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## The Role of Research in the International Cooperation of Transboundary Rivers

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# Presentation Outline

- International Rivers and Cooperation
  - UN Convention on Non- navigational Uses of International Watercourses
  - CFA
- Reasons for Cooperation Internationally
- The Nile
  - Significance & Core Value of the Nile
  - Eastern Nile –Ethiopia
  - Unity of the Nile &Core Value Nile to Riparian Countries
  - Challenges
  - Opportunities
  - Prospects and Scenario of Cooperation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- The Role of Research in .....
- Concluding Remarks

# International Rivers



# Reasons for cooperation Internationally

- There are 276 transboundary river basins around the globe,
  - covering nearly half of the earth's land surface and crossing the territories of 145 countries.
  - Such basins are home to 40% of the world's population and
  - generate around 60% of global freshwater flow.

# Reasons to collaborate...

- Without active measures to promote collaboration, growing water scarcity and degradation are likely
  - To increase interstate conflicts.

International norms regulating the rights and duties of basin and aquifer countries create a legal framework for transboundary cooperation on the management, use, and protection of water resources.

Foster dialogue and global security that are necessary to maintain ecosystems services and facilitate access to sufficient food supplies, to alternatives for sustainable energy production, to safe and affordable water, and to adequate sanitation

# The Nile as Permanent Connector

- There are 11 riparian countries in the Nile Basin
- The Nile is a permanent connector between its upstream and downstream riparians
  - thousands of communities are permanently connected at every segment or tributary of the Nile (in each country)
  - the riparian countries are permanently connected by the Nile flow

# Significances of the Nile ... cont.

## **To: Burundi, DRC, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda**

- They are upstream countries from the Equatorial Lakes Region
- Numerous hydraulic projects in each of the countries

## **To: Sudan, Eritrea & S. Sudan**

- The Nile water passes through territories
- They mid-stream countries
- Opportunities to cooperate with up-stream and downstream nations

## **To: Egypt**

- The most downstream riparian and net recipient
- Almost entirely dependent on the waters of the Nile
- Opportunities to cooperate with upstream countries

# Core Value to Nile Riparian Countries

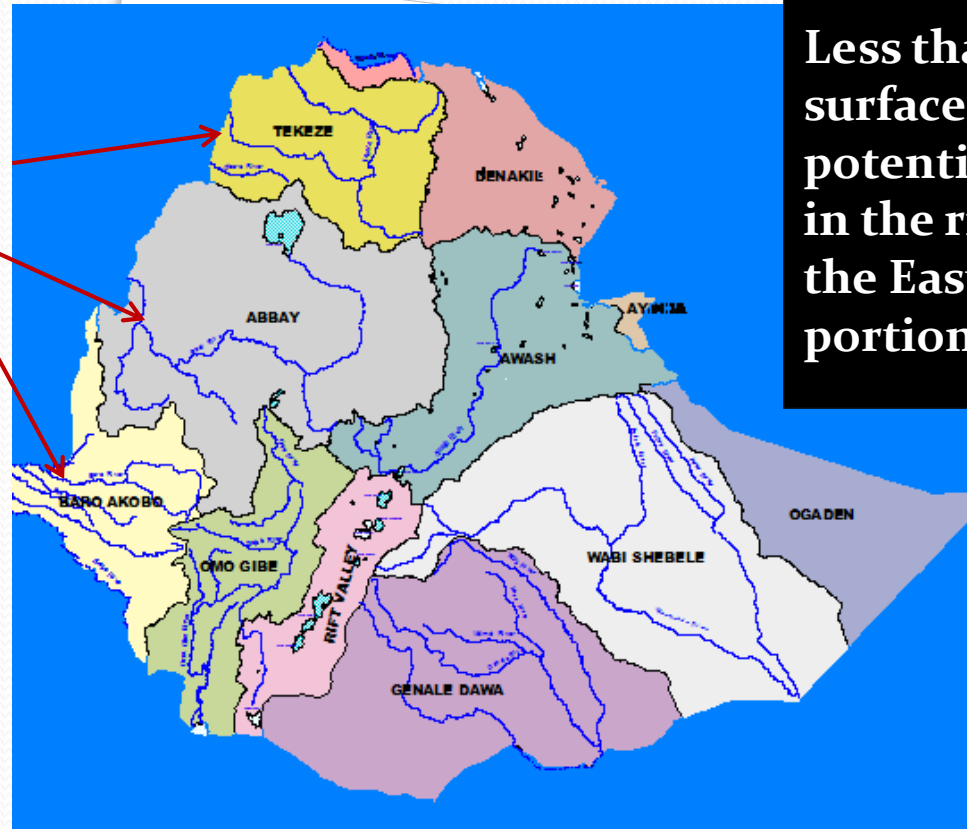
- Abbay, Baro-akobo and Tekeze will remain the source of identity, pride and prosperity for Ethiopia
- Without the Nile Uganda cannot be worthy of the description: “the pearl of Africa”
- Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, DRC, Rwanda have all ambitious water development programs
- The Nile the lifeline of Egypt
- Sudan’s huge potential for agricultural development cannot be imagined without the Nile
- The wetlands of southern Sudan will remain as “TOICH” (meaning the gift from mother in the Nuwer language)
- For Southern Sudanese the water in the Sudd is like mother’s milk (Toich)

It is untenable to imagine that the fate of the Nile will be determined by the frozen politics of colonial agreements or postcolonial hegemonic set-up



## Uneven Spatial Distribution

80-90% of surface water potential is generated in the 4 river basins in the West and South West portion of the country



Less than 20% of surface water potential is generated in the river basins in the East and Central portion of the country

National T

But :

Very uneven spatial and temporal distribution  
Historically low levels of water resource utilization

But these basins contain around 60 percent of the population

# The Special Significance of the Nile

## To Ethiopia

- 86% of the Nile waters
- 68%+ of the Eth. water resources
- 1/3 of the national territory
- Huge potential for hydropower, irrigation, etc.
- Expressed willingness to cooperate with downstream countries

# Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Project

- **A continuation from previous plans (since 1927)**
- **Appraised version of the Boarder Dam Project from 1956-64 Abbay basin study**
- **Clear benefits to downstream countries**
  - water flow regulating
  - clean and cheaper energy supply ( HP)
  - decrease flood hazards
  - decrease silt accumulation in downstream dams
- **A Fresh Opportunity for upstream-downstream benefit sharing**
- **Ethiopia's best option is hydropower (45,000MW)**
- **Catalyst for regional cooperation and benefit sharing**

# **GERDP's Significance for Regional Cooperation**

- **Offers shared benefits**
- **Provides opportunity for fresh cooperation**
- **can enhance sustainable socio-economic development**
- **can be used as platform for broader regional collaboration**
- **can be taken as a concrete case for equitable and reasonable utilization of the shared waters**

# IPoE

- IPoE as new initiative for cooperation in the Eastern Nile basin
- The results and lessons can be replicated for other projects in the basin
  - Continental
  - International

# Unity of the Nile

- Permanent bond between upstream and downstream countries
- Permanent natural process: heat, humidity and precipitation in the upstream (the continuous condition of the flow of the Nile)
- Changes in the political system or state boundaries do not and cannot interfere with the flow of the Nile
- Any monopoly perception of the Nile becomes useless and exact opposite to the UNITY OF THE NILE  
(colonial and post-colonial mistakes of downstream countries cannot be repeated)

# Challenges/lessons in Developing/Implementing the Existing Legal Framework?

- The downstream quest for Status-Quo
- Rejecting the negotiated Cooperative Framework Agreement of 2010
- Not accepting the upstream water rights
- Egypt not complying with the recommendations of IPoE on GERDP
- Slow move with regard to the work of TNC (Tripartite National Committee)

# Main Trans-boundary Opportunities

- Open opportunity for upstream-downstream cooperation
- Go for joint multi-purpose projects option
- Upstream – downstream strategy for water use projects on the basis of comparative advantage



# Prospects and Scenario of Cooperation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

- The aspirations for sustainable socio-economic development, peace and prosperity in the Nile basin in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century premise on the imperatives of **environmental, economic, institutional and security imperatives** of cooperation.
- Through cooperation the Nile riparian nations will not only overcome any **historical and contemporary tensions** but also make themselves **permanent partners rather than misguided adversaries**.
- There is **no viable alternative to upstream-downstream cooperation**
- A Nile cooperation should be based on equitable and reasonable utilization of the Nile waters and sustainable benefit sharing



# The Role of Research for Cooperation

# **The beginning!**

**Successful organisms thrive on Earth, others perish!**

**The secret of success is overcoming challenges.**

**How?**

**Be strong!**

**Be huge!**

**Be invisible!**

**Be fast!**

We Humans are not all of those !!!

**Be ...anything, BUT stay alive and  
reproduce!**

**WHAT ARE WE THEN?**

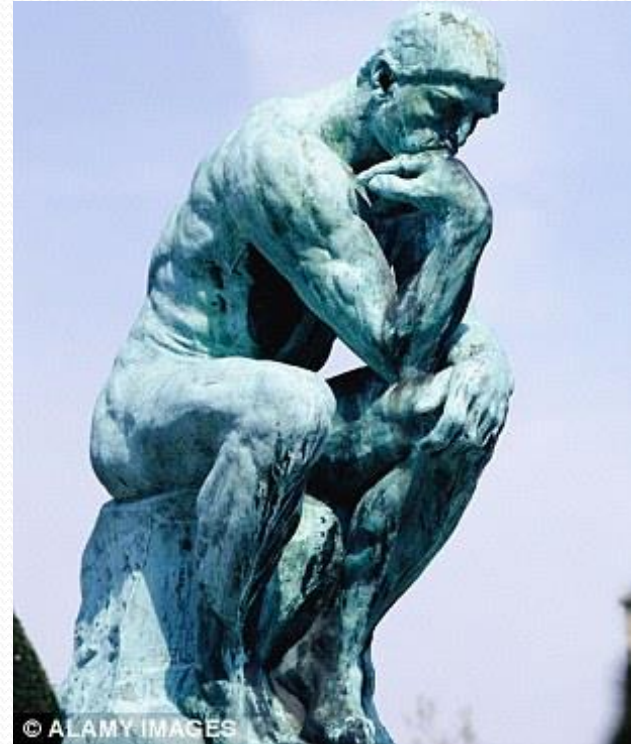
**SMART!!!**

**AND**

**ALWAYS!!!**

# WHO is smart?

**So are the chimps!!!**



**Humans are capable  
of abstract  
thinking!!! Super  
smart, if you like?**

# Smart PLUS

## RESEARCH

**Are humans the ONLY beings conducting research!!!**

# WHO ELSE REALLY RESEARCHES?

Researching?



Who is researching who?

# What is RESEARCH?

Research is a **SYSTEMATIC** and **ORGANIZED** way of **THINKING** and **ACTION** to **FIND ANSWERS** to **PROBLEMS**.

**BUT** research is **not the only way of knowing**.

Knowledge can be obtained

- **Spontaneously**: Naturally like scratching your head!
- **Firmly**: Information from people, books, etc.!
- **LOGICALLY**: Reasoning  $A=B$ ;  $B=C$  then  $A=C$
- **EMPIRICALLY**: **Critically observing and/or experimenting**
- **The Answer to our problems .....**



# Research in Transboundary Water Issues

- Completed
  - The benefit of upstream dam construction, and watershed management to down stream countries (the case Tekeze River Basin)
    - The out put
- New
  - Economic Benefits of cooperation for equitable allocation of international Water resources: the case of Eastern Nile River Sub basin
  - Payment for Ecosystem Service

# Concluding Remarks

- It is not a positive to think that the fate of the Nile will be determined by the frozen politics of colonial agreements or postcolonial hegemonic machination, but by the dynamics of geopolitics

# Concluding Remarks cont....

- Thinking beyond drops of water
- Riparian countries will benefit immensely by focusing on:
  - environmental imperatives of cooperation
  - economic imperatives of cooperation
  - security imperative of cooperation and
  - legal/ institutional imperatives of cooperation



**WATER IS LIFE !!!**

**LET GIVE LIFE TO WATER  
TOGETHER !!!**

# *Applied Water Research for Development* *Impact & Cooperation*



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