars effective February 2021 before the virtual/physical event. The theme for the event is: Rethinking Regional Investments in the Nile Basin. Water | Food | Energy | Environment | Climate

Find out more: https://www.nbdf6.nilebasin.org

Nile Media Awards 2021

This 3rd edition of the Nile Media Awards will take place in April 2021. Winners will be recognised during the 6th Nile Basin Development Forum, due to take place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Find out more: https://nilebasin.org/mediaawards/the-nile-media-awards/
NBI develops COVID-19 Business Continuity Strategy

The corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic outbreak is impacting businesses all over the world. Whether NBI operations are already greatly affected or the impacts are yet to be felt, a business continuity plan is essential to ensure that the Secretariat can be as resilient as possible in this global health crisis.

As per instruction of its governance, the Secretariat prepared a post COVID 19 Business Continuity Strategy to guide the Secretariat’s working modalities and approaches so as to ensure timely delivery and outcomes.

NBI MEMBER STATES

Burundi  DR Congo  Egypt  Ethiopia  Kenya  Rwanda  South Sudan  The Sudan  Tanzania  Uganda

NBI SHARED VISION OBJECTIVE

To achieve sustainable socio-economic development through the equitable utilisation of, and benefit from, the common Nile Basin water resources.

Want to know more about NBI?

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