



Press Statement by Hon. Prof. Jumanne Maghembe (MP)

**Chairperson of the Nile Council of Ministers and
Minister of Water, The United Republic of Tanzania**

**At the end of the
23rd Annual Nile Council of Ministers Meeting**

4th June, 2015 - DODOMA, Tanzania

Introduction:

The 23rd Annual meeting of the Nile Council of Ministers of Water Affairs (Nile-COM) has ended today 4th June, 2015 in Dodoma, in the United Republic of Tanzania. The Nile Council of Ministers addressed strategic issues to advance the Nile cooperation as well as NBI business issues. The Nile-COM is the highest decision-making organ on all political and development matters relating to the Nile Basin Initiative.

During the meeting, the United Republic of Tanzania assumed the leadership of the NBI, succeeding the Republic of The Sudan. Accordingly, I am the current chairman of the Nile Council of Ministers, replacing H.E. Ambassador Mutaz Musa Abdalla. Tanzania will chair

both the Nile Council of Ministers and the Nile Technical Advisory Committee of the NBI for the next one year.

The changes in leadership are in keeping with the NBI tradition of annually rotating the position of chairman among Member States, in alphabetical order, namely; Burundi, DR Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

Outcomes from the meeting:

- 1. Nile cooperation:** The River Nile is one of the world's great assets. As such, cooperation is not a choice, but a necessity, if we are to achieve its sustainable management and development in the wake of shared risks and challenges such as climate change and environmental degradation. Cooperation is also essential, as it contributes to poverty reduction and economic prosperity for the Nile Basin citizens.

The Nile Council of Ministers applauds efforts by Sudan to bring back Egypt into the NBI arena. We hope that this will culminate in Egypt resuming full participation in the NBI in the near future as the country has contributed tremendously to the Nile cooperation as well as to building the Nile Basin Initiative into a strong institution that we are all proud of today. An all-inclusive cooperation remains key for optimizing basin-wide development.

2. Investment financing: NBI is continuing to identify, prepare and facilitate implementation of economically viable, environmentally friendly and socially acceptable investment projects. These projects, which are of national priority and regional significance, are currently worth more than USD 6 billion. They include power interconnection projects such as the **Kenya-Tanzania Interconnection line**, which will benefit about 18,000 inhabitants in villages along the transmission line; **Iringa-Mbeya Interconnection** in Tanzania will benefit 72,000 inhabitants through rural electrification and the **Interconnection of Electric Grids of Five Nile Equatorial Lakes countries** namely Burundi, DR Congo, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. **The Regional Rusumo Falls Hydroelectric power project**, expected to be completed by 2017, will generate 80 MW of power, with Tanzania benefiting 27 MW that will be added to the National Power Grid.

Other remarkable projects are the watershed management projects aimed at restoration of degraded water catchments and improving economic productivity. These catchments are critical for sustaining the flow of the Nile's major tributaries and for enhancing and diversifying productivity in rain-fed farming. Cases in point are **Mara River Basin Management project** in Tanzania and Kenya and **Tana-Beles Integrated watershed management project** in Ethiopia, Eastern Nile. In addition, improved flood early warning information is generated and disseminated to flood-prone

communities in Ethiopia and Sudan benefiting 350,000 vulnerable people in the Eastern Nile directly and 1.7 million people indirectly.

All these projects do not only contribute to development of the Basin, but promotes peace and security in the region, as countries appreciate and support each other based on understanding and joint actions in the Basin.

3. Resource mobilization: Resource mobilization remains a priority in the NBI plans. The Secretariat has been able to mobilize USD 12,922,000 during the reporting period, particularly from GIZ/Germany and the World Bank. As Member States we are determined to support our organization given its importance in nurturing cooperation and ensuring the sustainable management and development of the shared Nile Basin water resources. We appreciate the support provided by our development partners and we call upon them to continue supporting NBI, particularly during this phase of consolidating the gains and delivering benefits.

4. NBI Business: The business of the Nile Basin Initiative was successfully concluded. This included review of the progress achieved over the last year, approval of plans and budgets for the coming year and strategic guidance on key issues affecting the Nile cooperation and NBI processes. We commend the staff for the progress achieved during the previous fiscal year.

5. Nile Media Awards:We congratulate all winners of the Nile Media Awards 2015 who are due to be recognized tonight.The objective of the Nile Media Awards is to recognize journalists for their outstanding reporting on issues surrounding the Nile cooperation and the Nile Basin as well as to inspire increased factual and accurate reporting on these issues.

Participants:

The 23rdAnnual Nile Council of Ministers Meeting was attended by Ministers in charge of Water Affairs or their representatives from Egypt,DR Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. Members of the Nile Technical Advisory Committee from the NBI Member States, NBI management, representatives of NBI Development Partners and the civil society participated as observers.

Next Annual Nile Council of Ministers meeting:

The 24th Annual Nile Council of Ministers Meeting shall take place in Uganda in mid-2016.

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