



NELSAP-CU
NILE BASIN INITIATIVE
INITIATIVE DU BASSIN DU NIL

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2026



Burundi



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Egypt



Ethiopia



Kenya



Rwanda



South Sudan



The Sudan



Tanzania



Uganda

Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program (NELSAP)

Kigali City Tower, 5th Floor, Avenue du Commerce

P.O.Box: 6759 Kigali - Rwanda | Tel: + 250 788307334 | Email: nelsapcu@nilebasin.org

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MESSAGE FROM THE REGIONAL COORDINATOR



As I write this, I am reminded more than once, why this work matters. Not the headline numbers, though those are worth stating, but the smaller moments. The community consultation in Nimule for instance, where South Sudanese residents asked sharp, informed questions about how the transmission line being built through their land will benefit them.

These moments do not make balance sheets. But they are the reason the balance sheets matter.

As of today, we can say with confidence that the Rusumo Falls plant is running, NCCR's early warning systems are saving lives, and the SUPIP corridor is advancing through implementation.

In February this year, we published our Country Benefits and Regional Impacts booklet, covering the period 2021 to 2025. It is a record of what cooperation delivered, written in the language of outcomes rather than ambitions.

The harder conversation is the one about what has not yet happened. Angololo is fully prepared and bilaterally agreed, and it is not yet financed. Mara Valley, Ngono Valley, and Sio-Sango are in the same position. Together, they represent over half a billion dollars in water infrastructure that communities across Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania need, and that NELSAP-CU has spent years preparing. The engineering is done. The politics are resolved. The financing is the outstanding item, and it has been the outstanding item for too long.

I want to be honest with you as a reader and as a stakeholder: the gap between investment-ready and investment-funded is where projects go to age. We are determined that this will not happen with the projects in our portfolio. That means harder conversations with financing partners, more direct advocacy, and a willingness to name the urgency publicly rather than manage it quietly.

The pipeline is ready. The communities cannot wait. Neither will we..

“ *What was cooperation on paper in 1999 is cooperation in concrete, steel, and water today. What is cooperation on paper today will be infrastructure by 2030 if we move with the urgency the basin demands.*

Dr. Isaac Alukwe - Regional Coordinator, NELSAP-CU

”

ALONG THE WHITE NILE, A REGION'S ENERGY FUTURE COMES INTO VIEW



In late March 2026, a joint mission travelled to Nimule, a town on South Sudan's southern border where the White Nile enters from Uganda, carrying with it a quiet but consequential question: what does South Sudan's energy future look like, and how soon can it begin?

The delegation, bringing together the European Union, South Sudan's Ministry of Energy and Dams, the South Sudan Electricity Corporation, the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, and NELSAP-CU, was on the ground to assess two interconnected opportunities. The South Sudan-Uganda 400 kV Power Interconnection Project (SUPIP) and the Grand Fulla hydropower potential site along the White Nile.

The team walked the proposed transmission corridor along the Juba-Nimule highway, visited the planned 400/132 kV Bibia

substation site on the Ugandan side, and received a technical briefing on Grand Fulla and the Fulla Rapids. What they encountered was more than infrastructure in planning, it was a convergence of opportunity rarely seen in one corridor.

Grand Fulla carries an estimated generation potential of 1,080 MW. Its proximity to the SUPIP transmission line means power produced could reach Juba without additional high-voltage infrastructure. And the significance does not stop at South Sudan's borders. Grand Fulla sits within a regional hydropower cascade identified under the Nile Basin Investment Programme, with potential to contribute to the Eastern Africa Power Pool and deliver energy benefits to Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania.

The Mayor of Nimule Municipality and the Commissioner of Magwi County both called on the EU and the Ministry of Energy to accelerate Grand Fulla beyond the planning stage.

NELSAP-CU Regional Coordinator Dr. Eng. Isaac Alukwe reaffirmed the institution's mandate in coordinating hydropower development across the Nile Basin, noting that Grand Fulla, alongside Shukoli, Lakki, and Bedden, forms part of a priority pipeline

endorsed by Nile Basin Countries.

The EU Ambassador signaled the Union's readiness to support resource mobilization for feasibility studies and environmental and social assessments. The Minister of Energy and Dams, Hon. Agok Makur, confirmed that while SUPIP remains the immediate priority, Grand Fulla is firmly embedded in the government's long-term energy strategy.



ANGOLOLO PROJECT EARNS GLOBAL INFRASTRUCTURE CERTIFICATION



The Angololo Water Resources Development Project, a joint Kenya-Uganda initiative coordinated by the Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program Coordination Unit (NELSAP-CU), received certification under the Blue Dot Network (BDN), an international framework that recognizes high quality, sustainable, and transparent infrastructure projects.

The certification was announced during the OECD InfraDays held in Paris, France, where governments, development finance institutions, investors, and infrastructure experts gathered to discuss global infrastructure priorities and investment opportunities. Angololo was among only five projects worldwide certified in this round.

For the Nile Basin region, this recognition marks an important milestone for transboundary infrastructure development and reflects growing international confidence in cooperative regional investments.

The Angololo Water Resources Development Project is located along the Kenya-Uganda border within the Sio-Malaba-Malakisi River Basin. The project is designed to improve water security, strengthen climate resilience, support food production, expand access to clean energy, and improve livelihoods for communities in both countries.

The project includes irrigation infrastructure for smallholder farmers, water supply systems, watershed restoration activities, and a mini hydropower component. Together, these investments are intended to address some of the most pressing challenges facing communities in the area, including unreliable rainfall, land degradation, limited energy access, and increasing climate variability.

Once implemented, the project is expected to support irrigation on thousands of hectares of farmland, improve water access for surrounding communities, strengthen watershed management, and contribute to local economic development.

The certification by the Blue Dot Network confirms that the project has been developed in line with internationally recognized standards for quality infrastructure. These standards cover areas such as environmental sustainability, transparency, resilience, financial viability, social safeguards, and long-term development impact.

Established in 2019, the Blue Dot Network is jointly led by the United States, Japan, and Australia in partnership with the OECD. The initiative promotes infrastructure projects that meet high standards of openness, sustainability, and accountability.

For Angololo, the certification strengthens the project's credibility as it advances discussions with development partners, financiers, and potential investors. In an increasingly competitive global financing environment, internationally recognized certification helps demonstrate that the project has undergone rigorous preparation and aligns with global best practices.

The recognition also highlights the value of regional cooperation in addressing shared development challenges. Transboundary projects often require sustained coordination between governments, technical institutions, and local stakeholders. The successful preparation of Angololo reflects years of collaboration between the governments of Kenya and Uganda, supported by NELSAP-CU under the Nile Basin Initiative framework.

Beyond infrastructure development, the project represents a broader approach to cooperative water resources management in the Nile Basin. By combining water, energy, agriculture, and environmental objectives within a single investment framework, the project demonstrates how shared natural resources can support regional integration and local development simultaneously.

Angololo's certification comes at a time when countries across the Nile Basin are seeking practical solutions to climate pressures, growing populations, and increasing demand for water, food, and energy. Investments that strengthen resilience while promoting regional cooperation are becoming increasingly important for sustainable development across the region.

The other projects certified in this round included infrastructure initiatives from Brazil, Egypt, South Korea, and the East African region, reflecting growing international

interest in sustainable and resilient infrastructure across both developed and developing economies.

While certification is an important achievement, the focus now shifts toward mobilizing financing and moving the project toward implementation. Continued cooperation between Kenya and Uganda, engagement with development partners, and sustained institutional coordination will remain essential as the project progresses to the next stage.

NELSAP-CU expressed appreciation to the governments of Kenya and Uganda, the Nile Basin Initiative, the Blue Dot Network, the OECD, development partners, technical experts, and local stakeholders who have contributed to advancing the project to this milestone.

As countries in the Nile Basin continue to pursue shared solutions to regional development challenges, the Angololo Project stands as an example of how cooperative infrastructure can support climate resilience, economic growth, and long-term sustainability across borders.



THE GROUND BENEATH OUR FEET: WHY THE NILE BASIN'S PEATLANDS CAN NO LONGER BE AN AFTERTHOUGHT

Nobody photographs peatlands. There are no dramatic landscapes, visible engineering, or ribbon-cutting ceremonies. There is just waterlogged ground, accumulating carbon quietly over thousands of years, holding water systems together in ways that only become obvious when they stop working.

That invisibility is the central problem. Across the Nile Basin, peatlands perform some of the most consequential environmental functions of any ecosystem on the planet. They regulate water flows,

store carbon at a density that forests cannot match, buffer communities against floods and droughts and they do all of it without asking to be noticed. The consequence is that they have been chronically underinvested, inadequately studied, and, in growing areas of the basin, degraded by the very development pressures that the water and climate security they provide is meant to support.

The numbers, when you stop to look at them, are daunting.



3%

of Earth's land surface is covered by peatlands. 30% of all soil carbon on the planet is stored in those peatlands, more than in all the world's forests combined. 6 billion tonnes of carbon are estimated to be stored in peat deposits beneath the Sudd wetland system in South Sudan alone.

That ratio is not curiosity. It is a very strong one for treating peatland conservation as a climate priority rather than as a marginal environmental concern.

The Sudd, stretching along the White Nile in South Sudan and covering between 30,000 and 40,000 square kilometres depending on the season, is one of the largest freshwater wetlands in the world. Beneath parts of it lie the peat deposits that hold those 6 billion tonnes of carbon. But the Sudd is not simply a carbon reservoir. It is also a flood buffer, absorbing water during the rainy season and releasing it gradually downstream, stabilizing river flow across one of

the most hydrologically complex stretches of the Nile. It supports fisheries, pastoral grazing, wildlife migration, and wetland agriculture that sustain livelihoods across South Sudan.

Further south, in the Kagera Basin shared by Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, and Uganda, the picture is similar in character if smaller in scale. The Akanyaru and Nyabarongo wetlands contain peat-rich soils that have developed under permanently waterlogged conditions over long periods. They store water, regulate flows into the upper Nile catchments, support agriculture and fisheries, and protect biodiversity. They are not famous. They are not well-mapped. They are, in many cases, not even well-understood. And they are under pressure.

The Problem Is Not Ignorance. It Is Prioritization.

Development planning in the Nile Basin's wetland areas has, historically, looked at

these landscapes through the lens of agricultural potential. The question asked was almost always how much of this land can be converted to productive use, not what this ecosystem is already doing and what would we lose if it stopped. That framing has consequences.

When peatlands are drained, the carbon stored in them does not stay stored. It is released as carbon dioxide, as the slow oxidation of organic matter, and a direct contribution to the greenhouse gas concentrations that are now driving the more frequent floods and droughts.

Population growth, agricultural expansion, and land drainage are increasing pressure on peatland ecosystems across the region. These are not abstract future threats. These are current conditions.

“ When a peatland is drained, the carbon it has been storing for thousands of years does not disappear. It enters the atmosphere. The cost is real. It is just paid by everyone rather than charged to anyone. **”**

What Protecting Peatlands Actually Means in Practice

There is sometimes a tendency, in environmental policy discussions, to treat conservation as the alternative to development rather than as a precondition for it. Peatland protection is a clear case where that distinction breaks down. Intact peatlands regulate floods and droughts. They maintain water quality and protect the biodiversity that sustains fisheries and agriculture. Peatlands store carbon accumulated over millennia in a way that no engineered solution can replicate at comparable cost.

Investing in peatland management means, concretely: understanding where peat soils are distributed and in what condition, because the Nile Basin's peatland mapping is still incomplete in ways that would not be acceptable for any other category of strategic natural asset. It means developing land-use practices that allow communities to derive livelihoods from wetland landscapes without degrading the ecological functions those landscapes perform. It means integrating peatland protection into water policy and climate policy rather than treating it as a separate environmental agenda that competes for attention and budget with infrastructure.

None of this is beyond reach. It requires investment, institutional commitment, and the kind of regional coordination that the Nile Basin already has the architecture to deliver

PEATWISE: The Regional Response

NELSAP-CU is advancing PEATWISE a proposed regional initiative covering Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda as part of its priority pipeline, currently under resource mobilisation with an estimated cost of USD 50 million. The programme is designed to strengthen knowledge, monitoring, and sustainable management practices for peatland ecosystems in the Kagera Basin and connected wetland systems, explicitly linking peatland conservation to climate resilience, water security, and community livelihoods.

PEATWISE is not framed as an environmental project sitting alongside the infrastructure and water portfolio. NELSAP-CU's water infrastructure investments depend, in part, on the ecological integrity of the upstream wetland systems they sit within.

The programme will support countries in mapping and assessing their peatland assets, developing sustainable land-use frameworks, building the institutional capacity to enforce them, and connecting peatland protection to carbon finance mechanisms and climate adaptation funding streams that are available to countries that can demonstrate credible conservation commitments. PEATWISE is also a financing opportunity carbon-rich peatlands are the kind of nature-based climate solution that climate funds were

designed to support, and the Nile Basin's peatland assets are, by global standards, significant.

The Broader Point

The Nile Basin is facing more frequent floods, longer droughts, and increasing ecosystem stress. The response to that pressure has, appropriately, focused on building infrastructure: dams, irrigation systems, early warning systems, among others. That focus is right and necessary. But built infrastructure operates within a natural system, and the natural system is sending signals that deserve attention.

Peatlands are one of those signals. They are telling us, through their degradation and the consequences that follow, that the development framework has been missing something. A river basin whose upstream peatlands are degraded is a less predictable, less buffered, less resilient system than one where they are intact. The flood that overwhelms the early warning system you built, the drought that exceeds the reservoir capacity you engineered these are, in part, the result of natural systems that were not protected upstream.

This is not an argument against infrastructure investment. It is an argument for both: building the infrastructure that communities need and protecting the ecosystems that make that infrastructure work as intended. In the Nile Basin, peatlands are part of the second category. They have always been. We are simply, and not a moment too soon, beginning to plan and finance accordingly.

WIRING SOUTH SUDAN INTO THE REGIONAL GRID: SUPIP IS MOVING, AND THE CORRIDOR IS WATCHING



Right now, across a corridor stretching from northern Uganda through Nimule into Juba, the most consequential power infrastructure project in South Sudan's history is taking shape.

The South Sudan-Uganda Power Interconnection Project, (SUPIP) is a USD 262 million infrastructure investment currently under implementation. This matters because most conversations about energy in South Sudan are still framed around crisis, around deficit, around what does not exist. SUPIP is the answer to those conversations, and it is being built.

South Sudan, particularly Juba, runs largely on diesel runs largely on diesel. Diesel-generated electricity costs four to six times more than hydropower from Uganda's grid, which is exactly where SUPIP will source from. For businesses, that cost difference is the margin between viable and unviable. For hospitals, it is the difference between reliable equipment

and managed risk. For households, it has been, for too long, simply darkness.

The 400 kV transmission line along the Olwiyo to Nimule to Bibia to Juba corridor will change that.

What Is Happening in the Corridor Right Now

NELSAP-CU is coordinating active stakeholder engagement along the transmission route, including consultation sessions with communities and other settlements the line will pass through. These are not formalities. The people who live in this corridor have asked detailed questions about land access, about compensation timelines, and what this line means for the next generation. Those questions are being answered and recorded. Environmental and social safeguard commitments are being implemented in the field.

Uganda's Side of the Story

For Uganda, SUPIP is not a charity project toward a neighbour. It is a commercial opportunity. Uganda has invested heavily in generation capacity in recent years. SUPIP gives that capacity a new market, enabling bulk power exports from Olwiyo substation through the 400 kV line, generating electricity export revenue, and strengthening Uganda's position as the region's power supplier of choice.

This dual-benefit dynamic is exactly how good regional infrastructure should work.

SUPIP Within the Bigger Picture

SUPIP is one strand in a larger web. Alongside the Uganda-DRC interconnection, the Burundi-Tanzania line that is now cleared with AfDB Board approval. The proposed Nsongezi Hydropower Project across Tanzania, Uganda, and Rwanda, and the SOONO mini-hydropower initiative on the Kenya-Uganda border, are more projects building the physical spine of a regional electricity market. Where power flows where it is needed, at prices driven by supply and demand rather than by distance and isolation.

READY TO BUILD. WAITING FOR THE MONEY. THE ANGOLOLO PROJECT CANNOT WAIT MUCH LONGER.



The engineering is done. The governments have agreed. The bilateral framework is signed. Angololo is no longer a proposal. It is a blueprint that needs a financial decision.

Projects that are ready to build are seldom found in development infrastructure. They arrive at investment readiness with one missing piece: either the technical preparation is incomplete, or the bilateral governance arrangements are still being negotiated, or the environmental

assessment is being contested. Angololo has none of those problems.

The Angololo Transboundary Water Resources Development Project, shared between Kenya and Uganda in the Sio-Malaba-Malakisi basin, has a completed

feasibility study, a finished detailed design, a signed Environmental and Social Impact Assessment, a Resettlement Action Plan that has been reviewed and accepted, and a bilateral agreement formally signed by both governments. The estimated investment cost is USD 136.9 million. NELSAP-CU is actively pursuing financing. What the project needs now is a financier willing to decide.

Five Things Angololo Does at Once

The reason Angololo was designed as a multipurpose project is that the communities it will serve have multiple, intersecting needs. Addressing only one would leave too much undone. So, the project was designed to work across five dimensions.

Irrigation: approximately 4,300 hectares across Kenya and Uganda, including around 1,180 hectares in Busia and Bungoma counties in Kenya, will come under irrigation. Smallholder farmers who currently plant according to the rain and pray it arrives will have water when they need it. Water supply: up to 270,000 people will gain access to improved domestic water services. Flood control: seasonal flooding that destroys crops and displaces families in the Sio-Malaba-Malakisi basin will be regulated. Watershed management: 430 km of watershed area will be actively managed. Hydropower: a 1.3 MW generation component will provide local electricity to communities that have never had reliable grid access.

None of these outcomes are speculative.

They are engineered. The designs exist. The costs are known. The benefits are calculated. What is missing is the financing.

What the Signing Ceremony Actually Meant

When Kenya and Uganda signed the bilateral agreement on Angololo, it made the news in the way that signings usually do, photographs, official statements, ministers in suits. What it represented was harder to photograph: years of negotiation between two sovereign governments on how a shared river would be governed, who bears what responsibility, how costs are allocated, and what happens if one side feels the terms have not been honored. That framework is now locked in. It will outlast any individual minister or administration. It is the governance architecture on which the project will run for decades after it is built.

That is not a small thing. Transboundary water governance is where many regional projects have failed but Angololo has already cleared that hurdle.

The Ask Is Specific

NELSAP-CU is not asking for expressions of interest or letters of intent. The ask for Angololo is specific: USD 136.9 million in concessional infrastructure financing to move a fully prepared, bilaterally agreed, investment-ready project from blueprint to construction. The pre-investment work has been done. The risk profile has been reduced. The political will is demonstrated and documented. The communities are waiting.



We have spent years preparing Angololo so that when financing comes, construction can begin immediately. We are not asking investors to take a risk on a concept. We are asking them to fund a blueprint.

Eng. Terrence Ngoda – NELSAP-CU Water Resources Program Manager



MANAGING SHARED FLOOD RISKS ACROSS BORDERS IN THE NILE BASIN

In April, two regional meetings held in Nairobi and Addis Ababa brought renewed focus to how countries in the Nile Basin are responding to growing flood risks and climate pressure.

The sessions were convened by the Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program Coordination Unit in partnership with the Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office under the Regional Climate Resilience Program (RCRP), a World Bank supported initiative aimed at strengthening climate resilience across Eastern and Southern Africa.

In Nairobi, attention was on the Unyama/Ame River Catchment, a flood prone area between Uganda and South Sudan. Stakeholders met to validate a draft transboundary flood management plan developed following detailed technical studies. The discussions focused on aligning national approaches to flood forecasting, early warning dissemination, and coordinated response mechanisms. For communities around the Nimule and Elegu border corridor, where floods regularly disrupt movement and trade, the outcome of this process carries immediate relevance.

A week later in Addis Ababa, the focus widened to the overall performance of the RCRP. The Medium-Term Review assessed implementation progress, examined

whether program design remains aligned with evolving climate risks, and identified operational gaps. Government representatives, regional institutions, and technical partners reviewed results against agreed targets, while also addressing issues related to safeguards compliance, resource use, and delivery timelines.

Taken together, the two meetings highlight a shift in how climate risks are being managed across the basin. Flood events are no longer treated as isolated national emergencies, but as shared challenges requiring coordinated planning, data exchange, and joint action.

This approach depends heavily on sustained financing and institutional commitment. Investments under the RCRP are supporting systems that extend beyond physical infrastructure, including forecasting tools, data platforms, and cross border coordination frameworks. These are long term assets that strengthen preparedness and reduce the cost of disaster response over time.

As climate variability intensifies across the region, the case for continued support becomes clearer. Programs such as the RCRP are helping countries move from reactive responses toward more structured and predictable flood risk management, with direct implications for livelihoods, trade corridors, and regional stability.



COMMUNITIES IN ELEGU AND NIMULE STRENGTHEN FLOOD PREPAREDNESS THROUGH CROSS-BORDER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN



Communities in Elegu, Uganda, and Nimule, South Sudan, are strengthening their preparedness for recurrent flash floods following a joint awareness and stakeholder engagement campaign led by the NELSAP Coordination Unit (NELSAP-CU) and Uganda's Ministry of Water and Environment under the Regional Climate Resilience Program (RCRP).

The campaign focused on improving public understanding of the Nile Basin Flash Flood Early Warning System (NB-FFEWS) and supporting community participation in the development of the proposed Transboundary Flood Management Plan for the Unyama/Ame River Catchment.

Located along a busy border corridor linking Uganda and South Sudan, Elegu and Nimule frequently experience flash floods during heavy rains, affecting homes, businesses, transport, and livelihoods. Residents continue to face challenges related to flooding, poor drainage, and limited access to timely and understandable warning information.

Although the NB-FFEWS can issue flood alerts up to 48 hours in advance, awareness and response to these alerts within communities has remained limited due to low public understanding, language barriers, and limited access to digital communication channels.

During the mission, stakeholder meetings were held with local authorities, technical officers, community representatives, school leaders, faith-based institutions, and traders from both border towns. The discussions provided an opportunity for communities to share experiences, identify key flood challenges, and contribute feedback on proposed flood management measures for the Unyama/Ame River Catchment.

The engagements also emphasized the importance of coordinated flood preparedness and response between Uganda and South Sudan, particularly in border communities where flooding affects movement, trade, and public safety on both sides.

As part of the awareness campaign, community radio sensitization programs were conducted to help residents better understand flood alert messages and appropriate response actions during emergencies. The radio programs allowed community members to call in, ask questions, and discuss practical safety measures to take when warnings are issued.

To improve outreach and message retention, flood awareness jingles were produced and aired in both English and Luo across local radio stations serving the affected communities. The jingles encouraged residents to pay attention to flood alerts, follow safety guidance, and respond early during heavy rainfall periods.

NELSAP-CU also distributed four categories of flood awareness materials, including Flood Alert Posters, School Awareness Posters, Community Awareness Leaflets, and Fact Sheets for local authorities. The materials were distributed across schools, churches, markets, town council offices, and

public notice boards in Elegu and Nimule to ensure flood preparedness messages remain visible and accessible within the community.

Under the campaign, officials involved in the mission noted that communities demonstrated strong interest in receiving localized and simplified early warning information, particularly through trusted communication channels such as radio and local leaders.

The campaign forms part of broader efforts by NELSAP-CU and partner countries under the Regional Climate Resilience Program to strengthen transboundary flood management, improve community resilience, and bridge the gap between technical early warning systems and local response capacity.

Further engagement with district disaster management structures, schools, and community leaders is expected as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen preparedness and reduce flood risks within the Unyama/Ame River Catchment.



Country Benefits Booklet available



BE PREPARED... Early warning saves lives. Stay alert.

Save the date for these upcoming event

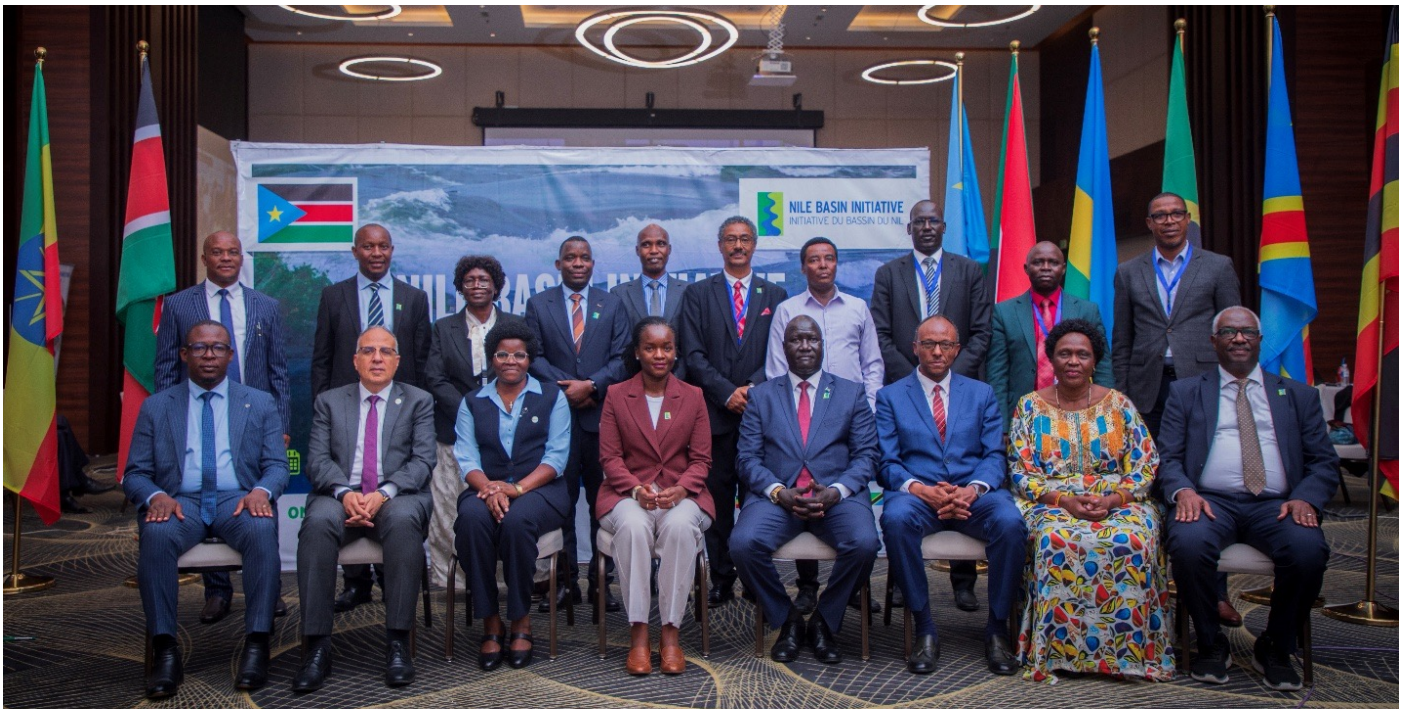
1. WORLD WATER WEEK;

World Water Week 2026 will be held from August 23-27 in Stockholm, Sweden, it will center on the theme “Water for People and Progress”. This theme highlights the urgent need to ensure equitable, sustainable water access for human development, supporting justice, health, and a water-secure future for all while addressing climate impacts.

PICTORIAL

Governance Meeting & Nile Day 2026.









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The Sudan



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Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program (NELSAP)

Kigali City Tower, 5th Floor, Avenue du Commerce

P.O.Box: 6759 Kigali - Rwanda | Tel: + 250 788307334 | Email: nelsapcu@nilebasin.org