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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Burundi to officially launch The Year of the Nile Basin on behalf of NBI Member States

ENTEBBE, Uganda - The government of the Republic of Burundi in partnership with the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) is organising the official launch of **The Year of The Nile Basin**, scheduled to take place early next week.

As the country holding the position of chairman of the Nile Council of Ministers (Nile-COM), highest decision making body of the Nile Basin Initiative, Burundi's Minister of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock, Hon. Deo-Guide Rurema will, on behalf of the NBI Member States preside over the launch activities on January 27 - 28, 2019. Activities will include a press conference and tree planting at the most distant source of the River Nile in Rutovu.

The launch follows a decision by Ministers in charge of Water Affairs in the Nile Basin countries, during their 26th annual Nile Council of Ministers held in Bujumbura in August 2018, to declare 2019 as The Year of the Nile Basin.

The Year of the Nile Basin under the motto: '**Putting Water at the Heart of Regional Transformation**', is dedicated to highlight the role that transboundary water must play in the conversations Nile Basin

countries have about the present and future regional development. The emphasis is on ensuring equitable utilisation and win-win benefits for society and the environment alike. Ultimately, it will also contribute to maintain regional peace and security.

The official launch is organised with the support from the European Union and the Federal German government.

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NOTE TO EDITOR

The Nile Basin region is undergoing rapid social, political, economic and environmental transformations. The Basin is facing a multitude of shared challenges which, like the Nile itself, span across borders. Challenges include growing demands for water, but as food and energy, which are also dependent on water. However, water variability keeps increasing, and climate change is expected to increase the risks. This reality can no longer be ignored.

At the same time, the River Nile plays an integral part in achieving not only water security but also food and energy security as well as in eradicating poverty for the people of the Nile Basin region. Nile Basin countries must act together in order to adequately respond to these challenges and take advantage of the opportunities.

The Nile Basin Initiative is the only basin-wide institution providing a neutral platform to the 10 Member States, to discuss how to jointly take care of and utilise the shared Nile Basin water resources for the benefit of all and to address the common challenges such as food, water and energy security as well as the negative impacts of climate change, which no country can tackle alone.