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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Republic of Kenya to Host Nile Day 2023 Celebrations

NAIROBI, Republic of Kenya – The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), in collaboration with the Republic of Kenya, is organising the 17th Regional Nile Day celebrations, which will take place in Nairobi on 22nd February 2023 at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre.

While addressing media representatives at Saravoa Panafric Hotel in Nairobi this morning, Kenya’s Principal Secretary at the Ministry of Water, Sanitation, and Irrigation, Hon. Dr. Paul Kipronoh Ronoh indicated that the Republic of Kenya is honoured to host the 17th Regional Nile Day; the first time having been in 2016.

The theme for Nile Day 2023 is “*Deepening Nile Cooperation: Sustainable Development in a Changing Climate.*” The Guest of Honor for the 17th Regional Nile Day is H.E. Dr. Musalia Mudavadi, EGH, Prime Cabinet Secretary of the Republic of Kenya.

The Executive Director of NBI, Eng. Sylvester Matemu, in his remarks provided context for this year’s theme by explaining that the theme demonstrates the alignment of Nile Basin Member States to global priorities such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which Member States have committed to achieve by 2030. Nile Day 2023, Eng. Matemu remarked, will be “an opportunity for Member States to reflect on these commitments, challenges that might hinder their achievement, and opportunities available to improve on achieving them.”

Eng. Matemu informed the media representatives that they constitute one of NBI's key stakeholders and that it is through their factual and accurate reporting that the benefits of Nile cooperation as well as the common challenges we face are shared with the 272 million Basin citizens.

Hon. Dr. Paul Kipronoh Ronoh amplified Eng. Matemu's message by emphasizing the importance of the Nile River to the 10 Member States, saying it is a "critical water source" that needs to be protected and that the Member States need to tap into the benefits of this water resource. Using the examples of the Hydromet and Groundwater projects, which are being implemented by NBI, Hon. Dr. Ronoh explained how Kenya has benefitted over the years from Nile cooperation, which has facilitated the economic development of the country.

The Principal Secretary appreciated the establishment and existence of NBI, saying that it is the only regional body that provides an avenue for managing and developing transboundary water issues in a harmonious manner. Looking at climate change from a national angle, Hon. Dr. Ronoh mentioned that Kenya has experienced drought, hunger, as well as loss of livestock due to climate change. He added that NBI provides a forum and a sustainable model for addressing common Basin challenges collectively. He ended his remarks to the media with a call to action on a collective approach and discussion (Nile cooperation) to the challenges of climate change so that the Nile Basin Member States can report on their achievements of the SDGs in 2030.

At least 400 Nile Basin citizens and friends of the Nile are expected to participate in the celebrations taking place at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre. These include Ministers in charge of Water Affairs in the Nile Basin countries (Nile Council of Ministers); representatives from NBI Member States embassies in Nairobi, and officials from Ministries whose activities relate to the management and development of the shared water resources, namely Water, Environment, Energy, Agriculture, Foreign Affairs, Finance. Others include policy decision makers, development partners, researchers, academia, civil society, media (national, regional, and international), youth, and NBI strategic partners.

The celebrations, which will take place at Kenyatta International Convention Centre, will start with a brass band-led march from Uhuru Park to the Kenyatta International Convention Centre. A number of activities have been lined up including an exhibition by various partners showcasing achievements and on-going works in water and water-related activities, speeches from different dignitaries focusing on the theme for the day, traditional cuisine and dance. Later in the afternoon, Ministers in charge of Water Affairs in the NBI Member States together will convene for an extraordinary session of the Nile Council of Ministers (Nile-COM) meeting.

The annual Nile Day event provides an opportunity to increase awareness of the importance of basin-wide Nile Cooperation in jointly taking good care of and utilising the shared Nile Basin water and related resources for win-win benefits.

This is in addition to enhancing awareness about the consequences of non-cooperation as well as the challenges of Nile cooperation. Nile Day is also an occasion for participants to appreciate the rich and varied cultures which exist within the Nile Basin.

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About Nile Basin Initiative

The Nile Basin Initiative is a regional inter-governmental partnership launched by the Nile Basin countries on February 22, 1999, to manage and develop the shared Nile Basin water and related resources in a cooperative manner, share substantial socio-economic benefits, and promote regional peace and security. There are 10 NBI Member States: Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. Eritrea participates as an observer. The setup of NBI is informed by the principle of subsidiarity that matters ought to be handled by the smallest, lowest or least centralised competent authority; hence, the three NBI Centres: A Regional Secretariat (Nile-SEC) based in Entebbe, Uganda is the executive arm responsible for the overall corporate direction. Two subsidiary Action Programs – the Eastern Nile Subsidiary Action Program (ENSAP) and Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program (NELSAP) – are responsible for preparing trans-boundary investment projects aimed at contributing to energy, food and water security in the Nile Basin.