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PRESS RELEASE

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NBI to hold regular Heads of States Summits

BUJUMBURA, Burundi – The 26th Nile Council of Ministers has agreed to institutionalise and regularise the Nile Basin Heads of State Summit, after the first event in June 2017 in Uganda, Burundi’s Minister of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock, Dr. Deo-Guide Rurema, who is also the chairman of the Nile Council of Ministers, has said.

Dr. Rurema was speaking at a press conference to mark the end of the 26th Nile Council of Ministers meeting in Bujumbura, Burundi.

“The Heads of State Summit is a platform that the Nile Basin Initiative will utilise to promote the Nile Basin development,” he said.

The Nile Council of Ministers is an annual gathering of the Ministers of Water Affairs from each of the Member States of the Nile Basin Initiative. The meeting was attended by ministers from Burundi, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Uganda while DR Congo, Egypt, Sudan and Tanzania were represented by high level government officials. Kenya and Rwanda did not participate.

During the meeting, the Republic of Burundi assumed political leadership of the Nile Basin Initiative, succeeding the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The changes in leadership are in keeping with the NBI tradition of annually rotating the position of both chairman of the Nile Council of Ministers and the Nile Technical Advisory Committee among Member States.

The Nile Council of Ministers offered strategic guidance and direction on key issues aimed at encouraging Member States to jointly address their common

challenges including water scarcity, food and energy insecurity and climate change as well as institutional matters of the Nile Basin Initiative.

The ministers also discussed the financial sustainability of NBI.

“Member States agreed to meet their annual obligations in a timely manner so as to support NBI in meeting its core costs,” Dr Rurema said, adding, “Member States committed themselves to clear within the shortest possible time.”

“We need to feed the cow in order to get milk. If we don’t feed the cow, we will lose both the cow and the milk,” Dr Rurema said in reference to countries meeting their financial obligations to NBI.

In his remarks, Tanzania Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, Prof. Kitila Mkondo, said, “The Cooperative Framework Agreement and the subsequent [River Basin] Commission would curtail any conflict among Member States,” adding, “I call upon countries to pay their dues to support the organisational operations of the NBI.”

In addition, the ministers approved the NBI Financing Strategy and the Resource Mobilisation Action Plan, both of which are to enable NBI raise more funds for core costs, programme work as well as implementation of regional investment projects.

The meeting was also attended by Members of the Nile Technical Advisory Committee, Management staff of NBI as well as representatives of development partners and civil society.

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About Nile Basin Initiative

The Nile Basin Initiative is a regional inter-governmental partnership launched by the Nile Basin countries on February 22, 1999, to manage and develop the shared Nile Basin water and related resources in a cooperative manner, share substantial socio-economic benefits, and promote regional peace and security. There are 10 NBI Member States: Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. Eritrea participates as an observer.

The setup of NBI is informed by the principle of subsidiarity that matters ought to be handled by the smallest, lowest or least centralised competent authority; hence, the three NBI Centres: A Regional Secretariat (Nile-SEC) based in Entebbe, Uganda is the executive arm responsible for the overall corporate direction. Two subsidiary Action Programs – the Eastern Nile Subsidiary Action Program (ENSAP) and Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program (NELSAP) – are responsible for preparing trans-boundary investment projects aimed at contributing to energy, food and water security in the Nile Basin.

The Nile Basin Initiative will, next year, celebrate 20 years since its inception on February 22, 1999.