

# **Stakeholder Discourse in the Nile Basin**

**By**

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**Presented at**

**The 758<sup>th</sup> Wilton Park conference on Environment,  
Development & Sustainable Peace: Finding Paths to  
Environmental Peace making**

**16-19 September, 2004**



# Outline

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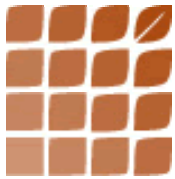
# Introduction

- Need for co-operation between states as well as between basin users
  - Different states with different interests
  - Different groups of people with different needs (some competing)
  - Potential for conflict in use and management
- International law a basis for negotiation of rules to govern transboundary watercourses
  - Developed over time; state-centric
- Two agreements with respect to the Nile
  - 1929 Nile Water Agreement & 1959 Agreement for the Full utilization of the Nile gave Egypt & Sudan extensive rights over the Nile waters
  - Challenges on equity grounds & negotiated during colonial period
    - Countries challenge these agreements & some denounced them at independence



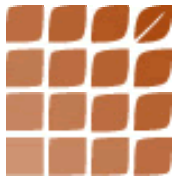
# Nile Basin

- Nile Basin covers 10 countries:
  - Ethiopia, Eritrea, Egypt, Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, DRC, Rwanda, Burundi
  - An area of about 3 million square kilometres.
- Many people dependent on Nile basin for subsistence & economic activities
- The Nile Basin Initiative a cooperative arrangement for management of the Basin (cooperation Vs. Conflict)
  - Developed over the years and formally established in 1999
  - Countries working together to develop the Nile resources for the benefit of all
  - Context: A long legacy of mutual recriminations, regional conflict, drought and other problems



# Nile Basin (2)

- Initially cooperation around scientific information sharing
  - The shared vision of the Nile Basin Initiative is *“To achieve sustainable socio-economic development through equitable utilization of, and benefit from the common Nile basin water resources”*
- NBI has comprehensive programme for development of the basin in a sustainable and equitable way thro’ its institutional organs:
  - The Council of Ministers (Nile-COM)
  - The Technical Advisory Committee (Nile-TAC)
  - The Nile Basin Initiative Secretariat (Nile-Sec)
- Working on a cooperative legal framework to guide activities
  - Agreement not yet finalised but is ultimate aim
- The NBI has two main programmes:



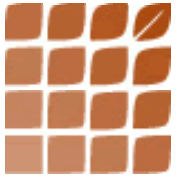
# Nile Basin (4)

- **1. The Shared Vision Programme (to help create an enabling environment for action on the ground)**
  - Covering all riparian states
  - Dealing with regional power trade, water resources planning, confidence building and stakeholder participation, socio-economic development and benefit-sharing among others.
- **2. Subsidiary Action Programme (Sub-basin projects)**  
involving specific groups of riparian countries categorised into two:
  - **Eastern Nile Subsidiary Action Programme (ENSAP)**
    - Ethiopia, Eritrea, Egypt, Sudan
  - **Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Programme (NELSAP)**
    - Sudan, Egypt, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, DRC, Tanzania & Kenya
- These programmes are geared to reach the lowest appropriate level – Principle of subsidiarity



# Nile Basin (5)

- Aim at poverty reduction, economic development, reversal of envtl degradation
- Search for win-win opportunities between riparian countries
  - Water resource & water-shed management
  - Envtl & natural resource management
  - Food security
  - Flood preparedness
  - Power & infrastructure



# Observations

- NBI developed at very high political level
  - Process towards a cooperative framework fragile & threatened by mistrust, conflict in some states etc
- NBI predicated on view that Nile waters constitute a major and vital resource for the people of the basin countries
  - Governments cannot go it alone and must include other stake holders such as civil society
- All riparian states' ministries responsible for water participating in NBI
  - Great achievement given sense of alienation of some actors by others
- No direct involvement of groups outside the government departments



# Nile Basin Discourse

- The Nile Basin Discourse initiated to bring the voices of stakeholders to the process of the development of the Nile basin
- It seeks to:
  - 1. Promote broad-based open dialogue, discussion and sharing of views on development in the Nile basin mainly thro' NBI between:
    - All role players
    - Stakeholders and affected parties
  - 2. Develop a database of stakeholders
  - 3. Facilitate interaction between stakeholders
  - 4. Catalyse national discourses in the 10 riparian countries
  - 5. Give space for national discourse on status of people dependent on the Nile waters



# Nile Basin Discourse (2)

- 6. Bring out voices of all stakeholders, especially the poor at all levels (national, sub-national levels), CBOs & others concerned about:
  - Poverty, food security, economic and social human rights
  - Threats to livelihoods and poverty reduction posed by accelerating environmental degradation in large areas of the Nile Basin.
- Expected that the participation of a diverse array of stakeholders will:
  - Contribute to NBI's effectiveness
  - Contribute by bringing non-government views in addressing poverty, improving the livelihoods of all within the basin, and addressing insecurity and strife in the region.
- The process leading to the establishment of the discourse long and winding (Not yet out of woods)



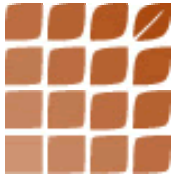
# Nile Basin Discourse (3)

- Government actors wary of engaging civil society due to political fragility of the process leading to co-operation over the Nile waters
- Civil society invited & made statement on importance of engaging stakeholders in the development of the Nile at the First Meeting of the International Consortium for Co-operation on the Nile (ICCON)
- Increasing (albeit slow) recognition of need to bring all stakeholders on board
- **Structure of NBD**
  - 1. International Steering Committee with membership drawn for all riparian countries
  - 2. A General Assembly drawn from all riparian countries which has met once
  - 3. Secretariat in Entebbe, Uganda near the offices of the NBI
  - 4. National Discourse Forums (NDFs)
    - Groupings around issues
    - Concern for representation of marginalised (women, youth etc)
- **Achievements of NBD to date**
  - 1. Has NDFs in all riparian countries



# Nile Basin Discourse (4)

- 2. Dialogue between civil society organizations
  - Widening web of organisations involved
- 3. Draft MOU with NBI
- 4. Developing a resource centre on the Nile basin at the desk office
- 5. Creating master database of civil society organisations with interest in the Nile
- **Challenges in Getting NBD Going**
  - 1. Leveraging resources for Discourse Desk & National Discourse Forums
    - NBD Desk at Entebbe presently struggling to survive
    - NBI programmes beginning in earnest & revised agreement being discussed
    - NDFs not engaged due to lack of finances for Discourse activities



# Nile Basin Discourse (5)

- 2. Question of representation raised
  - Should involvement have been sought only after getting all stakeholders on board?
- 3. Given open nature of dialogue and involvement of diverse entities, how does it:
  - (a) Put in place an agenda not captured by interests of powerful groups?
  - (b) Create demand for involvement by empowering local groups?
- 4. Legal nature of forums (comprised of groups and individuals) – has implications for capacity to impact on policy and engage government
  - Which sector to involve? Environment? Security? Development?
- 5. Articulation between the NBD Desk & NDFs
  - Can/should NDFs seek resources and move even as NBD is struggling?
    - Impacts on nature of Discourse as basin-wide?



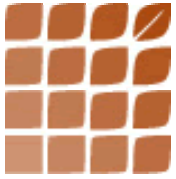
# Lessons Learnt

- Stakeholder participation in the management of Nile facet of procedural rights in the environmental rights realm
  - Outlined in Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration & many national envtl laws
    - Access to information by all
    - Public Participation in decision-making
    - Freedom of association
    - Access to justice
- Provision for envtl rights assumes availability of information & access to the information
  - Not the case for many of the countries
- Need for multi-faceted approach
  - Water related to other resources such as land (pasture, agric, occupation)
  - Land rights for individuals & groups critical beyond sovereign rights of nation



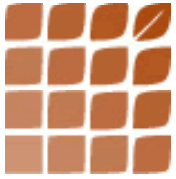
# Lessons Learnt

- Agreement at state level but cooperation involves diverse actors and states must provide the space for cooperation
  - Existence of structural violence not conducive to cooperation
  - Non-involvement of stakeholders can diminish gains made at inter-state level
- Process of engendering stakeholder participation requires nurturing
  - It is essentially political and amenable to capture by interest groups
  - Need to build trust among actors
  - Feeling of commonality of interest
  - Convergence of interests among actors



# Message for Development Partners

- Support to basin-wide initiatives such as NBI laudable & should be sustained
- Support for civil society engagement in basin –wide initiatives to be in tandem with basin-wide initiative support
  - 1. CS much weaker compared to government
  - 2. Enable to demand access to benefits negotiated at inter-state level
  - 3. To secure investment in basin-wide initiative
- Need for coordination among different funding institutions to create synergy in different sectors & have cooperation over water really be a catalyst for peace



# Thank you

- For more information: Visit NBI & NBD websites: [www.nilebasin.org](http://www.nilebasin.org) & [www.nilediscourse.org](http://www.nilediscourse.org)