



May 20, 2020

Excellency,

Please accept this letter as a response to the letter from the Arab Republic of Egypt to the UN about the Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam (GERD) dated May 1, 2020 (S/2020/355), and please register it in your annals.

Ethiopian International Professional for Abay (EiPSA) has obtained the letter written from the Arab Republic of Egypt Foreign Affairs to the UN regarding the GERD. As an independent organization that followed the tripartite negotiations since 2011 on the GERD, EiPSA is obligated to respond to the distortions and outright wrong assertions of Egypt's letter to the UN. The tripartite negotiations between Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia have been going on for over a decade. Although the negotiations have been very difficult, substantial progress has been made. Despite Egypt's claim of cooperation to advance the negotiations to their fruitful conclusion, it is Egypt that has been obstructionist and responsible for the failure of most of the key elements of the negotiations. Egypt's refusal to be a party to the Nile Basin Initiative, a forum that brought all the Nile Basin States together to settle such conflicts, tells how it is pursuing the negotiations. Contrary to the spirit of goodwill negotiations, Egypt works hard to divide the riparian nations by putting direct and indirect political pressures including threats. Actions speak louder than words. The ill intentions of Egypt to preserve its so-called 'historical quota' that completely disregards other nations' interests can be seen from all its actions.

The main contention point during the tripartite negotiations was that Egypt wants directly or indirectly to impose the 1959 water allocation agreement between Sudan and Egypt that excluded Ethiopia and the other Nile Basin riparian countries. In the past, Ethiopia has registered its objections to the 1959 and other agreements that gave water monopoly to Egypt. The 1959 agreement divided the Nile water between Sudan and Egypt leaving nothing for the other riparian states. This is neither just nor equitable for a country that contributes 86 % of the water to the river basin. This historical wrong should be corrected with equitable and reasonable distributions. Ethiopia is considered the water tower of Africa; in the past, it could not utilize its water resource due to lack of financing. It was Egypt and her allies that blocked the financing from the international organizations for any water developing project in Abay (Nile is known as Abay in Ethiopia) River basin. The Abay River basin drainage area encompasses two-thirds of the country and without developing the river basin it is impossible to alleviate the abject poverty that has been a strangle to our people.

It is not very long that images of malnourished and death of Ethiopian citizens who lived a few kilometres from the Abay River plastered the world media and on every home television screen. The song that was produced by Live Band-Aid to raise funds for the drought victims titled "We are the world" was considered an Ethiopian song. The present generation of Ethiopians do not want to repeat and MUST not allow that event to repeat again. So, when the Ethiopian



government embarked to utilize their God-given natural resources of the river Abay and try to pull its citizens out of poverty and begging, the entire population in Ethiopia and citizens of Ethiopian origin in the diaspora supported the initiative. The Ethiopian people expected support from the world superpower, not the opposite such as lending a sympathetic ear to obstructionist behaviour of Egypt. Since the initiation of the GERD project, the Ethiopian people as a whole contributed their meager resources for the construction of the Dam. The construction of the dam is a National Project that transcends all political party lines and ideological differences. The construction of the dam is close to completion and the Ethiopian government has indicated the first stage of filling will commence in July 2020 during the onset of the rainy season. EiPSA fully supports the Ethiopian government three stage-filling of the dam and the decision to table developing long-term operation scenario for future discussions.

Egypt's claims that Ethiopia needs prior approval to any kind of development in the Nile basin and filling of the dam is not acceptable. As a sovereign nation, Ethiopia does not need any country's approval to utilize its natural resources. However, since Abay is a transboundary river, Ethiopia respects international conventions not to cause significant harm to downstream countries, including Egypt. It is Ethiopia who provided a positive contribution to the tripartite negotiations, to the establishment of the International Panel of Experts on the GERD, to the negotiations of the Declaration of Principles (DoP) until it was signed in 2015, to mention a few. Ethiopia is also a signatory of the Nile Basin Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA). On the contrary, Egypt abstained from the CFA and sabotaged its implementation by aggressively lobbying against it. Egypt also resorted to involve a third party without prior consultation with Sudan and Ethiopia as per the stipulation in Article X of the DoP.

Egypt also claims that the sole purpose of the GERD is to generate hydroelectric power. Ethiopia is the sole owner and determines the purpose of the Dam, not Egypt. It is a fact that the main purpose of the Dam is to generate needed electricity to increase the coverage in the country from the present 40 % to 90 %. It is up to Ethiopia to utilize the water stored in the dam for aquaculture such as fisheries, recreation, water supply and irrigation. In fact, GERD also has significant benefits to the downstream countries, Egypt and Sudan. A few of the benefits include prolonging the life of the dams in Sudan and Egypt by trapping most of the sediment upstream, attenuating flood flow and reducing fluctuation of the river flow to a constant supply of water and supply electricity. However, Egypt's assertion to characterize the sole purpose "to generate hydroelectric power only" is unacceptable.

The letter from Egypt also stated its water vulnerability and the construction of the GERD aggravates the situation. Climate change will impose the greatest threat in water security to the region in general and in the Nile River basin, in particular. Climate change models for the region especially the part that includes Ethiopia show that there will be 10-20% increase in precipitation while the variability increases. Considering this increased variability, the GERD will help in lessening the impact of climate change by storing water during wet years for utilization during the dry or prolonged drought years and in regulating the variability.



Egypt also needs to modernize its irrigation water application from the wasteful techniques to modern ones. The study commissioned by Egyptian scholars, Walaa Y, El-Nashar, 2018 concluded 40 BCM water could be saved with the implementation of modern application techniques. The international community should advise and assist Egypt to modernize its irrigation water applications techniques to conserve and eliminate wastage instead of supplying military hardware.

It is our earnest call that Egypt comes to the table of cooperative framework that is based on a holistic approach that also addresses the demand side within its territory instead of a stubborn approach of continuing with a colonial time treaties that will sustain its hydro-hegemony.

Please accept, Excellency, EiPSA's input with the highest consideration.

Sincerely,
Ethiopian International Professional for Abay