

THE NILE: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

PRESENTATION 9

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Why Egypt should have sponsored the GERD?





Providing context to the Nile river

- Longest, but small in terms of water volume (around 84 BCM/yr)
- Estimated total population of Nile basin countries is around 547 million
- Ethiopia has the largest population (114 million) followed by Egypt (102 million)
- By 2050, most of the population of the Nile Basin countries will double, and more than half will be urbanized with middle-class life requiring more infrastructure mainly water and electricity



Providing context to the Nile River

- Currently, access to basic infrastructures in most of these riparian countries (except Egypt) is quite poor (65 m population not connected grid in Ethiopia alone)
- Massive deforestation takes place in most of these countries in search for firewood and expansion of traditional agricultural system (from 40% in the beginning of 20th to 2.36% in 2000)
- All these and other customary activities gradually threaten the safety of water running out of the upper riparian countries



Egypt's approach to Nile river

- ‘All that matters to me is the milk, not the wellbeing of the cow’
- No investment by Egypt in Ethiopia to date aimed at collaborative Nile conservation
 - Egypt's approach to Nile is not only unfair and selfish, but in the long term, is it a self-distractive and unsustainable path
 - Egyptian ambassadors, diplomats and intelligent community are aware of minor skirmishes in Ethiopia, but never bothered about investing a penny in Ethiopia to safe and preserve the source of the Blue Nile



What Egypt and Sudan claim about GERD

- Threat to their water share (Egypt)
- Gives Ethiopia the monopoly to control the water
- The largest in Africa or even sometimes in the world
- Threat to well being or security of citizen due to risk of collapse (Sudan)
- While GERD is a dam for hydroelectric purpose which has a least reputation for water consumption
- While dam operation is less likely used for water blocking or monopolizing water usage anywhere else in the world
- While Aswan is twice the size of the GERD in the surface area (the later has only more electric generating capacity)
- While Sudan and Egypt still operating a century old dams on the Nile river

Why Egypt and Sudan should have sponsored GERD



1. GERD Precludes Ethiopia from diverting or engaging in any massive irrigation undertaking upstream

- If massive water is needed to turn on the 16 turbines, the water monopoly concern over the dam is simply a paranoia
- Located near border and ragged mountainous which is inconducive for irrigation activities

2. Access to electricity in Ethiopia means less deforestation

- Currently more than 83% of Ethiopia population are agrarian and rely on firewood for cooking and as a source of light
- Small scale farming and land degradation mainly contribute to encroachment to forest lands threatening water sources

Why Egypt and Sudan should have sponsored GERD

3. Strengthen diplomatic ties and develop mutual understanding among the population of the two countries

- The current Egypt approach to Nile has been a source of great frustration and resentment among Ethiopians
- Ethiopians and Egyptians characterization of each other is quite polarized and often misguided

4. Regulated water flow and less sedimentation

- Flooding threatens lives every year in Sudan, and silt from Ethiopian highlands has been a threat to their dams (Sudan and Egypt spend more than 500M USD per annum for flood mitigation)
- Saving of water in Ethiopian dam also means less evaporation or wastage compared to Aswan dam (10% vs less than 3% of annual flow)



The way forward

- Coming together and creating an institute where:
 - Academicians and students exchange ideas and experiences on better water conservation and alternative water/energy sources
 - Run collaborative research and data sharing platform within the riparian countries and also other transboundary river sharing countries
- Nile Funding Initiatives
 - While all riparian countries are responsible, the downstream countries should show leadership and lions share in terms of monetary allocation for Nile water sustainability (collaborative conservation reduces costs by 34%, Alan, et.al, 2019)
 - Create a regional vision where benefits and threats of future projects on Nile could go beyond host country in terms of both benefits and perceived threats
- Revise their population policy, and intensify and promote Family Planning services
 - Highest fertility rate is happening in the most fragile and insecure parts of the world
 - Rapid population growth has a domino effect on most of the pressing issues in the region



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International
Conference
on the Nile
and GERD



5 MINUTE DISCUSSION