



Agreement on the Nile River Basin Cooperative Framework

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE NILE BASIN STATES OF THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE NILE RIVER BASIN COOPERATIVE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT

13th October 2024

Today, October 13th, 2024, we witness a defining moment in the history of the Nile Basin and in the broader story of Nile transboundary water cooperation. Today marks the official entry into force of the Agreement on the Nile River Basin Cooperative Framework, also known as the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA). The status of deposition of instruments of ratification or accession to the CFA and the date of entry into force of the CFA was formally confirmed by the African Union (the Depositary of the CFA) on 4 September 2024, in line with Articles 43 and 45 of the CFA.

The Cooperative Framework Agreement, the result of over a decade of negotiations, is a testament to our collective determination to harness the Nile River for the benefit of all, ensuring its equitable and sustainable use for generations to come. The Agreement was negotiated amongst nine Nile riparian countries (Burundi, DR Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda), and comes into force after its signature and ratification by five countries (Burundi, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Tanzania and

Uganda) and accession by a sixth country – South Sudan. This is a moment to congratulate the governments and people of the ten Nile riparian countries, and all partners and stakeholders, for their patience, resolve, and dedication to this cause.

In our basin, which stretches over 11 countries, including Eritrea which has hitherto participated in Nile cooperation efforts in the role of observer, and sustains more than half a billion people, the Nile is more than just a river; it is our lifeline. Its waters have nurtured civilizations, shaped our economies, and defined our cultural heritage and identity. Yet, the challenges we face in managing these waters are significant. Our economies are growing, but many in the region remain vulnerable. Climate change, environmental degradation, and growing population pressures threaten the resources we so dearly depend on. This is why the CFA is not merely a legal agreement—it is a vision for how we can come together to ensure the sustainable and equitable use of the Nile’s resources.

One of the key aspects of the CFA is its promotion of transboundary cooperation and ensuring that all riparian states have a voice in the management of the river's resources. Water does not recognize borders, and in the face of growing demand and finite resources, cooperation is the only sustainable path forward. This agreement enshrines the principles of collaboration, equitable use, and mutual respect among the countries that share the Nile’s waters. The CFA further establishes a mechanism for peaceful dispute resolution, fostering a culture of dialogue and understanding. This is a model not only for the Nile region but for the world, showcasing how nations can come together to resolve common challenges for the greater good.

Another crucial pillar of this framework is equity. The CFA aims to rectify historical imbalances in access to the Nile’s waters and ensure that all Nile Basin countries—whether upstream or downstream—can benefit from this shared resource. The CFA

recognizes the legitimate needs of all Nile Basin states and commits us to the equitable sharing of these waters in a manner that promotes sustainable development. This agreement represents hope for the future, where each country can grow and prosper without depriving others of the same opportunity.

Today, we stand on the brink of a new era. The entry into force of the CFA also paves way for the establishment of the Nile River Basin Commission (NRBC). The Commission will be vested with the responsibility of managing and safeguarding the Nile's resources for the benefit of all, and will be the cornerstone of our cooperative efforts. Thus, the CFA's coming into force triggers the process of transition from the Nile Basin Initiative to the River Basin Commission. The primary objectives of the Commission are four, namely: (1) to promote and facilitate the implementation of the principles, rights and obligations provided for in the CFA; (2) to serve as an institutional framework for cooperation among Nile Basin States in the use, development, protection, conservation and management of the Nile River Basin and its waters; (3) to facilitate closer cooperation among the States and peoples of the Nile River Basin in the social, economic and cultural fields; and (4) to act as a forum for resolving disputes related to the Nile's water usage.

The CFA was negotiated, and all its Articles except one were agreed upon, by all nine members states of the NBI, including Egypt and Sudan. The pending Article was placed in the Annex of the CFA for resolution within 6 months of establishment of the Commission. We wish to take this opportunity to inform all the brotherly countries of the Nile Basin that have not signed the CFA that it remains open for them to join at any time. Being part of the Commission enables them to influence decisions that could impact their access and use of the common Nile water resources.

We take this opportunity to thank Development Partners and the international community for their unwavering support throughout this journey of cooperation. Your contributions have helped us achieve this milestone, and your continued partnership will be essential as we move forward into this new phase of cooperation.

All Nile Basin states should fully embrace the CFA and uphold its principles. Let us remember that the CFA is not just an end in itself, but an important milestone on the journey towards a greater end: a Nile Basin where all people live in peace, prosperity, and harmony. We need to work together to build a future where the Nile River is a source of hope, not conflict; a symbol of unity, not division; and a testament to our collective ability to overcome challenges and create a better world for ourselves and future generations. Let this day be remembered as the day we set our region on a path of unity, development, and sustainable management of our shared waters.

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