

### **2025 regional Innovative stakeholder's forum III**

The III Regional Innovative Stakeholders forum is taking place in Nairobi Kenya from June 18 to 20, 2025 with the main objective of engaging five critical Eastern Nile Stakeholders – (i) the Faith Community (mainly of the two predominant faiths – Christian and Muslim), (ii) Hydropower/Dam operators, (iii) Ex-Diplomats (with good knowledge of the Nile issues and wisdom to share), (iv) media house owners/Journalists, and (v) parliamentarians to promote all-inclusive Eastern Nile Cooperation and avoid or at least minimize misunderstanding and mistrust that hinders the shared vision.

As a citizen of Eastern Nile Basin this forum is a platform designed to bring ideas, exchange constructive dialogue and innovative approaches of promoting cooperation on our vital resource, which is Nile River and its water resources, proper development and water management without conflict.

During the welcoming remarks ENTRO Acting Executive Director Eng. Teshome Atnafie welcomed participants to the regional stakeholder forum in Nairobi, Kenya. He emphasized the importance of stakeholder engagement for water management to achieve efficiency, sustainability, and equity. Eng. Teshome, said that the forum aims to discuss Eastern Nile water resource development and management issues, exchange experiences, identify challenges, and strengthen relationships. Accordingly, Eng. Teshome invited South Sudan ENSAPT to give welcoming remarks.

Hence, Eng. Thomas Jang Kag ENSAPT Member of South Sudan on his welcoming speech highlighted the importance of water, highlighting the challenges faced in water resource management and development. Eng Thomas said that “Water plays a crucial role in sectors like hydropower and irrigation, and addressing these complexities is essential, the need for collaboration and recognition that water is not just a vital resource but also a shared responsibility.” Finally, He calls for a unified approach to address these issues, to come together in a spirit of collaboration, acknowledging that water is not solely an individual concern but a shared responsibility.

Sudan ENSAPT Representative Dr. Elharith Mustafa said that “this forum presents an opportunity to bridge the gap between the diverse perspectives of various countries in the region regarding cooperation and regional development. We anticipate that this forum will particularly emphasize on regional cooperation and water diplomacy, particularly in response to climate change challenges.” Dr. Elharith said that the initiative shifts away from traditional conflict resolution methods and focuses on a comprehensive approach that involves the entire community, including media, parliament, diplomacy, and religious organizations, which foster effective dialogue and create lasting solutions, as it involves those directly impacted by water-related conflicts, ensuring a more effective and lasting solution.

Dr. Zebene Lakew, ENSAPT Chair, highlighted the importance of faith leaders and media representatives in shaping the region through collaboration. He emphasized the value of their wisdom and expertise in reaching communities and amplifying their collective impact. Dr. Zebene also highlighted the vital role media houses play in communication channels and the value of their presence in discussions. He emphasized the need for active engagement of stakeholders in the Eastern Nile Basin to foster inclusive cooperation and mitigate misunderstandings that can hinder

shared vision. Dr. Zebene hoped for an interactive discussion, guided by resources and senior experts, to pave the way for a sustainable future for the region.

By saying this Dr. Zebene officially open the III Regional Innovative Stakeholder's Forum.

The Forum is taking place with the following major topics: -

1. Water resources management and development EN/NBI
2. Nile/Eastern Nile cooperation:
3. Hydro-diplomacy and international water law
4. Environment and climate change challenges of the basin