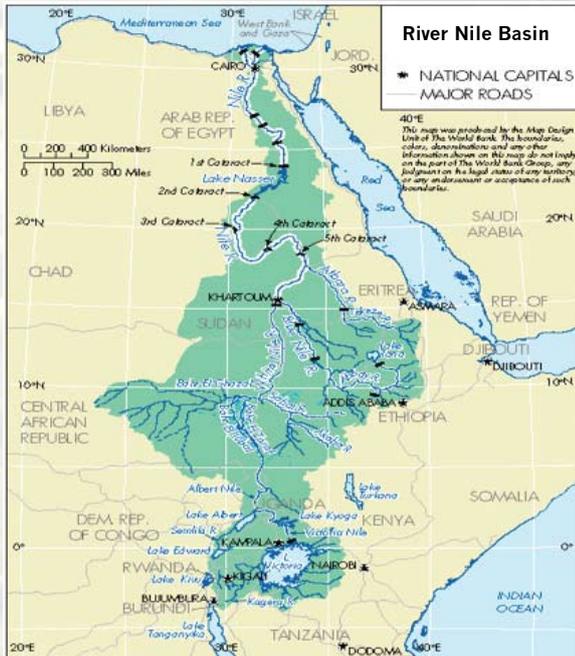




Telling the Nile Story

Ten Years of Successful Cooperation



The River Nile is a transboundary resource shared by 10 countries: Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Cover photo: Sunset on the River Nile in Khartoum, Sudan.

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The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent those of NBI or its Member States.

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For centuries, the people living along the 6,671-kilometre River Nile depended on it almost entirely for water, irrigation, and food. Millions still depend on it today. But as populations have grown and lifestyles changed, the great river and its basin have come under serious strain.

The river banks have been heavily settled, forests cut for fuel and pollution has been exacerbated from industrial release and fertiliser use. Silt now clogs river tributaries contracting the flow, displacing natural reservoirs of water in lakes along the way, and increasing the likelihood of flooding. Fish populations and those of other water animals have dwindled as a result of declining habitats and over-harvesting. Consequently, the livelihoods of about 160 million people stand threatened. All this has driven home the point that the 10 countries within the Nile Basin are permanently connected and must cooperate to save the River Nile if they are to survive and develop both as nations and collectively, as a region.

Enter the Nile Basin Initiative

In today's world, cooperation appears to be a logical necessity yet decades of negotiations among the riparian countries of the River Nile Basin had previously produced nothing. Only when the idea of cooperative management of the River Nile Basin was put on the table did change begin. This idea, called the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), was launched in February 1999 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The secretariat for the Initiative was established a year later in the lakeside town of Entebbe in Uganda.

The NBI was set up as a forum to allow for a process of legal and institutional dialogue that would guide the setting up of a permanent cooperative framework through which to improve the livelihoods of the people of the Nile Basin. All riparian countries, except Eritrea which has observer status, are NBI members. They are Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

The starting point was the articulation of the shared vision of achieving “sustainable socio-economic development through equitable utilization of, and benefit from, the common River Nile Basin water

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resources". This vision, adopted by the Nile Council of Ministers (Nile-COM), was the basis on which the historic NBI programme has been carried out, as negotiation on a permanent cooperative framework continues on a parallel process.

Achievements of the Nile Basin Initiative

Arguably the biggest success thus far of the NBI has been the lessening of tensions amongst the Nile Basin countries. Things were so bad that at some point an argument amongst delegates almost degenerated into a free-for-all fist-fight. "We have built understanding and established the principle of negotiation and discussion with each other," says Mr. Remy Mugunga, advisor to the President of Rwanda, recalling the 1997 meeting in Kigali that almost ended in an exchange of blows and not ideas.

Today, countries sit at one table to resolve water conflicts that previously kept them apart. Through this dialogue the tremendous riches of the region are being uncovered. Indeed, agreement has come faster than at any river basin negotiations anywhere else in the world. Within a short six years, only the issue of water security was, and still is, yet to be decided.

Results you can believe in

Owning a good grade cow was a far-fetched dream for Rwanda's Didacienne Mukakigeri, as she went about her dreary day-to-day tasks of tilling the land with a hoe, planting, weeding and fetching water. That fruitless, if predictable, existence was interrupted when Ms. Mukakigeri found herself the owner of a high quality cow as a beneficiary of the Microgrant Program set up under the NBI. Life had changed in Gacundezi Village in the Western Province of Rwanda.

The Cattle Traction Project was introduced to the area initially to encourage zero-grazing and get people to reduce the size of their poor quality herds. This would take pressure for pasture off the land. A local NGO – Rwanda Development Organisation – then added value by training the bulls and oxen to pull ploughs to increase the productivity of peasant farmers like Ms. Mukakigeri.

... the biggest success thus far of the NBI has been the lessening of tensions amongst the Nile Basin countries... "We have built understanding and established the principle of negotiation and discussion with each other".

“I used to produce 30 kg of beans and 80 kg of maize each year,” she says, adding that it was the output of a nine-hour working day almost seven days a week. Today, thanks to the Traction Project, Ms. Mukakigeri’s workload is down to four hours in the field and yet production has gone up to a tonne of maize and 800 kg of beans a year. So popular is the project that Ms. Mukakigeri now has a new job, training oxen as people in neighbouring villages catch on to the idea.

In most countries of the River Nile Basin similar microgrant projects have fired the imagination of communities. From commercial fruit growing to animal husbandry to production of crafts using the troublesome hyacinth weed that has clogged rivers and lakes to tree nurseries and terracing, small projects have made a big impression.

NBI microgrants were given to groups and communities as part of a package of projects designed to prepare people for cooperative management of the River Nile. Each of the riparian countries has similar microgrant projects, all started with an investment of about US\$25,000. The minimal direct benefits to the communities have created an appetite for more.



Maize crop

NBI Programs Create a New Agenda

As in Mukakigeri’s village, microgrant projects have mobilised a lot of energy within communities and within the ranks of government officials. But there is more.

Overseen by the NBI Secretariat in Entebbe, the work done to prepare for cooperation in the River Nile Basin falls under two key programs: the Shared Vision Program (SVP) and the Subsidiary Action Programs (SAPs).

Implementation of these programs gives recognition to the fact that while River Nile Basin countries have agreed to cooperate at the political level, the actual work requires technical skills at many different levels and an understanding and orientation towards regional cooperation and transboundary issues.

Sharing a Vision

When the Shared Vision Program (SVP) began it was clear that several countries had limited capacity for understanding and managing transboundary water issues, says Ms. Hamere Wondimu, the Senior Program Officer who coordinates the SVP at the NBI Secretariat. “SVP is about capacity building,” she says. The SVP was designed in 2001 as a basin-wide program based on national needs assessment studies.

To achieve its aims, seven regional projects were created:

Integrated Water Resources Planning and Management (IWRM) Project

Its main task is to reorient the planning system to look at the waters that traverse each independent country as a shared resource. The IWRM components include forging a common water policy; providing a common platform for communication, information management and analysis of water resources through the Nile Basin Decision Support System; equipping government officials involved with water policy with project planning and management skills so as to prepare and implement sound multi-country and transboundary projects. Finally, there is the regional coordination and facilitation component, managed by the Project Management Unit in Addis Ababa, which focuses on monitoring and evaluation and overall operation of the project.

The Regional Power Trade (RPT) Project

Cooperation in power trade is key to the economic development of each country and the region. The Rusumo Falls Hydro and Multipurpose Project on the Rwanda-Tanzania border, for example, will also benefit Burundi and Uganda. The project was on hold for 40 years because of the absence of a structure through which to negotiate a binding agreement with all riparians. NBI, through the Dar-es-Salaam based RPT Project, has now made progress possible. Regional meetings on power have enabled experts in all nine countries to connect and negotiate better. “We know each other as experts and we recognise the need for capacity building,” says Mr. Kavese Paluku of DR Congo’s Ministry of Energy.



Efficient Water Use for Agricultural Production (EWUAP) Project

The Nairobi-based project aims to establish a forum to assist actors in the agricultural sector at regional, national and community levels to acquire knowledge and skills that will support them in addressing efficient use of water for agricultural production. The actors are decision-makers, professionals, farmers, the private sector, and others, according to Dr. Tadele Gebreselassie, the Regional Project Manager for EWUAP.

- People have been trained to increase their ability to undertake small-scale irrigation in upstream countries, largescale irrigation in Egypt and Sudan, as well as water harvesting. In Egypt and Sudan where there is a history of largescale agricultural farming, remote sensing and geographical information system studies were conducted to define efficiencies in water use.
- DR Congo trained about a dozen government staff in small-holder irrigation and today these serve as a permanent resource for the country.
- “EWUAP also undertook a rapid baseline assessment of the overall status of agricultural water in the Nile Basin,” says Dr. Gebreselassie. This report, together with another on best practices, will be used to inform the direction of new projects. With agriculture being the mainstay of economies in the region, it is hoped that progress made under EWUAP will inform proposals to create an Agricultural and Trade Productivity Project under the Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program (NELSAP).

Applied Training Project (ATP)

The ATP based in Cairo, is the knowledge management unit of NBI and aims to develop capacity and training in integrated water resources planning and management, capturing everything from water quality to watershed management. The first batch of 35 master’s students from across the riparian countries graduated in 2007 and another 22 graduated in 2008. While the master’s students were sponsored to universities within the River Nile Basin countries, doctoral level students joined campuses all over the world on condition that their research was carried out in the Nile Basin.

The first group of about 50 post-doctoral students graduate in 2009. In addition, ATP held training and capacity development sessions in various aspects of integrated water management for up to 750 different stakeholders including appreciation training for 76 Members of Parliaments and

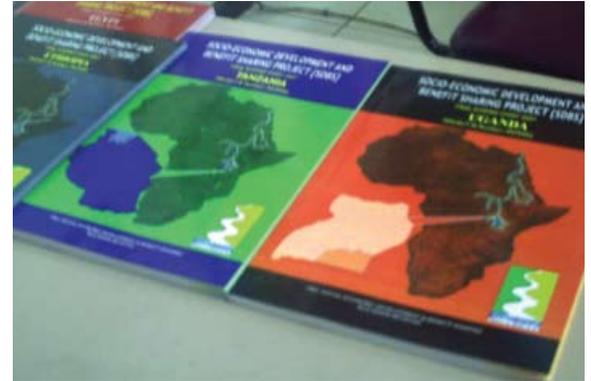
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other regional policymakers. To support this process, the project has also developed materials and began training-of-trainers (TOT) with the goal of initiating a multiplier effect. “ATP is going to set up a training institution at university level that will remain after the project has concluded,” says Dr. William Kudoja, a lead training specialist with ATP.

Socio-Economic Development and Benefit Sharing (SDBS) Project

The Nile Basin region is still home to many of the world’s poorest people. Responding to this, the SDBS Project was launched in 2006 and a year later scoping studies were undertaken to capture opportunities for poverty reduction. A series of cluster workshops were held with concerned parties to improve the final reports, which were later launched in June 2009.



Reports of the Scoping Studies undertaken by the SDBS Project

Confidence Building and Stakeholder Involvement (CBSI) Project

Acting from its base in Entebbe, Uganda, the CBSI Project uses multiple channels to disseminate information about NBI work. Several networks have been created amongst media people, teachers, academics, Members of Parliament, religious leaders, and women. Some of these networks are quite active. “Ugandan MPs were brought on board in 2006 [and] since then we have formed the Parliamentary Nile Basin Forum and we intend to push our government to sign the Cooperative Legal and Institutional Framework Agreement (CFA),” says Mr. Mathias Kasamba, representative of Kakulo County in Uganda’s Rakai District.

- Bigger initiatives, however, are underway. Burundi introduced a new syllabus with a Nile Basin focus in September 2008 while Egypt has developed modules to be taught in schools from the 2009 school year.
- A Nile Media Network has been created and media campaigns on various aspects of the Nile Basin conducted in some countries. “We produced 30 episodes of a radio programme for broadcast by a well known Egyptian personality,” says Prof. Hesham Moustafa, coordinator for the CBSI Project in Egypt. “In Uganda we used radio and television spots,” says Ms. Jane Nabunya, the coordinator for the CBSI Project in Uganda. “We don’t talk about NBI in these programs rather we stress the importance of the River Nile and the need to foster regional cooperation.”

Nile Trans-boundary Environmental Action Project (NTEAP)

The objective of this Khartoum based project is to strengthen riparian cooperation and coordination through trans-boundary activities including capacity building, training, education and awareness raising, knowledge and information sharing, communications, environmental activities monitoring and activities at selected sites.

NTEAP has recorded significant achievements in creating awareness and strengthening capacity in environmental issues, threats and remedial measures through intensive dialogue among stakeholders, training and through implementation of practical pilot projects.

Among others, the project has created and enhanced awareness on the River Nile environmental threats and its effects on water resources and communities. It has strengthened trans-boundary partnerships and networks of environmental education and awareness practitioners.

In addition, information exchange has been enhanced through networks of journalists, practitioners, teachers, lecturers and national working groups. Awareness materials have been developed and about 200 people trained on Environment Education and Awareness (EE&A) materials development. A training manual on Environment Education for tertiary level was finalized and disseminated to all NBI countries.

The Water Quality Monitoring component developed the Water Quality Monitoring system which consists of 44 trans-boundary sampling stations, 11 water quality parameters, reference and focal laboratory designation, sampling and analysis manuals have been finalized and approved by the Nile Basin Technical Advisory Committee.

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Looking Beyond the Shared Vision Program

With the Shared Vision Program (SVP) coming to an end in December 2009, it is expected that many of the activities will be taken over by governments of the region. Some will find natural accommodation in existing

institutions such as the Drought Monitoring Centre in Nairobi that already monitors floods and drought in countries of the Nile Basin save for DR Congo, Egypt and Sudan; and the Remote Sensing Project of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

Almost US\$34 million has been set aside to ensure that key projects are carried through to conclusion under the Institutional Strengthening Project (ISP). The money is provided by 34 donors who agreed to support the ISP as a sort of holding tank for the key SVP gains. The ISP will also play a role in supporting the integration of SVP initiatives into the work and vision of Nile Basin governments.

Action on the Ground - Demonstrating Benefits of cooperation

The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) has made remarkable progress in establishing a (transitional) regional institution, building capacity for basin-wide water management and launching a significant investment portfolio to support water development.

To undertake the implementation of investment projects, NBI established the Eastern Nile Subsidiary Action Program (ENSAP) and the Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program (NELSAP). ENSAP and NELSAP have since registered great strides in preparing medium to large investment projects, bringing NBI's investment portfolio for projects under implementation and preparation close to US\$1 billion.

Eastern Nile Subsidiary Action Program (ENSAP)

ENSAP is premised on the recognition that Eastern Nile water resource management/development-related challenges are trans-boundary in nature (e.g., alteration of flood and droughts; soil erosion-sedimentation-siltation; wetland degradation; climate change; growing demand for water, etc). These challenges cannot be addressed successfully by any single country alone. Hence, joint development and management of the Eastern Nile water resources is expected to serve as a catalyst for greater regional integration with benefits that far exceed those derived from the river itself.

In order to tackle the challenges above, the three NBI Member States of Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan established ENSAP. ENSAP seeks to develop the water resources of the Eastern Nile in a sustainable and equitable way to ensure prosperity, security and peace for all its peoples. The Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO), with headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia is the executive arm of



Having fun: Children at the 2009 Regional Nile day Celebrations in Burundi

ENSAP. ENTRO's main tasks include providing support to ENCOM/ENSAPT, including secretariat support; liaising with Development Partners and other stakeholders; plus identifying, preparing and launching water resources development projects.

The Integrated Development of Eastern Nile (IDEN) is the first group of ENSAP projects. IDEN consists of two tracks of investments: the fast-track and the multi-purpose track projects respectively. The projects are at different phases of preparation as indicated below.

Fast-track projects:

These projects are intended to demonstrate early benefits of cooperation by realizing results on the ground. They include:

The Eastern Nile Planning Model Project currently under preparation is intended to assist Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan identify, prepare and implement cooperative development-investment projects that confer benefits for all three countries. The jointly developed modeling system will provide a shared, common analytical basis for identifying and assessing options, quantifying benefits and impacts, evaluating trade-offs, as well as analyzing and managing information.

The Flood Preparedness and Early Warning Project identifies flood risks and implements community-based plans to reduce flood damages and capture environmental benefits. The project under implementation by and in Sudan and Ethiopia has its focus on establishing public education programs and mobilizing affected communities, public services, the private sector and civil society groups. Enhanced flood forecasting capacities will improve dissemination of flood warning information to communities at risk and strengthen existing institutions and mechanisms to alert communities.

The Ethiopia-Sudan Transmission Interconnection Project will connect the power grids of Ethiopia and Sudan to facilitate cross-border energy trade. This is needed in order to promote synergy and efficiency and overcome shortage of electricity in both countries - a severe constraint on poverty



ENSAP tree planting ceremony

reduction and economic growth. The project implemented by and in Ethiopia and Sudan is also a first step towards greater regional power trade.

The concluded Eastern Nile Power Trade Program Study aims to promote regional power trade by coordinating the planning and development of power projects and transmission interconnection across the three Eastern Nile countries. The power projects will be developed as part of multipurpose water resources development projects. This project will include an assessment of the scope and potential of an Eastern Nile power market, potential power generation options in the three countries, potential sites for transmission interconnection and potential power trading arrangements. Findings of the study will provide key inputs to the Joint Multipurpose Project (JMP) whose identification studies are underway.

The Irrigation and Drainage Project strives to develop and expand irrigated agriculture; to improve the productivity of existing small-and large-scale agriculture through more efficient use of water. The project also aims to promote production of high value crops in addition to improved access to markets and credit. It has supported the identification of over 100,000 hectares of fast track irrigation development projects in each ENSAP country. Of these, 50,000-60,000 hectares of irrigation development is under implementation by and in Egypt and Ethiopia.

The Watershed Management Project is focused on sustainable management of watersheds in the three Eastern Nile countries. This is by improving the living conditions of the people that depend on the waterways through: providing alternative and/or complimentary livelihood opportunities; enhancing agricultural productivity; protecting the environment; and reducing soil erosion and sediment transport in addition to laying the groundwork for future, sustainable development-oriented investments. The first ever Cooperative Regional Assessment has been concluded and a first round of fast-track projects is under implementation by and in Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan.



Water users association leader speaks during ENSAP Stakeholder Consultation - Jazeera Scheme, Sudan.



Women of Tekeze sub-basin carrying water

Multi-purpose track programs and projects:

While pursuing joint multi-purpose development will be more complex and time-consuming in relation to pursuing separate national agendas, the Eastern Nile countries recognize that it is a much more sustainable path. This is due to the potential for greater impact on poverty alleviation, sustainable socio-economic development and international relations in the region compared to single-purpose or national projects/ programs.

The Joint Multi-Purpose Program (JMP) and JMP1 - Under the auspices of the NBI and with guidance and direction from the Eastern Nile Council of Ministers (ENCOM), Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia have embarked upon an Eastern Nile Joint Multipurpose Program (JMP). The JMP is envisioned as a long-term program, including a coordinated set of investments and enabling institutional environment that facilitates the sustainable development and management of the Eastern Nile shared water resources, to provide a range of transformational development benefits across sectors and countries. Following the conclusion of the JMP launch phase, the JMP1-Identification Studies are underway.

Baro-Akobo-Sobat Multi-Purpose Water Resources Development Project - Located at the Southwestern parts of Ethiopia and the Southeastern parts of Sudan, the area is subjected to land degradation, soil erosion, flooding, high evaporation and seepage losses. As such, the project components will comprise developing irrigated and rain-fed agriculture, as well as improving water conservation. Other components are that of river regulation and environmental management in addition to mitigating the impacts of flood and drought. Development of hydropower and navigation, complemented with measure to diversify income opportunities, will also constitute the project's components. The consultative processes to identify trans-boundary and regional projects is underway.

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Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program (NELSAP)

NELSAP includes eight countries of Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan Tanzania and Uganda.

The objective of NELSAP is to contribute to the eradication of poverty, promote economic growth, and reverse environmental degradation. The Program promotes investments in power development, power transmission interconnection and power trade, water resources management, management of lakes and fisheries, agricultural development, and control of water hyacinth.

The program is managed by a Coordination Unit based in Kigali, Rwanda which facilitates project processes, manages financial resources as well as builds Sub regional capacity in Project preparation and implementation. This is in addition to overseeing the implementation of the jointly identified SAPs and promoting cooperative inter-country and in-country investment projects related to the common use of the Nile Basin water resources.

NELSAP has demonstrated effectiveness in the coordination of multi-country preparation of complex regional projects. A total of 12 projects identified under the initial track of cooperative projects are at different levels of preparation. Two of the projects which include the Regional Interconnection project and the Lakes Edward and Albert Fisheries pilot project concluded the preparation stage and resources are being mobilized for their implementation.

A process for advancing the preparation of new projects in the power and natural resources sub-programs commenced effective July 2006 and is on-going under a scaling up strategy.

NELSAP projects are grouped as follows:

1. NELSAP Institutional Strengthening Project (2001-2011)

2. Natural Resources Management and Development sub program projects

- The Regional Agricultural Trade and Productivity Project (2008-2012). This project covers all nine NBI Member States.



Supervision of afforestation projects in Rakai District, Uganda by members of the Nile Technical Advisory Committee

- The Lakes Edward and Albert Fisheries Project (2004-2008) is implemented in Uganda and DR Congo.
- The Mara Trans-boundary Integrated Water Resources Management project (2005-2010), is under implementation in Kenya and Tanzania.
- Sio-Malaba-Malakisi Trans-boundary Integrated Water Resources Management project (2005-2010) covers Uganda and Kenya.
- The Kagera Trans-boundary Integrated Water Resources Management project (2005-2010) covers four countries of Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania and Uganda.
- Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project (II) (2007-2009), is in Rwanda and Burundi.
- Water Resources and Basin Irrigation Project (2010-2011), is in one country, Tanzania.
- The Bugesera Trans-boundary Water Resources Development program (2009-2010), is for Rwanda and Burundi.
- Nile Equatorial Lakes Coordinated Water Resources Development Project (2009-2011).

A total of 12 projects identified under the initial track of cooperative projects are at different levels of preparation.

3. Power Trade and Development sub program projects

- Regional Rusumo Falls Hydroelectric and Multipurpose Project (RRFP) (2007-2011). This project covers Burundi, Tanzania and Rwanda.
- Regional Transmission Interconnection (2006-2012). A feasibility study and detailed engineering design for four power transmission lines between Burundi, DRC, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda
- Implementation of Indicative NELSAP Power Master Plan to assist the Member States in selecting best power supply options and regional transmission inter connection and to facilitate the participation by multilateral and private financing institutions in development. The master plan is for 15 years effective 2005.

Speaking in People Terms: A Role for Civil Society

For the short period that civil society networks have been involved in NBI's activities, they have embraced regional cooperation and created momentum around the great opportunities that they see. Working under the regional umbrella of the Nile Basin Discourse (NBD), national chapters can clearly see a role for themselves in getting discussions "beyond that trickle of water," as Ms. Sarah Naigaga, the acting coordinator of the NBD, says.

Civil society partners participate in decision-making bodies like the Nile Basin Trust Fund, the custodian of funding for NBI projects, and have representation at key meetings such as Nile-COM. “Civil society is a channel for information dissemination to communities,” says Ms. Naigaga. “It is also an amplifier of messages back to governments.” she adds. The Nile-Technical Advisory Committee regularly accepts recommendations from civil society.

Challenges for the Nile Basin Initiative

- Efforts at cooperation have gone generally well over the last decade. But more remains to be done, not least the signing of the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) to form a permanent river basin organisation under which even bigger projects may be funded.
- The direct benefits to community members such as Ms. Mukakigeri with the Cattle Traction Project in rural Rwanda have created an appetite for more and bigger. These people cannot afford to be disappointed.
- There also seems to be an urgent need to disseminate accurate information on the Nile Basin as widely as possible through an aggressive and well structured communication campaign. Huge countries such as DR Congo provide a particular challenge given low media coverage there.
- In Sudan, the signing of a peace accord between the North and the South in 2005 meant that initiatives in Southern Sudan started late and as the SVP comes to a close, projects are in the earliest phases. Particular attention needs to be paid to that part of the Sudan.

All things considered however, the dogged negotiations involving water experts and government representatives across the Nile Basin hold the potential to massively transform the fortunes of the people in the region by ensuring shared and better management of the River Nile resource.



Part of civil society: CBSI Project Sensitization tours for media in Burundi

NBI: Working together to make a difference





photo: stock.adimg



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