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## The "Renaissance Dam" crisis

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The construction of the Grand Renaissance Dam (GERD) has been a source of tension between Ethiopia and Egypt for some years. The dam, begun in 2011, is due for completion in this year. It will hold a massive 74 billion cubic meters of water and will be the largest hydroelectric power plant in Africa.

Egypt relies heavily on the Nile River for its main source of water. The River Nile is the backbone of Egypt's industrial and agricultural sector and is the primary source of drinking water for the population. Egypt has been suffering from severe water scarcity in recent years. Uneven water distribution, misuse of water resources and inefficient irrigation techniques are some of the major factors playing havoc with water security in the country. Egypt is facing an annual water deficit of around 7 billion cubic meters and the United Nations is already warning that Egypt could run out of water by the year 2025.<sup>1</sup>

Ethiopia argues that there will be no reduction of water downstream, as all the Blue Nile water will be cycled through the dam and eventually reach the downstream countries on its way to the Mediterranean. It also claims that more water will be available overall because there will be less evaporation.<sup>2</sup>

Under a new 2015-2020 development plan, Addis Ababa wants to rise power generation to 17,346 MW from a current capacity of just over 4,300 MW from hydropower, wind and geothermal sources and aims to become the continent's biggest power exporter.<sup>3</sup>

One of the main issues in debate is the time of filling the reservoir. Egypt and Sudan will be especially vulnerable to the time frame of filling the reservoir, which may take anywhere from five to 15 years. Addis Ababa originally wanted to fill the reservoir in three years which would have seen Egypt's share of Nile water fall drastically. Egypt is pushing for a seven-year filling timetable. How Cairo will react should Addis Ababa refuse to compromise is not clear yet.<sup>4</sup>

The shorter the time taken the quicker Ethiopia can begin producing electricity, but this will also mean an aggressive throttling of water flow downstream. Once the dam is filled the flow should stabilize downstream as it will reach a point where Ethiopia cannot contain it any longer.<sup>5</sup>

Amidst recent rising tensions between Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia, President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi affirmed, on January 15, 2018, that Egypt is not willing to enter into a war with brotherly nations. "We will not enter a war. I tell this to our brothers in Ethiopia and Sudan: Egypt doesn't conspire or interfere in the affairs of any country and is very keen on maintaining good relations between our nations. It is already enough what the region has already witnessed in the past years. We have a fixed policy of development, building and construction and nothing else," El-Sisi said.<sup>6</sup>

Egypt's foreign minister Sameh Shoukry, irrigation minister Mohamed Abdel-Atti and the acting head of General Intelligence Abbas Kamel arrived in Khartoum on April 4, 2018, to discuss with their Sudanese and Ethiopian counterparts outstanding issues regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. The tripartite talks aimed to resolve an impasse in negotiations over studies conducted to determine the impact of the dam on downstream countries.<sup>7</sup>

At the end of the talks, Egypt's Foreign Minister said that the talks had not yielded any significant results that could be announced. Sudanese Foreign Minister Ibrahim Ghandour admitted that the talks had failed to achieve any significant results, adding that the ministries of irrigation in the three countries will hold further meetings to look into the technical disagreements.<sup>8</sup>

## The Grand Renaissance Dam (GERD)

In 2007, Ethiopia announced that it would build a dam on the Nile to help it generate electricity. Ethiopia officially announced the Renaissance Dam project on March 13, 2011 only one day before the contract to build it was signed with the Italian company, Salini Costruttori. The foundation stone was laid on April 2, 2011.<sup>9</sup> Salini, the Italian company in charge of the project has completed 20 major projects in Ethiopia since 1958, including the Gibe I (1999-2004), Gibe II (2004-2009) and Gibe III (2006-2016) dams, as well as roads and power stations. However, none of these compare in size to the GERD and none are on the River Nile.<sup>10</sup>

Addis Ababa, has maintained that the dam project, is vital for generating electricity and the GERD project is expected to allow Ethiopia to increase access to energy, export hydroelectric power to Sudan, Kenya and Djibouti.<sup>11</sup>

On April 2, 2011, Addis Ababa officially embarked upon the construction of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Hydropower Project on the Blue Nile and in May 2013, Ethiopia began diverting the Blue Nile. Located 500 km north- west of the capital Addis Ababa and near the Sudan border, the dam will be the largest in Africa, 1800 m. long and 170 m high. It will create a lake 150 square kilometers in size, with an overall volume of 10 million cubic meters. Two power stations will be located on either bank of the river with an installed capacity of 6000 MW and 15,000 GW / h annual energy. When completed it will enable Ethiopia to export more power to its neighbors.

Ethiopia denies that there are problems in obtaining the financial funds. China is interested in investing in the region, and offered the Ethiopian government a loan for the Renaissance dam project.

Ethiopia's official news agency reported that bonds issued by the government had collected some 12 billion Ethiopian birr (\$982.26 million), while the cost of construction is 80 billion birr. The government has also collected two billion birr in donations and is expected to collect another 1.4 billion during this year's celebrations.<sup>12</sup>

Four hundred investors had visited the dam, as well as 250,000 Ethiopian citizens and thousands of journalists and foreign visitors, with the aim of promoting it as a successful investment project.<sup>13</sup> It makes Ethiopia feel financially independent from the United States and other international institutions, which would offer their financial support provided that the dam project complies with the existing agreements, mostly in favour of Egypt.

## The negotiations

In May 2011, Egyptian Prime Minister Essam Sharaf visited Ethiopia, where he agreed to form a committee of Egyptian, Sudanese and Ethiopian experts to study the effects of the proposed Ethiopian Dam on the flow of Nile water to Sudan and Egypt.

On June 11, 2012, the Ethiopian parliament ratified the new Nile Basin Cooperative Framework Agreement, opposed by Egypt. Cairo has repeatedly expressed concerns that the construction of the Renaissance Dam, could negatively affect Egypt's share of Nile water.

Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi, who was in office, when the Nile agreement was ratified by the Ethiopian Parliament, warned that "all options are open" to challenge Ethiopia's Nile project.

Former president Mohammed Morsi before his removal from power was caught on camera discussing with his cabinet attacking Ethiopia to stop the dam. After that, fears spread that there could be a serious water conflict over the Nile; with Egypt being the most affected downstream country, and the one possessing the strongest military capacities.<sup>14</sup>

In late May 2013, Ethiopia diverted the flow of the Blue Nile as part of the dam's construction. The diversion in itself didn't affect Egypt's share of the Nile's water, because the flow of the river was to be diverted and then returned to its original path a few km later, meaning that the amount of water reaching Egypt would be the same.<sup>15</sup>

A few weeks later on June 30, 2013, millions of Egyptians protested against Morsi in the streets, and he was overthrown as a result of the intervention of the military. After the overthrow of Morsi, the Egyptian government continued to negotiate with Ethiopia to change the specifications of the dam to make it less harmful for Egypt.

The Governments of Sudan, Egypt and Ethiopia signed an agreement to form a committee of experts to oversee the Renaissance Dam. This committee selected international experts to conduct two studies, a hydrological simulation model and an economic, social and environmental assessment of the dam's impact on Egypt and Sudan.<sup>16</sup>

On September 22, 2014, the panel of experts in the three countries proposed the conduction of two studies on the dam project, the first one on the effect of the dam on the water quota of Sudan and Egypt and the second one to examine the dam's ecological, economic and social impacts of the dam on Sudan and Egypt.<sup>17</sup>

**The Declaration of Principles** - in a confidence-building measure taken in March 23, 2015, Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan signed in Khartoum, a Declaration of Principles (KDP) that included a provision that none of the signatories would harm the interests of the others.<sup>18</sup>

The declaration of principles on the dam project that tacitly approves the dam construction but calls for technical studies aimed at safeguarding the water quotas of the three riparian states.<sup>19</sup>

According to the Declaration of Principles, disputes should initially be referred to the ministerial level. If the disputes are not resolved, they should be referred to the level of foreign ministers, and then to the presidential level. The principles require technical agreements to be ratified after the international advisory offices finish preparatory studies.<sup>20</sup>

**The technical studies** – Egypt –Sudan and Ethiopia agreed to conduct studies of the dam's potential impact on downstream countries. In December 2015, the three countries agreed to contract with two French companies to conduct technical studies on the impact of Renaissance Dam on both Sudan and Egypt. The studies include the managing of water and hydroelectric resources as well as an assessment of the cross-border environmental, social and economic impact of the mega project.<sup>21</sup>

The draft preliminary report was produced by a French consultancy firms in March 2017. It included studies to be conducted by the firm on the hydrological, hydraulic, environmental and economic impact of the dam.

In April 2017, a committee of experts from Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia discussed in Cairo an initial report prepared by the two French consultancy firms Atrelia and BRL on the effect of the dam on downstream countries, where they agreed on several technical points to be taken into consideration by the firms when formulating a final report. The three countries said in April 2017 that the firms are respecting the recommendations of the committee of experts, which recommended that the studies focus on the concerns expressed by the three states, including the best mechanism for filling the dam.<sup>22</sup>

In May 2017, as a continuation of the April 2017 meeting, experts from Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia has held talks in Addis Ababa with representatives from foreign consultancy firms to discuss an initial report by the firms on the effect of the Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam (GERD) on downstream countries. The discussions were held to decide on a mechanism to be adopted by the firms in carrying out their studies.<sup>23</sup>

On July 12, 2017, Media reports claimed that satellite images showed that Addis Ababa filling the reservoir of the Renaissance Dam. On July 13, 2017, Egypt affirmed in a statement that water accumulation in the reservoir is not a filling process but a result of the annual Nile flooding indicating that it is a small amount not affecting Egypt.<sup>24</sup>

## The technical track deadlock

In November 2017, negotiations between the three countries broke down. Egypt has previously expressed concern over repeated delays by Sudan and Ethiopia in approving the technical studies, especially given that construction on the dam is underway.

Egypt's share of Nile water is a "a matter of life or death for the nation," Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi said on November 18, 2017, in his first comments on the Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam (GERD) since negotiations between Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia stalled over the project.<sup>25</sup>

Egypt's Minister of Irrigation Mohamed Abdel-Ati said on November 12, 2017, that participants in the tripartite ministerial meeting held in Cairo to discuss a preliminary studies report on the regional impact of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam have failed to reach a consensus.<sup>26</sup> The negotiations between the three countries broke down over how to conduct studies determining the dam's potential impact on downstream countries.

27

Egypt approved the initial report by the European consultancy firms, though Ethiopia and Sudan demanded major amendments to the proposed studies. Egypt's foreign minister Sameh Shoukry said that Egypt approved the initial report given that it is a technical study that bears neither interpretation nor politicization, adding that Egypt trusts the professionalism and impartiality of the consultancy firm.<sup>28</sup>

In a televised talk President El-Sisi said that "no one can touch Egypt's share of [Nile] water. We've talked to our brothers in Sudan and Ethiopia from the very beginning about three points, including not touching the water [of Egypt's share]," he said. The president added that he understands the developmental goals behind the GERD, but that development for Ethiopia in this case is a "matter of life and death" for Egypt.<sup>29</sup>

Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi said on January 8, 2018, that the Egyptian state would not allow the nation to be hit by a water shortage, pointing to steps taken to protect water resources and ensure they are properly managed. "We won't allow a water-shortage crisis to occur in Egypt. We have not only to keep our share of the Nile, but also to use our share to the maximum," he said during a short statement. "This is our country, and water for agriculture and drinking must be secured for citizens from Aswan to Alexandria, so that no problem will occur later and we say that we are not ready for it," he added.<sup>30</sup>

## The Egyptian initiative to involve the World Bank

Egypt has suggested to Ethiopia that the World Bank could mediate, as it did between India and Pakistan for a renegotiation of the Indus Water Treaty. This agreement between the two subcontinental states has endured remarkably well despite their frequent hostility in other fields.

Involving the World Bank has several advantages, as it was the party that initiated the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) in 1999 on the management of the River Nile's water and thus has ample experience in this regard. Egypt has submitted the same initiative to Sudan.<sup>31</sup>

The involvement of the World Bank, would be likely to provide a catalyst for establishing a framework for regional cooperation in which a multi-purpose project integrating water, power grids, railway and road network between the three countries could be drawn up.<sup>32</sup>

Egypt's foreign minister Sameh Shoukry suggested in a meeting on December 26, 2017 with Ethiopian counterpart Workneh Gebeyehu that the World Bank will act as an impartial third party in the technical committee studying the effects of construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on downstream countries. Shoukry said that the bank has experience that could facilitate reaching an agreement within the tripartite committee.<sup>33</sup>

Ethiopia's Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn arrived in Cairo on January 17, 2018, for a two-day visit. In the meeting President El-Sisi said that Egypt's proposal to include the World Bank as a neutral mediator in GERD negotiations was aimed at overcoming the delays in technical negotiations and to reassure all involved

countries. The president said that the Egyptian proposal to include the World Bank is up to the brothers in Ethiopia and Sudan to study, adding that he has agreed with the Ethiopian PM on another vision in this regard, though he said he would not reveal the details at this time.<sup>34</sup>

The Ethiopian PM said the Egyptian proposal would be discussed on the level of the tripartite committee during their upcoming meeting. "We stress the necessity of further studying the Egyptian proposal and carrying on cooperation in good faith and trust among our countries. I am confident that we will overcome these problems soon," Desalegn added.<sup>35</sup>

Shortly after his return to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn has rejected a call by Egypt for World Bank arbitration in a dispute over a hydroelectric dam Addis Ababa is building along its share of the Nile. "Seeking professional support is one thing, transferring (arbitration) to an institution is another thing. So we told them that this is not acceptable with our side," the state-run Ethiopian News Agency quoted Hailemariam as saying.<sup>36</sup>

Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry has telephoned Ethiopian counterpart Workneh Gebeyehu to express Cairo's concerns over reports that Addis Ababa rejected Egypt's proposal to involve the World Bank in the stalled technical negotiations over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). The Ethiopian Foreign Minister told Shoukry that Desalegn's statements "were taken out of context".<sup>37</sup>

Following a tripartite summit between the leaders of Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan in the Ethiopian capital on January 29, 2018 to discuss differences over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, Egypt's president told reporters, "People should be assured. None of [us three] countries – Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia – will be harmed." President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi added, "Egypt's interests are one with Ethiopia's and also one with Sudan's. We are speaking as one voice." In a response to a question by reporters on whether the crisis over the dam has been resolved, El-Sisi said, "There is no crisis."<sup>38</sup>

The meeting between El-Sisi, Al-Bashir and Ethiopian PM Hailemariam Desalegn, which came on the sidelines of the African Union summit in Addis Ababa, aimed at breaking the deadlock in negotiations over disputes on the impact of the GERD on downstream countries.<sup>39</sup>

## Sudan

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is located in the Benishangul-Gumuz Region of Ethiopia, only 40 km east of the country's border with Sudan. 77% of Sudan water sources come from the Rivers Nile, Gash, Parka, and Azoum, all of which are outside its borders.<sup>40</sup> Sudan suffers from a scarcity of water resources and this scarcity is increasing year by year. Sudan's total water resources are now estimated at 30 billion cubic meters. 20.5 billion of the resources are estimated to come from the River Nile and its tributaries, 5.5 billion from seasonal rivers valleys and 4 billion from groundwater sources. Sudan's estimated water requirement in the period 2012 - 2027 is approximately 33 billion cubic meters. This 3 billion deficit highlights the growing demand for water in that period.<sup>41</sup>

Sudan had initially been supportive of Egyptian concerns over the impact of the dam on the flow of the Nile but changed its position in 2015. President Al-Bashir said in a TV interview in December 2015 that the dam has become a reality and that it requires the cooperation of all parties to "ensure its success".<sup>42</sup>

Sudan, with much larger water resources than Egypt, does not share the worry over a drop in its annual share of water from the Blue Nile. However, it still needs, at least in theory, reassurance on the safety of the GERD, since if this were to crack or even collapse the resulting floods could inundate Khartoum.<sup>43</sup> Khartoum wants to stay part of the negotiations on an issue which will undoubtedly affect the lives of the Sudanese people, and the future of the country. Sudan argues that its responsibility is to protect its own interests in the dispute, and not Egypt's.<sup>44</sup>

Sudan, formerly an Egyptian ally, has aligned with Addis Ababa for the benefit from the project. Ethiopia will be selling electricity to its northern neighbor, a planned transmission line will connect the Ethiopian electrical grid to Khartoum. The dam project will also limit flooding of the Blue Nile in Sudan, allowing Sudan to expand its agriculture.<sup>45</sup>

Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir said on August 17, 2017, at a joint press conference in Khartoum with visiting Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, that the construction of Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam on the Nile River would not impact water supplies to Egypt as feared by Cairo. Bashir added that "If anything happens to the dam, it will be crisis for Sudan because of the huge amount of water the dam will be storing. But Ethiopia has made some changes to the dam's structure, and now we are satisfied." Bashir concluded that "We are fully committed to ensure that the Egyptian share of the Nile water will not be affected because of the building of the Renaissance Dam."<sup>46</sup>

Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, for his part, said the project was a "win-win" for the peoples of all three countries if it was not politicized. "This is more of a technical issue and it is not political," he said. "If we don't politicize it, then we will reach a conclusion that is a win-win for all our people."<sup>47</sup>

The Egyptian government believes Sudan to be on Ethiopia's side regarding the future of the dam, and recently proposed excluding it from contentious negotiations over the future of the project, angering the Sudanese government.<sup>48</sup>

Media reports in Sudan claimed Egypt had asked Ethiopia to exclude Sudan from negotiations on the Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukri condemned the false information being purveyed by some Sudanese media, cautioning that this undermines the joint interests of both countries.

Tense relations between Cairo and Khartoum threaten to further derail the already blocked tripartite negotiations between Egypt and both Ethiopia and Sudan over the Renaissance Dam.<sup>49</sup>

## The African initiative of Egypt

President El-Sisi pursues the diplomatic route with the Nile Basin countries in an initiative to find ways to regain Egypt's position in the region and in Africa in general. President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi had completed in August 2017, a four-leg African tour: Tanzania, Rwanda, two Nile Basin states, and Chad and Gabon. Addressing water security concerns was high on El-Sisi's agenda in his Africa tour. The four-day tour was El-Sisi's second Africa visit in less than six weeks. President El-Sisi's visits and the talks with African leaders, is designed to lobby support for Egypt's position in the hope of generating more pressure on Ethiopia.<sup>50</sup>

## The visit of Tanzanian foreign minister in Egypt

Tanzania understands that the River Nile is the lifeblood of Egypt, Tanzanian foreign minister Augustine Mahiga said during a joint press conference with Egyptian foreign minister Sameh Shoukry in Cairo on January 11, 2018.<sup>51</sup>

Mahiga said that he and Shoukry discussed ongoing talks between Egypt and Ethiopia over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), expressing his confidence that bilateral relations and maximizing the use of Nile water for both countries was a vital issue in solving conflicts. The Tanzanian minister added that the Nile was the lifeblood of all Nile Basin countries, and that its use is regulated through international agreements that organize the use of water, affirming his country's support of negotiations between Nile Basin Countries.<sup>52</sup>

Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi visited the Tanzanian city of Dar Al-Salam in August 2017 and called for closer economic and trade cooperation between Egypt and the eastern African country. Tanzania's President John Magufuli is set to visit Egypt in 2018.<sup>53</sup>

## The visit of the president of Eritrea in Cairo

Egypt's President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi met on January 9, 2018 with his Eritrean counterpart Isaias Afwerki in Cairo, where they discussed enhancing bilateral relations as well as the latest developments in Nile Basin countries and the Horn of Africa. El-Sisi and Afwerki, also discussed regional and international issues of mutual interest. The meeting between the two leaders will be followed by a meeting of delegations from the two countries.<sup>54</sup>

The last meeting between El-Sisi and Afwerki took place in November 2016 in Cairo, where the two leaders agreed to launch a joint committee aimed at boosting bilateral cooperation in all fields, as well as continue technical assistance to Eritrea from the Egyptian Agency of Partnership for Development (EAPD).<sup>55</sup>

## The Arab League and the "Dam crises"

The secretary general of the Arab League, Ahmed Abul-Gheit, said on November 26, 2017, that the pan-Arab organization was following "with extreme concern" talks between the River Nile's downstream Arab countries Egypt and Sudan, and Ethiopia over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). In an address to the Fourth Arabic Forum for Water in Cairo, Abul-Gheit stated that the water security of the most populous Arab country, in reference to Egypt, was a matter of Arab national security.<sup>56</sup>

"We do not feel that Ethiopia was cooperating and coordinating enough. The Ethiopian plans to operate the dam and use its water in irrigation are ambiguous and concerning," Abul-Gheit said.<sup>57</sup>

Abul-Gheit called on Ethiopia to show more openness to cooperation, transparency and participation, especially given that "there are currently 400 million people living on the banks of the Nile who will reach one billion by 2050."<sup>58</sup>

"I talk here clearly about how the talks between Egypt and Ethiopia are stalled on GERD's standards of construction and operation," he said, adding that Egypt receives 85 per cent of its water from the Ethiopian highlands through the Blue Nile.<sup>59</sup>

## Summary

Minister of Irrigation and Water Resources Mohamed Abdel-Atti said in April 2018 that Egypt's needs are 114 billion cubic meters, of which only around 60 billion are currently available.<sup>60</sup> Egypt expressed concerns that the dam might reduce its share of Nile water and expressed concern over ongoing delays in the approval of the technical studies given that Ethiopia is continuing the construction the dam.

Egypt depends on the Nile for 95 per cent of its water needs, with most of this water coming from the Blue Nile. Under a treaty agreed in 1959, Egypt receives 55.5 billion cubic meters of Nile water, while Sudan receives 18 billion cubic meters. Egypt does not seem to be prepared to compromise or renegotiate the 1959 treaty and is apparently committed to maintaining the status quo on the use of the Nile waters.

Egypt fears losing its "historic rights" on Nile's waters. Egypt believes that Ethiopia was the driving force behind demands to revoke the old agreements that govern the distribution of Nile water and calls for new agreements to be made which would see upstream Nile countries granted a large share of the Nile's resources, inevitably resulting in a decrease of Egypt's share.

The Nile basin is one of the hotspot for water-related conflicts. The Nile basin is the only major river basin lacking an inclusive, permanent legal and institutional framework for its utilization and management. The lack of Nile basin wide agreement reflects changes in the balance of geopolitical powers in the region. The discrepancy between the socio-economic development of Egypt and its upstream neighbors is decreasing, and Egypt's historical hegemonic position is being challenged by emerging regional powers such as Ethiopia.<sup>61</sup>

The formation of a coalition of riparian states (excluding Egypt) with a mutual interest in renegotiating Nile water allocation has the ability to alter the regional power dynamic in light of Egypt's current vulnerability, diminish Egypt's ability to frame the debate over Nile waters in its favor.

Ethiopia maintains that the dam will not have any negative impact on Egypt or Sudan. The Ethiopian Foreign Minister Workneh Gebeyehu has assured Egyptians in April 2017, during a first-time Cairo visit that Addis Ababa will never harm the Egyptian people and their interests.<sup>62</sup>

Ethiopia believes that GERD will provide numerous benefits to Nile riparian states, especially Sudan and Egypt. It will maintain a regular flow of water in the rainy season, prevent flooding and, equally, allow for increased flow during the dry seasons. The amount of evaporation of the water from the GERD reservoir will be minimal compared with the Aswan High Dam and other dams in Sudan and Egypt. It will also help minimize the negative impact of climate change. On completion, it will allow the export of considerable quantities of low-cost clean energy to other riparian states and contribute significantly to regional economic integration.

At the current state, only a multilaterally negotiated agreement on shared water could prevent Egypt from further aggravating its water problem, with serious repercussions on food security, economic development and therefore national security.

Egypt has adopted a firmer tone in recent months. President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi is still stressing Egypt's commitment to cooperate fully to serve the development interests of all African countries but he is now adding very clear lines about the fact Egypt cannot take any risks over its Nile water share.

The appointment of Abiy Ahmed Ali as Ethiopia's new prime minister didn't change the results of the tripartite meeting in April 2018 in Khartoum.<sup>63</sup> In the absence of any agreement over whether Ethiopia should continue

construction work on the dam before negotiations about ensuring the flow of the Nile are concluded and no consensus over the timetable for filling the reservoir behind the dam, now is the time for the international community to become more involved in the negotiations in order to prevent a crisis that can destabilize the whole region. Only shared governance of the Nile waters could guarantee a fair and equitable allocation and a sustainable development that could benefit all countries.

The international community should redouble efforts to move toward a new Nile River Basin-wide comprehensive governance regime marked by cooperation and joint management of trans boundary resources.<sup>64</sup>

## Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> Amir Dakkak, Egypt's Water Crisis – Recipe for Disaster, EcoMENA, July 22, 2017.
  - <sup>2</sup> Doaa El-Bey, Bringing in the bank, Al Ahram Weekly, Issue 1375, 4-10 January 2018.
  - <sup>3</sup> Ethiopia leader rejects call for World Bank arbitration in dam dispute with Egypt, Ahram Online, January 21, 2018.
  - <sup>4</sup> Mission to Africa, Al Ahram Weekly, Issue 1357, (17 - 23 August 2017).
  - <sup>5</sup> Gavin du Venage, Ethiopian dam creates waves, The National, April 24, 2017.
  - <sup>6</sup> 'Egypt doesn't conspire or fight against its brothers': President Sisi tells Sudan and Ethiopia, Ahram Online, January 15, 2018.
  - <sup>7</sup> Egypt's FM, intelligence chief, irrigation minister in Khartoum for new round of Ethiopian dam talks, Ahram Online, April 4, 2018.
  - <sup>8</sup> Current round of Ethiopian dam talks in Khartoum yields 'no significant results': Egypt's FM, Ahram Online, April 6, 2018.
  - <sup>9</sup> Saifeldin Yousif Saeed, Ethiopia's Renaissance Dam and its impact on Sudanese water security, Sudan Tribune, January 7, 2018.
  - <sup>10</sup> Haitham Nouri, A new dawn in Ethiopia, Al Ahram Weekly, Issue 1388, (5 - 11 April 2018).
  - <sup>11</sup> Ahmed Mahdi, Is Egypt's water security in danger? Al Ahram Weekly, Issue 1351, (6 - 12 July 2017).
  - <sup>12</sup> Haitham Nouri, A new dawn in Ethiopia, Al Ahram Weekly, Issue 1388, (5 - 11 April 2018).
  - <sup>13</sup> Haitham Nouri, A new dawn in Ethiopia, Al Ahram Weekly, Issue 1388, (5 - 11 April 2018).
  - <sup>14</sup> Maher, A., "Egyptian politicians caught in on-air Ethiopia dam gaffe", BBC News, June 2013.
  - <sup>15</sup> Ahmed Mahdi, Is Egypt's water security in danger? Al Ahram Weekly, Issue 1351, (6 - 12 July 2017).
  - <sup>16</sup> Saifeldin Yousif Saeed, Ethiopia's Renaissance Dam and its impact on Sudanese water security, Sudan Tribune, January 7, 2018.
  - <sup>17</sup> Sudan, Egypt and Ethiopia reach agreement on Renaissance Dam, Sudan Tribune, December 30, 2015.
  - <sup>18</sup> Working on water, Al Ahram Weekly, May 12, 2017.
  - <sup>19</sup> Sudan, Egypt and Ethiopia reach agreement on Renaissance Dam, Sudan Tribune, December 30, 2015.
  - <sup>20</sup> Saifeldin Yousif Saeed, Ethiopia's Renaissance Dam and its impact on Sudanese water security, Sudan Tribune, January 7, 2018.
  - <sup>21</sup> Saifeldin Yousif Saeed, Ethiopia's Renaissance Dam and its impact on Sudanese water security, Sudan Tribune, January 7, 2018.
  - <sup>22</sup> Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia experts meet in Addis Ababa to discuss report on GERD impact studies, Ahram Online, May 14, 2017.
  - <sup>23</sup> Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia experts meet in Addis Ababa to discuss report on GERD impact studies, Ahram Online, May 14, 2017.

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- <sup>24</sup> The Blue Nile's flooding season, which starts in June and ends in September.
- <sup>25</sup> Egypt's Nile water share a 'matter of life or death,' says Sisi after Ethiopia dam negotiations stalemate, Ahram Online, November 18, 2017.
- <sup>26</sup> Regional ministers fail to reach agreement on Ethiopian dam studies report, Ahram Online, November 13, 2017.
- <sup>27</sup> Regional ministers fail to reach agreement on Ethiopian dam studies report, Ahram Online, November 13, 2017.
- <sup>28</sup> Egypt's Shoukry proposes World Bank as third party on Ethiopian dam technical studies, Ahram Online, December 26, 2017.
- <sup>29</sup> Egypt's Nile water share a 'matter of life or death,' says Sisi after Ethiopia dam negotiations stalemate, Ahram Online, November 18, 2017.
- <sup>30</sup> The Egyptian state won't allow a water crisis to take place: President Sisi, Ahram Online, January 8, 2018.
- <sup>31</sup> The NBI was a partnership initiated by the Nile Basin countries as a platform for dialogue and joint work on sharing the river's resources, promoting peace and stability in the region.
- <sup>32</sup> Doaa El-Bey, Bringing in the bank, Al Ahram Weekly, Issue 1375, 4-10 January 2018.
- <sup>33</sup> Egypt's Shoukry proposes World Bank as third party on Ethiopian dam technical studies, Ahram Online, December 26, 2017.
- <sup>34</sup> Egypt's Sisi and Ethiopia's PM Desalegn stress need to overcome obstacles in GERD negotiations, Ahram Online, January 18, 2018.
- <sup>35</sup> Egypt's Sisi and Ethiopia's PM Desalegn stress need to overcome obstacles in GERD negotiations, Ahram Online, January 18, 2018.
- <sup>36</sup> Ethiopia leader rejects call for World Bank arbitration in dam dispute with Egypt, Ahram Online, January 21, 2018.
- <sup>37</sup> Egypt is concerned over reports Addis Ababa rejects role for World Bank in stalled dam talks, Shoukry tells Ethiopian FM, Ahram Online, January 22, 2018.
- <sup>38</sup> 'The interests of Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia are one,' President Sisi says after tripartite summit in Addis Ababa, Ahram Online, January 29, 2018.
- <sup>39</sup> 'The interests of Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia are one,' President Sisi says after tripartite summit in Addis Ababa, Ahram Online, January 29, 2018.
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- <sup>54</sup> Egypt's Sisi, Eritrea's Afwerki discuss bilateral relations, developments in Nile Basin countries, Ahram Online, January 10, 2018.
- <sup>55</sup> The EAPD, established by El-Sisi in June 2014, aims to support African development by dispatching experts in several fields to African countries.
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