

The Role of Internal and External Factors in the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) Crisis

Mariam Hassan and Mohamed Nour Al-Bosrati*

Department of Political Science, Faculty of Politics and Economics, Beni-Suef University, Egypt.

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Abstract: Water issues have become one of the first priorities of countries, so they set out to develop future plans and water policies to preserve and develop the available water resources and rationalize their use, and to search for new water resources by using alternatives to increase their water wealth. The Nile countries are among the countries that suffer from scarcity in a desert region where surface water sources are lacking, and their location outside the heavy rain belts made them suffer from a decrease in rainfall rates, and the waters of major rivers come from outside their lands, as the Nile originates from outside the lands of Egypt and Sudan. It should also be noted that water security faces many human and natural threats.

The conflict over the Renaissance Dam is part of a long-standing conflict between Egypt and Sudan - downstream countries - on one hand, and Ethiopia and the riparian states on the other hand over access to the Nile waters, which are considered the life of millions. Despite intense disagreements, Ethiopia continues to press ahead with the dam, arguing that the hydroelectric project will significantly improve livelihoods in the region on a larger scale. This conflict is influenced by a number of factors that resulted in the difficulty of reaching a resolution which constitutes a threat to the Egyptian water security.

Keywords: Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), Water Security, Internal and External Factors.

1 Introduction

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) crisis reveals an exception. It - in contrast to what distinguishes international crises from the element of surprise - has a history spanning five decades, the last of which is the current decade full of negotiating rounds. In contrast to the cohesion between the river's natural flow state between its riparian countries, the modern water relations in the Nile Basin were a mixture of coercive and cooperative elements. We find its first roots during the reign of Muhammad Ali Pasha, the Ottoman governor of Egypt, who paid great attention to establishing an agricultural renaissance in his country that would enhance his expansionist ambitions. One of the requirements of this renaissance was the rebuilding of the irrigation system, which would allow land reclamation and the introduction of new crops that would feed the new industries. But since then, it seemed that controlling the Nile River with barrages and dams is an unattainable goal, except by extending the hand of control over it from its higher sources. Based on this conviction, Muhammad Ali launched a series of military campaigns in the name of the geographical discoveries of the Upper Nile, which caused an unbalanced form of river/water relations between the countries of the basin, combining cooperation and conflict. During this long period of time, Egypt stood at the initiator of a new formation of river hydraulics, with planning and control that continued until the sixties of the last century.

Egypt was and still wants a purely technical settlement by modifying the current technical engineering design of the dam to extend the filling period for five years and/or reduce the storage capacity of the dam's reservoir, which is rejected by Ethiopia and not supported by Sudan. The research problem is about the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and what is related to it whether the Egyptian movement to reach a settlement which can ensure its historical rights or the factors which make such settlement difficult. Therefore, the main question can be as: How do internal and external factors affect the Renaissance Dam crisis? Then, there can be sub-questions to answer the main question which are:

- 1) How were the negotiation paths regarding the GERD?
- 2) What are the internal factors that influence the Renaissance Dam crisis?

* Corresponding author E-mail: mnour@eps.bsu.edu.eg

- 3) What are the external factors that influence the Renaissance Dam crisis?
- 4) Which factors did have the most impact on the others?

The importance of study comes from the case itself which includes new developments every day. Also, the study may be a way to discover the obstacles to reach a settlement so that the Egyptian leadership can deal with the crisis effectively. The objective of the study is to determine the factors affecting the Renaissance Dam crisis and their impact on the Egyptian water security whereas the Renaissance Dam is considered as one of the key pillars of the Egyptian water security. Regarding the research methodology, the study depends on the role approach which aims to analyze the role of the factors affecting the Renaissance Dam crisis and the role of the Egyptian leadership to handle the crisis. Therefore, the study will be divided into two sections:

- Firstly: GERD Negotiation Paths
- Secondly: The Internal Factors influencing the GERD Crisis
- Thirdly: The External Factors influencing the GERD Crisis

Firstly: GERD Negotiation Paths:

Regarding the negotiating performance, Ethiopia's strategy since the official start of negotiations between it and the two downstream countries in 2013 can be summarized under the title "Procrastination" and seeking to buy time; As a prelude to the imposition of a fait accompli with the completion of the dam's construction.¹ As for Egypt's strategy for dealing with the crisis, it ranged between good offices and an attempt to reach a settlement with Ethiopia, before the existence of the dam and its control over the Blue Nile waters became a reality, and between internationalizing the crisis and inviting influential parties to intervene in it, leading to the threat of resorting to the use of Military force as a bargaining chip, or as a last resort to block Ethiopia's path before its purpose is achieved.²

As for the case of Sudan; It is true that it interferes in the crisis as an original party, as a downstream country, but it has been noticed through the negotiation rounds during the past seven years that it has been trying to balance between Egypt and Ethiopia, based on a different perception of its interests, and seeking to distance itself from the sharp conflict between the two countries, affecting not to bear consequences that he does not see necessary;³ Sudan's interests make it see that the dam has risks that must be resolved, and on the other hand, it has clear development benefits. It is worth noting in this regard what we see of the impact of the political dispute between Egypt and Sudan, over the past two decades, on their ability to adopt a common position, as they are two downstream countries that share a common interest in this issue.⁴

It is worth highlighting the different negotiating tracks, in order to understand how the positions have evolved, and in this we can identify three negotiating tables on the Renaissance Dam since 2013.

The first table is the Khartoum table, which was held at the initiative of Sudan, which called for bringing together the parties to the crisis after the media confrontation between them reached its climax in 2013, and its work extended until late 2019. This path reached its climax with the signing of a Declaration of Principles between the three parties in Khartoum in March 2015.⁵

The second table was in Washington, and Egypt pushed towards it when it realized that the tripartite negotiation had been dominated by Ethiopia and its success in the strategy of buying time. Egypt specifically called for American mediation, declaring its good intentions and readiness to accept any compromise formulas proposed by the Americans, provided that

1 Abdo Moussa, The Renaissance Dam crisis: What is obstructing the negotiating track?, Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, October 2020, available at: <https://www.dohainstitute.org/ar/PoliticalStudies/Pages/The-Grand-Ethiopian-Renaissance-Dam-Crisis-What-Hinders-the-Negotiations-Track.aspx>.

2 Ibid.

3 Despite the Sudanese fear of the impact of the Renaissance Dam on the Sennar and Roseires dams, and their doubts about the structural safety factors in this dam, Sudan is not afraid to reduce its water share, and it does not use most of it, and it goes to Egypt, and hopes that the Renaissance Dam will reduce the phenomenon of the summer flood that The regions of the east and the capital threaten Khartoum every year, as well as what it wants from a share of the electricity generated by the dam. Talks have already taken place between him and Ethiopia regarding electrification, 12 July 2020, available at: <https://suna-sd.net/ar/single?id=684800>

4 The matter is clearly reflected in the negotiation, and the current form of relations between Egypt and Sudan seems in itself an obstacle to the possibility of effective coordination. Water relations were not isolated from the tensions between the two regimes in the two countries, and a legacy of problems, some of which were caused by the rivalry of regimes and the personalization of relations, and others by unresolved disputes over borders, support for the opposition, and so on.

5 Abdo Moussa, "The Renaissance Dam Crisis between Egypt and Ethiopia: Reclaiming the Negotiation Path or Regression toward Confrontation?", Case assessment, Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, 5 November 2019, available at: <https://bit.ly/3jD2Jwr>

their proposals ensure a solution.⁶ With the approval and personal support of President Donald Trump, a US-sponsored negotiating track opened in early 2020. Despite the promising progress of the negotiations led by the US Treasury Secretary, Steven Mnuchin, to reach a consensus proposal that was elaborated with the participation of the World Bank, the Ethiopian party suddenly decided to leave the negotiations and not sign, while the Egyptian party took the initiative to sign the initials. The restoration of the Khartoum table, following the Washington tour, resulted in a wave of tension between Egypt and Ethiopia, which necessitated Sudanese efforts to bring the positions closer. What was new was that a clear consensus between Khartoum and Cairo after the Washington round was established, based on the conviction that any new negotiations should be based on the findings of Washington table. The keenness of the Ethiopians to return the negotiations to the zero point has become evident. However, Sudan maintained its reservations about the Egyptian pressure for the internationalization of negotiations.

The third table is the negotiation under the auspices of the African Union with the monitoring of the Security Council of the United Nations, which is the table that opened after Egypt submitted its complaint to it, and portrayed the crisis as an "existential threat". In light of the Egyptian complaint, it was put upon the Council to deal with it within the framework of "peace and security in Africa"⁷. Ethiopia rejected the Egyptian move while Egypt saw the possibility of responding to the request of the African Union to take over mediation⁸. Security Council consultations resulted in the acceptance of a proposal by Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa and current Chair of the African Union, to host the negotiations under the slogan "African solutions to African problems". The statement of the Security Council came out supporting the launch of new efforts to reach an agreement between the three parties under the auspices of the African Union, provided that the situation is presented to the Security Council at that time.⁹

But at the end of the twentieth century, weakness hit both tracks. On the one hand, Egypt's rapid and unjustified withdrawal from cooperation relations with the basin countries took place, and its momentum, which reached its peak in the sixties of the last century, was lost, and it seemed that internal reasons had pushed towards reducing these relations to their minimum limits, and what remained of them were mostly seasonal, related to times of crisis. . It was not surprising that, with the approach of the new century, the course of these relations turned from the cooperative formula to a severely crisis relationship.¹⁰

Secondly: The Internal Factors influencing the GERD Crisis:

1. Late Timing for the Egyptian Move:

In fact, there are various reasons behind the late timing of the Egyptian move to confront Ethiopia's imposition of the reality of the Renaissance Dam, according to its technical design, which Egypt objects to. Among these reasons are the circumstances that surrounded the timing of the Ethiopian announcement on March 31, 2011 about the initiation of the construction of the dam. This announcement coincided with the political chaos that prevailed in Egypt immediately after the January 25 revolution, between the military establishment and the various political forces.

There is another reason for describing this move as "late," which is the Nile Basin Cooperative Framework Agreement, which has been signed by five Nile Basin countries so far: Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania and Kenya. Burundi signed it on February 28, 2011, and then ratified it by its parliament, as did Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania (that is, after the January 2011 revolution) and the number of signatory countries became 6, which means that according to Daniel Miboma, the regional spokesman for the Nile Basin Initiative, based in Entebbe, "...after Burundi signed the framework agreement on March 1, 2011, it became possible for the framework agreement to enter into force," adding that "under applicable international law, it was necessary for the Six of the state parties signed the agreement in order for it to be enforceable, which is what actually happened."¹¹ So it represents a barrier to understanding between Egypt and these countries because it was adopted and ratified by their parliaments, so it became part of its national legislation. This framework agreement represents

6 Ethiopia's Embassy, Statement of Ethiopia on the Negotiations on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, 29 February 2020, available at: <https://bit.ly/34ROfmW>

7 Text of Sameh Shoukry's letter to the President of the Security Council regarding the crisis of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, Al-Ahram, 20/6/2020, available at: <http://gate.ahram.org.eg/News/2430001.aspx>

8 Ethiopia's Embassy, Ethiopia's statement at the UN Security Council on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, 29 June 2020, available at: <https://bit.ly/3lzljqf>

9The African Union's efforts to resolve the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam crisis enjoy support in the Security Council," France 24, 30 June 2020, available at: <https://bit.ly/3gZbhfl>

10 Rania Ahmed Hmaid, Egyptian foreign policy (special reference after The 25th of January Revolution), **TESIS DOCTORAL**, (Madrid: FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS POLÍTICAS Y SOCIOLOGÍA, 2018), Pp 313-316.

11 Khalil Al-Anani, Water Conflict Between Egypt and Ethiopia: A Defining Moment for Both Countries, June 2020, available at: <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/water-conflict-between-egypt-and-ethiopia-a-defining-moment-for-both-countries/>.

an official vision that these countries have already adopted regarding their rights to the Nile water and therefore it is not just a reviewable point of view.¹²

2. The Negative Impact of the Phenomenon of Climate Change and the Threat of Drought in the Nile Basin Countries:

Among the factors that prompted Ethiopia and Uganda (the two countries of the sources of the Nile) to put in place the framework agreement for cooperation between the Nile Basin countries, which Egypt rejects because of its denial of the principle of prior notification with regard to any projects on the course of the river, as well as for its denial of its historical right to the waters of the Nile based on certain agreements, including the May 1929 agreement signed Between Egypt and Britain, there is also another factor, which is the phenomenon of climate change, which among its manifestations is the lack of rain, drought and desertification, which has led to a threat to the food security of the basin countries to one degree or another, which requires more cooperation based on a common understanding between the countries of the basin, but while avoiding harming any of these countries.¹³

Among the many statements in this matter was what the Sudanese president himself said early on, before Ethiopia announced its construction of the Renaissance Dam when he made a statement to the Sudan News Agency on August 7, 1995, in which he referred to what was stated that "Any talk about Sudan's increasing exploitation of the Nile water annoys the Egyptian government."¹⁴ despite the developments in the Nile Basin countries, including drought and the need of countries that do not have a share of the Nile water, and the expansion of water use in Sudan due to migration". Of course, this statement aimed from the Sudanese president at that time to convey several messages to Egypt, the most important of which is that Sudan is about to increase its exploitation of the Nile water and that there are developments in the Nile Basin countries, including drought, that calls for developing their Nile policies to confront drought in order to achieve food security, and the Sudanese president shows his country's sympathy with other countries, and that Sudan has an additional justification to increase its exploitation of the Nile water due to the Eritrean and Ethiopian migration waves in eastern and central Sudan.

The Ethiopian Minister of Water also referred on February 21-22, 2011 to "the sensitivity of the issue of climate change and facing the dangers of floods followed by famines,"¹⁵ which was secured by the Congolese Minister of Environment, Protection of Natural Resources and Tourism when he indicated that the phenomenon of climate change is related to the floods in the Nile Basin region as a result of heavy rain.

But there are two observations related to the focus of some and others on maximizing the impact of the climate change factor when talking about surface water resources, and even justifying some of the actions committed by some countries, such as Ethiopia and Uganda, for example, and others, in violation of international law with regard to cross-border rivers such as the Nile River, for example, we find on the Mail website and Guardian - Africa - on March 14, 2017, an article written by Ludger Schadomsky in the French news agency entitled "Hunger in the Horn of Africa was not caused by climate change."¹⁶ The expert explains and points out that the hunger facing 17 million people in East Africa is nothing but a man-made crisis. He also points out that "when United Nations agencies appealed to the world to help Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda, no one extended a helping hand, but it was noted that these countries are ruled by corrupt politicians who do not care about democracy in anything and who transgress human rights and ignite ethnic and religious conflicts only to seize power by force. Schadomsky gave examples of these countries, including Ethiopia, which he described as a rich country, but it suffers from injustice. That none of them clearly shows that there is a link between bad governance and hunger as there is in the case of Ethiopia, which has been suffering from starvation since the seventies of the last century and from which influxes of refugees have emigrated...." Hunger in Africa is a climatic phenomenon, but this is purely an illusion and nothing else. Hunger, especially in the Horn of Africa, is a human industry from the work of politicians and elites."¹⁷

With partial recognition of the relationship of the phenomenon of climate change with river water resources (and there are many similar cases, such as the case of Lake Chad decreasing, whose area has shrunk to 2,500 square kilometers, after it was 25,000 square kilometers in the sixties of the last century, for various reasons, the least significant of which is the phenomenon of climate change).¹⁸ However, it must first be recognized that the negative impact of this phenomenon is distributed among the participating countries in the river basin. The basin is in attributing or justifying linking their water

¹² Brett Walton, Nile Basin Countries Fail to Sign River Treaty Again, May 2010, available at: <https://www.circleofblue.org/2010/africa/nile-basin-countries-fail-to-sign-river-treaty-again/>.

¹³ <https://www.nilebasin.org/index.php/81-nbi/73-cooperative-framework-agreement>, Op.cit

¹⁴ Understanding and managing new risks on the Nile with the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, op.cit

¹⁵ Water scarcity, climatic change worsen situation in Egypt: Minister, December 2021, available at: <https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/1/110510/Water-scarcity-climatic-change-worsen-situation-in-Egypt-Minister>

¹⁶ Look: <https://www.dw.com/en/opinion-hunger-on-the-horn-of-africa-is-not-caused-by-climate-change/a-37925572>

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Mariama Sow, Figure of the week: The shrinking Lake Chad, **Africa in Focus**, february 2017.

ambitions to the phenomenon of climate change, because Egypt is the biggest harm to the effects of the phenomenon, but when politicians formulate agreements related to a purely technical issue, one should expect formulations such as the case of Article 14 B related to water security in the framework agreement, which among its justifications is the need of countries to establish projects on the course of the Nile to meet the increasing water requirements without prior notification to the downstream countries (Egypt and Sudan). These projects are justified by the politicians of these countries by saying that its reference is the increase in demand for water due to the increase in population numbers, and this is 100% true, and because of the negative effects of the phenomenon of climate change, and this is the controversial matter 100%.¹⁹

3. The Increasing Exclusion of the Hypothesis of a Military Solution:

It is worth noting that the Renaissance Dam is no longer an Ethiopian economic need only, but has also become a regional economic need, as it is a supplier of electrical energy to the neighboring countries of Ethiopia, which are except for Djibouti, Nile countries.²⁰ It is also an economic need for the European Union and the European countries for their investments and their business network, which includes the implementation of key projects in the Horn of Africa, including the Italian Mega Company²¹, which is implementing the Renaissance Dam. However, even with Egypt's awareness of this fact, there is still room for a logic and a justification for Egypt to justify a military solution, as it is the only available alternative after exhausting the diplomatic negotiating course, the last of which was the ninth meeting in Addis Ababa, at the conclusion of which they signed a document that included 5 items establishing a new road map apart from the previous tracks that did not lead to a result, and the three countries pledged to cooperate in accordance with the Declaration of Principles of the Renaissance Dam signed in Khartoum in March 2015²², but the document of this ninth meeting did not resolve the controversy and disagreement between Egypt and Ethiopia with regard to conducting technical studies to determine the negative effects of the dam on Egypt or an agreement on the mechanism of storing and operating the dam without causing serious harm to Egypt, and the final result after all that is that the crisis of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is neither considered by Ethiopia nor Sudan as a crisis, as it is still and will remain Egypt's "crisis" alone.²³

Thirdly: The External Factors influencing the GERD Crisis:

1. The Lack of a Legal Framework for Water Allocation:

Although Egypt has persisted that the 1959 agreement between Egypt and Sudan is the legal framework for the allocation of the Nile waters, Ethiopia and other upstream riparian states reject that agreement. The 1959 agreement allocated all the Nile River's waters to Egypt and Sudan, leaving 10 billion cubic meters for seepage and evaporation²⁴, but afforded no water to Ethiopia or other upstream riparian states—the sources of most of the water that flows into the Nile. Perhaps even more consequential is the fact that this agreement granted Egypt veto power over future Nile River projects.

2. Conflict of Interests

Examining the allegations of the various parties that charted this crisis path leads us to say that there are two distinct interest packages, often contradictory, which are:²⁵

- A. **The interests of the upstream countries:** Since the nineties of the last century, the countries of Upper Nile have called for overriding the current legal frameworks, by proposing an alternative to them, or at least re-interpreting them. It issued a letter that Egypt inherited the water relations established by colonialism, which it calls the bias towards the downstream countries, and that Egypt with these frameworks constrain development in the upstream countries. Ethiopia led this view, and worked to create an alignment on its side from other upstream countries, and the matter reached its climax with the signing of the Framework Agreement (Entebbe 2010)²⁶, and the escalation of demands to reconsider the current agreements. Despite what appears to be an apparent compatibility of interests, the differences in the positions of

19 Understanding and managing new risks on the Nile with the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, op.cit.

20 Egypt and the Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, last access in January 2022, available at: <https://www.aucegypt.edu/news/stories/egypt-and-ethiopian-renaissance-dam>.

21 Egypt raises concerns about Ethiopia's GERD with German, Italian and Chinese envoys, October 2019, available at: <https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/352771/Egypt/Politics-/Egypt-raises-concerns-about-Ethiopia%E2%80%99s-GERD-with-G.aspx>

22 Noha El Tawil, Declaration of Principles on Renaissance Dam is 'exclusive agreement' binding Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan together: intl. law expert, June 2020, available at: <https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/1/88909/Declaration-of-Principles-on-Renaissance-Dam-is-exclusive-agreement-binding>

23 Ibid.

24 John Mukum Mbaku, The controversy over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, *Africa in Focus*, 5 August 2020, available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2020/08/05/the-controversy-over-the-grand-ethiopian-renaissance-dam/>.

25 Marawan Badr, *Relations between the Nile Basin countries between the crisis and future opportunities*, Paper presented at the annual conference of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs about: Egyptian-African relations...towards new horizons, 2017, P26-27.

26 Meaad Salman, "The Nile Basin Cooperative Framework Agreement: A Peacefully Unfolding African Spring?" *Water International*, no. 38, vol. 1 (2013), pp. 17-29

the source countries remain evident. They differ on what to do in practice over the downstream objections. It is possible in this regard to stand on two points of view: There are countries that see the necessity of a sharp confrontation with the downstream countries, and not allow them to have the slightest control over this water resource, freeing from any treaty restrictions that prevent the upstream countries from establishing what they see as development projects, even if that includes reducing the shares of the downstream countries in the water. While another group believes that cooperation in managing the river is necessary to avoid tension and exacerbate the crisis, and that it is possible to reconcile the current legal frameworks, which reflect the needs of Egypt and Sudan and their desire to draw guarantees for the arrival of specific quotas of water to it, and the development goals of the upstream countries. The establishment of development projects does not necessarily require that it becomes at the expense of the just right of the downstream countries to water²⁷.

B. **The interests of downstream countries:**²⁸

In the face of the upstream countries' rising awareness of the issue of incompatibility with the current water division frameworks and their development ambitions²⁹. Egypt did not take the initiative to address the escalating crisis, nor did it present convincing proposals that would achieve a new win-win equation in the relations of the basin countries, and it did not see the need to build new frameworks that go beyond the category of historical rights that upstream countries describe as equal to colonial rights. The crisis reached an unprecedented level prior to the Entebbe Agreement in 2010; The steps of the conflicting parties to prove their positions accelerated in 2009, when the upstream countries presented a new framework for water sharing, which the downstream countries rejected,³⁰ and the Egyptian side described as unfair to its historical rights. In order to avoid an escalation of the crisis, an emergency meeting of foreign ministers of the Nile Basin countries was held in July 2009, initiated by the upstream countries led by Ethiopia, with a threat that the upstream countries would be obliged to exclude the downstream countries, Egypt and Sudan, from any agreements regarding the Nile River, unless A clear response arrives within six months. Simultaneously, a campaign was launched against Egypt claiming that it stands in the way of development efforts in the countries of Upper Nile.³¹

C. **The impact of conflict of interests in the crisis of the GERD:**

The example of negotiating the Renaissance Dam provides clear evidence of the complex nature of this crisis, which goes beyond the borders of the Blue Nile, the location of the dam, and even the borders of the Nile Basin itself. The fact is that there is no confidence in the possibility of a bilateral solution, while it is almost impossible under the current situation to reach a new collective consensus framework that transcends this type of bilateral agreements whose problem lies in that one party recognizes it while the other parties in the basin countries deny it.³²

In order to understand the nature of the problem in the Renaissance Dam, we return to examining the interest motives that drive the negotiation strategies pursued by the two parties.³³

What Ethiopia is doing is, according to the Egyptian perception, a detraction from the vital interests concerned with ensuring the historical and legal share of water. While Ethiopia believes that its new dam will not harm the interests of the downstream countries, and that its purpose does not affect the arrival of "fair shares" for both. Perhaps the reason behind what we see prevailing in a contradictory perception between Egypt and Ethiopia, which escalated to the zero-sum game after Ethiopia modified the design of the dam to be among the largest in the world in terms of storage capacity, is the lack of a real concept that translates the meaning of fair and equitable use, which is filled with the two parties' statements.³⁴

3. **The Ethiopian Move in the Opposite Direction to the Egyptian Move:**

There is a clear African policy for Ethiopia represented in the African summits and ministerial conferences that are usually held in Addis Ababa, which constitutes a meeting node for meetings and meetings between African politicians at

27 27 Mennatallah Nasr Atwan, Egyptian-Ethiopian water relations: A benefit sharing perspective, (American University in Cairo: School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, 2018), p35

28 Simon A. Mason, From Conflict to Cooperation in the Nile Basin, **Doctoral Thesis**, (SWISS FEDERAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, 2004), p138

29 Shrouq Tariq, "The Politics of Water: Ethiopia, Egypt and Israel," *The Express Tribune*, 9/7/2020, available at: <https://bit.ly/33LD8fl>

30 [P. Michael Link](#) and others, On Foes and Flows : Vulnerabilities, Adaptive Capacities and Transboundary Relations in the Nile River Basin in Times of Climate Change , 2012, available at: <https://www.cairn.info/revue-1-europe-en-formation-2012-3-page-99.html> , p11

31 Ana Elisa Cascão, "Changing power relations in the Nile river basin : Unilateralism vs. cooperation ?," *Water Alternatives* 2, no. 2 2009.

32 Benishangul-Gumuz, Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Project, available at: <https://www.water-technology.net/projects/grand-ethiopian-renaissance-dam-africa/>, last access in January 2020.

33 Charles Gordon Smith et al, "Nile River," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 7 November 2019, available at: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Nile-River>.

34 Walaa El-Nashara & Ahmed Elyamany, "Managing Risks of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on Egypt," *Ain Shams Engineering Journal*, vol. 9, no. 4 (December 2018), pp. 2383-2388.

all levels. This compensates for the less intense diplomatic representation of Ethiopia with African countries compared to the Egyptian diplomatic representation with About 40 African countries, and the Nile water issue is one of the most important issues within the scope of its African policy, especially after the announcement on March 31, 2011 of the construction of the Renaissance Dam.³⁵ Therefore, Ethiopia has been active in its movements towards most of the Nile Basin countries so as not to leave the field free for Egypt. Ethiopian presidential and ministerial visits chronologically overlapped with similar visits of Egypt in these countries, , and the following are the most important recent Ethiopian moves over the past two years in the Nile Basin countries:

Tanzania: The Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn visited Tanzania at the invitation of its President John Magufuli. It lasted for two days, starting on March 31, 2017.³⁶ The visit aimed to strengthen the existing diplomatic relations and explore areas of cooperation including trade and investment. The two countries signed 3 cooperation agreements, and a statement issued by the Tanzanian Foreign Ministry indicated that Tanzania and Ethiopia enjoy excellent relations and the latter will open a resident embassy in "Dar es Salaam".

Rwanda: On April 24, 2017, over two days, discussions were held within the framework of the second session of the Ethiopian /Rwandan Permanent Committee (established in 2012) at the technical level in the capital, Kigali, which dealt, according to the Permanent Secretary of the Rwandan Foreign Ministry, Claude Nikobisanzwe, to the establishment of a partnership in the fields of education, tourism and mutual legal assistance. Nikobisanzwe noted that "the cooperation between Rwanda and Ethiopia remains strong and has achieved tangible results in several areas, including defense (exchange of experiences in peacekeeping forces and operations support) and capacity building, which the peoples of the two countries will continue to benefit from. The Rwandan New Times website indicated on April 27, 2017, that the two countries signed in 2016 an agreement to open the two countries' airspace, allowing the national air carrier to operate without restrictions, and that the two countries signed agreements in 2012 covering areas of cooperation in the political, economic, commercial, investment, educational, health and other fields as a result of a general agreement of cooperation between them.³⁷

Kenya: The Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed paid an official visit to Kenya on May 6-7, 2018. The discussions dealt with bilateral and regional issues and means of strengthening integration, regional peace and security and multilateral cooperation. It is known that Kenya hosts thousands of Ethiopians who fled from the border city of Moyale due to the violence of Ethiopians soldiers.³⁸

South Sudan: The Foreign Ministers of Ethiopia and Kenya went together to Juba, the capital of South Sudan, on December 26, 2013, 11 days after the start of the civil war.³⁹

There they met President Salva Kiir, and the conversation with him focused on ways to stop the violence in the country and start political talks for that after the dispute broke out between him and his deputy, Riek Machar, and although Ethiopia, like others, realizes that South Sudan is not an influential player in the Nile Basin policies,⁴⁰ but it pays special attention for the security reasons especially in light of the fact that there is some degree of internal instability in Ethiopia, and this prompted Ethiopia to search for and find ways to manage refugee flows due to the civil war raging in South Sudan since 2013. In the Ethiopian region of Gambella alone, there are 288,000 refugees,⁴¹ most of whom are from the Nuer tribe, the opponent of President Salva Kiir, as well as because of Ethiopia's keenness not to leave South Sudan completely within the scope of Egyptian political interest, as leaving South Sudan away from Ethiopia's interest allows the free movement of Egypt in Juba and then its annexation to the allied or at least pro-Egyptian countries in the Nile Basin. From this standpoint, the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Haile Mariam Desalegn, in this context and in the context of revitalizing bilateral relations and following up on the implementation of the peace agreement signed in Addis Ababa in

35 Belal Al-Masry, Egyptian diplomacy: factors limiting its ability to solve the Renaissance Dam crisis (in Arabic), August 2018, available at: <https://democraticac.de/?p=55503>.

36 Ethiopian PM visits Tanzania to strengthen bilateral ties, April 2017, available at: http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-04/01/c_136175351.htm

37 Belal Al-Masry, Egyptian diplomacy: factors limiting its ability to solve the Renaissance Dam crisis (in Arabic), Op.cit.

38 Ethiopian PM visits Kenya: bilateral, regional issues top of agenda, May 2018, available at: <https://www.africanews.com/2018/05/06/ethiopian-pm-abiya-ahmed-visits-kenya-bilateral-regional-issues-top-of-agenda/>

39 Carl Odera, Aaron Maasho, UPDATE 1-South Sudan rebels seize oil wells, mediators urge talks, December 2013, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/southsudan-unrest-idUSL6N0K51X520131226>

40 Tesfa Alem Tekle, Leaders from Ethiopia, Kenya attempt to broker S. Sudan peace deal, December 2013, available at: <https://sudantribune.com/article48279/>.

41 Belal Al-Masry, Egyptian diplomacy: factors limiting its ability to solve the Renaissance Dam crisis (in Arabic), Op.cit.

August 2015 between the President of South Sudan Salva Kiir and the armed opposition led by Riek Machar, Desalegn visited South Sudan on October 28, 2016.⁴² It lasted one day, during which he delivered a speech before the National Legislative Assembly in Juba, in which he indicated that “his country will not support a group that is fighting armed battles or whoever has chosen the path of war, and therefore we will not allow any armed movement to rob peace from our region, whether it is in Ethiopia or South Sudan, And there will be cooperation between the Ethiopian and South Sudanese armies, and the South Sudanese president has agreed to send the army chief of staff to Addis Ababa quickly, and they will agree there on joint cooperation to secure the borders and beyond.”⁴³

4. The Sudanese Position on the Issue of Nile Waters in general and the Renaissance Dam in particular:

Before stating Sudan’s position on Nile water issues, it must be pointed out that 77% of the total water in Sudan comes from the Nile, Gash, Baraka and Azum rivers, and all of them originate from outside the borders of Sudan, just as the case of Egypt, which depends 99% on the waters of the Nile River only,⁴⁴ and this means that there is a common denominator between the Egyptian and Sudanese cases with regard to the degree of water security, as it is threatened in both cases, with the percentage difference being 100% in the Egyptian case and 75% in the Sudanese case. The difference between the Egyptian and Sudanese visions regarding the water of the Nile is not modern or resulting from the political dispute between the two countries only, but extends to the technical aspect as well, and this was clarified in the Egyptian/Sudanese negotiations regarding Egypt’s establishment of the High Dam and the consequent fabrication of a lake that stores the surplus waters of the Nile River (Lake of the High Dam or Nasser) and the forcible displacement of Nuba residents on both sides of the border resulted from the creation of this lake⁴⁵. As for the tripartite framework that includes Ethiopia, which was formed after Ethiopia announced on March 31, 2011 its initiation to build the Renaissance Dam, Sudan’s official position remained supportive of the Egyptian point of view, which saw its establishment with specifications which are being worked on as a detriment of its interests and the interests of Sudan’s water, but in a sudden development and before the end of 2013, the Sudanese position at the highest level shifted to support and support Ethiopia’s establishment of the Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile,⁴⁶ according to what was stated in a public speech by Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir on December 4, 2014 on the occasion of Inauguration by the Ethiopian Prime Minister of the electrical interconnection network between the two countries in the state of Gedaref, which is adjacent to the border with Ethiopia, indicated that “Sudan supports the construction of this dam because it will receive a large share of the electricity generated by the dam.”⁴⁷

5. The Mediation Door is Closed:

The Egyptian move included urging the World Bank to engage in the search for a solution to the Renaissance Dam crisis.⁴⁸ Indeed, at the end of December 2017, the Bank announced its initial readiness to intervene in accordance with a proposal submitted by Egypt to the Bank through the Egyptian Foreign Ministry that included a request for the World Bank to participate in the tripartite committee to address the crisis from the technical destination, and therefore has the right to express a technical opinion regarding the construction of the dam, and Cairo was waiting for the bank’s response in this regard before the visit of the Ethiopian Prime Minister to Egypt in January 2018⁴⁹. But the Ethiopian leaders refused the participation or intervention of the World Bank through arbitration in this crisis during his visit to Cairo on January 20, 2017, the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Hailemariam Desalegn, reiterated his rejection of the Egyptian proposal, which was notified to the World Bank in December 2017, and Mansa said, “Ethiopia will not accept Egypt’s request to include the World Bank in the ongoing talks within the framework of the tripartite technical committee on the

42 [Aaron Maasho](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southsudan-unrest-idUSKCN1LS2PW), South Sudan's president, rebel leader sign peace deal, September 2018, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southsudan-unrest-idUSKCN1LS2PW>.

43 South Sudan rivals Salva Kiir and Riek Machar strike unity deal, February 2020, available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-51562367>

44 Belal Al-Masry, Egyptian diplomacy: factors limiting its ability to solve the Renaissance Dam crisis (in Arabic), Op.cit.

45 [Radwan G.Abd Ellah](#), Water resources in Egypt and their challenges, Lake Nasser case study, *The Egyptian Journal of Aquatic Research*, Vol.26, Issue 1, March 2020.

46 Look: <https://www.sis.gov.eg/section/7302/9426?lang=en-us>

47 GERD will not affect Egypt’s Nile water share: Sudan, May 2018, available at: <https://translate.google.com.eg/?hl=ar&sl=ar&tl=en&text=GERD%20will%20not%20affect%20Egypt%E2%80%99s%20Nile%20water%20share%3A%20Sudan&op=translate>

48 [Zeinab El-Gundy](#), GERD Timeline: From construction till expected resumption of African Union-mediated talks, October 2021, available at: <https://english.ahram.org.eg/News/426270.aspx>.

49 The Political Deadlock on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, November 2021, available at: <https://www.giga-hamburg.de/en/publications/giga-focus/the-political-deadlock-on-the-grand-ethiopian-renaissance-dam>

Renaissance Dam.” He justified his refusal when he said afterwards, "there is an opportunity for the three countries to resolve potential disputes on their own."⁵⁰

The Americans do not have a self-interested motive to intervene, and most importantly, weakening Egypt more and more is something that adds to Israel's security, which is confirmed by American officials and documented by the successive strategic memoranda of understanding signed between Washington and Tel Aviv. As the Ethiopian ties to the United States were strong, especially after Ethiopia concluded a military treaty with it in 1953 and with its allies, led by Israel, which appointed its first general consul in Addis Ababa in 1956, its strength increased by the nature of the situation that arose as a result of the United States and the World Bank, under pressure, abandoning the pledge to finance the High Dam.⁵¹ And the Egyptian president turned to the Soviet Union in search of financing, so he concluded an agreement with him in 1958 that included financing in Soviet rubles and paying them in Egyptian currency and providing Egypt with all the necessary equipment and expertise⁵². When following up on the American role in the Renaissance Dam crisis, we do not see what we have previously seen in the financing crisis of the High Dam, which ended with the United States, Britain and the World Bank withdrawing their financing for the dam. Between the two crises of the Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and the Egyptian High Dam, there were at least seventy years between them, during which international policies changed. But it remains that the constant and common thing between the two cases is the Egyptian water security and the Ethiopian economic security, just as Egypt in the fifties had an influential regional role on two levels, namely Africa and the Middle East. Now, Egypt has lost or almost lost its role on these two levels, and unfortunately, it is no longer feared, as it is no longer It has a problem, for it is asking a state like the UAE,⁵³ which was established as a state in 1970, to intervene in the crisis of the Renaissance Dam, while Egypt knows that the investments of the UAE, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries in Ethiopia are so dense that it cannot be translated as a pressure force in favor of Egypt, but rather it is an investment preference. A Gulf of Ethiopia and a reluctance to invest in Egypt, so it is impossible that the UAE or any other intend to respond to an Egyptian desire to pressure the Ethiopians.⁵⁴

6. The Different Positions of the Countries included in the Egyptian Move from Egypt's Position on the Nile Water Issue:

The Egyptian move included the countries of the Equatorial Nile Basin in addition to South Sudan, and these countries are Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya, which are countries that signed the framework agreement for cooperation between the Nile Basin countries, which Egypt still refuses to sign in order to oppose it since the initial stages of its development in 2000 when the Council of Ministers of the Nile Basin countries, in its eighth regular meeting in Khartoum in August 2000, entrusted the process of preparing the draft of this agreement to a committee that was formed of two members from each country, and in February 2002 the Ministerial Council approved the formation of a negotiating committee from the nine basin countries to negotiate together on the articles that had not been collectively agreed upon⁵⁵. The committee was formed in 2003 and began its work in Addis Ababa in December 2003, and after several subsequent meetings, most of these articles were agreed upon, but there were two unresolved articles related to the relationship of the framework agreement with the previous agreements on Nile waters.⁵⁶ Such as the agreement on full use of the Nile water signed in 1959 between Egypt and Sudan and the 1929 agreement between Egypt and Britain, and Egypt and Sudan insisted that their signing of the framework agreement does not mean denial of the 1959 agreement and the 1929 agreement, and the second relates to prior notification of projects that any of the basin countries plan to implement.

The World Bank had a role in the current negotiating process, as it presented at the extraordinary ministerial meeting in March 2006 in Ethiopia a proposal under the title “Water Security” instead of defining the existing agreements, but the countries were unable to reach consensus on this, Egypt insisted on including “Water Security.” Water security” is provided that the current and historical uses and rights are not violated. In the Bujumbura meeting in 2006, the Egyptian

⁵⁰ Egyptian-Ethiopian negotiations on Renaissance Dam, March 2018, available at: <https://www.sis.gov.eg/Story/121622/Egyptian-Ethiopian-negotiations-on-Renaissance-Dam?lang=en-us>

⁵¹ Look: <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-ethiopia/>

⁵² Karel Holbik and Edward Drachman, Egypt as Recipient of Soviet Aid, 1955-1970, Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics, last access in January 2022, available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40749433>

⁵³ The United Arab Emirates in the Horn of Africa, November 2018, available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/united-arab-emirates/b65-united-arab-emirates-horn-africa>

⁵⁴ Massacres, Rape, Siege: Why Israel Must Stop Its UAE Ally Aiding Ethiopia's Atrocities, last access in January 2022, available at: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/why-israel-must-stop-its-uae-ally-aiding-ethiopia-s-atrocities-1.10463803>

⁵⁵ Look: <https://www.nilebasin.org/index.php/81-nbi/73-cooperative-framework-agreement>

⁵⁶ Teferi Mekonnen, Ethiopia's Quest for and Efforts at Building a Nile Basin Cooperation, Journal of Ethiopian Studies, Vol.51, December 2018.

and Sudanese delegations presented proposals for the two articles and the upstream countries accepted them, but Ethiopia made reservations about the two texts, and this was followed by the withdrawal of all the upstream countries from their approvals.⁵⁷

The positions of these countries are as follows:

- Sudan: Sudan supports the Egyptian viewpoint regarding the reservation to the framework agreement, specifically the reservation to Article (14B of it) and thus not to sign it, but at the same time Sudan supports the Ethiopian position on the Renaissance Dam⁵⁸ in accordance with the specifications that Egypt objects to (the size and period of filling the dam's reservoir) and the dam is considered one of the applications of the provisions of the framework agreement that itself has reservations about, and Sudan is considered one of the Nile countries that benefit from the electric energy that the dam will generate, amounting to 6000 megawatts, part of which will be imported according to an agreement with Ethiopia.
- South Sudan: The Minister of Water and Irrigation of South Sudan, Paul Mayom Akech, stated to a local radio station in South Sudan on March 20, 2013 that South Sudan does not recognize and confirms that it will not recognize the content of the 1929 agreement between Egypt and Britain. We say, we have nothing to do with this agreement."⁵⁹ He added, "We have joined the initiative of the Nile Basin countries and we have a long way to join the framework agreement for cooperation." Then he said, "Egypt, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo refused to ratify (intended to sign) this agreement for reasons that are due to the violation of this agreement to the 1959 agreement. ". Based on this early statement, which was issued two years after the declaration of the state of South Sudan, the expected position of South Sudan is to join the Cooperative Framework Agreement for the Nile Basin Countries, sooner or later, in light of South Sudan's failure to recognize the agreement on the full use of the Nile water signed between Egypt and Sudan in November 8, 1959, which is a major reason for which Egypt and Sudan justify their rejection of the Framework Agreement.
- Rwanda:⁶⁰ The Rwandan National Assembly has ratified the Framework Agreement for Cooperation, and this agreement has thus become part of its national laws. Accordingly, Rwanda is bound by this agreement, one of its articles indicating that the Nile Basin countries have the right to establish their projects on the river without the need for the approval of the downstream countries, Egypt and Sudan, and thus between them The positions of Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya have a great common denominator in their vision of the Nile water issue, through their connection to the text of the framework agreement for cooperation. In a speech he delivered on the occasion of the celebration of Nile Day in Goma, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, on February 21-22, 2011, the Rwandan Minister of Land and Environment referred to the necessity of signing and ratifying the framework agreement for cooperation between the Nile Basin countries,⁶¹ as it represents a protection and protection for the future of the basin countries as a common haven.
- Burundi: On June 22, 2017, Joseph Butore, the Second Vice-President of Burundi, made a statement before leaving the Burundian capital. He indicated that "the Nile River has always been important, and that the first point of it leaves Burundi and heads⁶² towards Egypt, passing through several countries. Therefore, it is necessary that the countries it passes through can be able to The river is able to meet together in order to exchange views and talk to agree on the way in which the waters of the Nile are used, and how to use the biological diversity of the Nile Basin in the interest of all.
- Uganda: It has drawn up with Ethiopia the text of the CFA Framework Agreement or the so-called Entebbe Agreement announced in 2010, which Egypt and Sudan still refuse to sign and reserve some of its articles, but what must be understood is that 70% of Uganda's renewable water comes from the Upper Nile River countries such as Burundi,⁶³ Rwanda and Tanzania, which simply means that Uganda's water interests are with those Great Lakes

57 Look: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-32016763>

58 Super Dam: Egyptian Concern for Nile Water Security Spurs Cooperation Over Ethiopia's New Dam, October 2013, available at: <https://www.circleofblue.org/2013/world/super-dam-egyptian-concern-for-nile-water-security-spurs-cooperation-over-ethiopia-s-new-dam/>

59 Look: <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/egypt-heads-south-sudan-amid-stalled-nile-dam-dispute>, June 2021.

60 Op.cit, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2015/04/28/the-limits-of-the-new-nile-agreement/>

61 Challenges for water sharing in the Nile basin: changing geo-politics and changing climate, last access in January 2022, available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02626667.2011.577037>

62 Look: <https://nilebasin.org/~nileba5/new-and-events/241-burundi-launches-the-year-of-the-nile-basin-with-a-call-to-protect-biodiversity-of-the-nile>, last access in January 2022.

63 Uganda says it has signed security agreement with Egypt amid tensions over Ethiopia dam, April 2021, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-uganda-egypt-idUSKBN2BV0R7>

countries first and then with Ethiopia (which will export to Uganda from the electricity generated by the Renaissance Dam, which amounts to at least 6000 megawatts). On February 21-22, 2011, the Director of the Water Resources Department of the Ugandan Ministry of Water and Environment referred to “the necessity of signing the framework agreement for cooperation between the Nile Basin countries.”⁶⁴

- Tanzania:⁶⁵ The Tanzanian position has been known since the era of its first president, Julius Nyerere, who announced his country’s rejection of all agreements related to the Nile that were signed during the colonial era, especially the 1929 agreement between Britain and Egypt, but also the agreement for the full use of the Nile water between Egypt and Sudan after the latter’s independence from Egypt on January 1, 1956.⁶⁶
- The Democratic Republic of the Congo: The Democratic Republic of the Congo has not signed the framework agreement (the Entebbe Agreement). On February 21-22, 2011, the Congolese Minister of Environment, Protection of Natural Resources and Tourism referred to the objectives of the Nile Basin Initiative and to ensuring the security and protection of the Nile waters in terms of quantity and quality,⁶⁷ and the most important indication that clearly explains the Congolese position from the framework agreement when the Congolese minister pointed out the importance of taking into account the water needs of countries such as the case of Egypt, for example, which is completely dependent on the waters of the Nile, and the Congolese position is still rejecting the framework agreement.⁶⁸

Conclusion

Egypt’s negotiation with Ethiopia regarding the Renaissance Dam crisis, whose position Sudan supports is a very difficult process in light of the factors referred to, and the Egyptian diplomatic move is almost a movement of limited impact in view of the factors referred to.

Given the fact that the conflict between Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan over the GERD seems to be among the most pressing issues in the region, it might be advisable for emphasis to be placed on securing a trilateral agreement that secures the peace between these three countries first. The other riparian states can then be brought in, either through the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) or some other regional framework, to secure an agreement that is binding on all the states. Although Egypt and Sudan are likely to resist efforts to include the other upstream riparians in the negotiations or to allow a regional organization, such as the NBI, to serve as an implementing organ, they must understand that the Nile River is a regional watercourse and its management must be approached from a regional perspective.

Finally, The Renaissance Dam crisis for Egypt is a life or death crisis. As for Ethiopia, it is a matter of life or a better life, and Egypt must struggle to avoid the danger of annihilation.

Recommendations to find Solutions:

There have been agreements between all three States on fundamental principles for the negotiations, one of those principles is the responsibility to avoid harming others through one’s own water use. This should be the foundation to build better trust and aim towards a settlement that allows Ethiopia to lead, but Egypt and Sudan to be involved in aspects of the GERD’s operation.

Second, the upstream riparian states must recognize and accept Egypt’s total reliance on the Nile waters. Such an understanding of Egypt’s water vulnerability would help the riparian states develop a water management protocol that can significantly enhance equitable and reasonable use while minimizing significant harm to downstream states. Nevertheless, Egypt must not use sympathy for its water vulnerability as a weapon to frustrate the efforts of the other riparian states to secure an agreement that is balanced, fair, and equitable.

Third, Egypt should stop continued references to its so-called natural historical rights (i.e., the water rights granted Egypt by the 1929 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty and the 1959 Agreement between Egypt and Sudan). Furthermore, resolving conflicts regarding the Nile is most likely to be more successful through improvements in relations between the riparian states and not

⁶⁴ Nile River from source to mouth, last access in January 2022, available at: <http://www.reizen-langs-rivieren.nl/the-rivers/nile-river-from-source-to.html>

⁶⁵ Egypt turns to Tanzania on Nile dam dispute, last access in January 2022, available at: <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/egypt-turns-tanzania-nile-dam-dispute>.

⁶⁶ Egypt’s project in Tanzania refutes Ethiopia’s accusations, last access in January 2022, available at: <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2020/06/egypt-tanzania-project-ethiopia-nile-dam-dispute.html>

⁶⁷ Egypt’s 'Lost Dream' of Linking Congo, Nile Rivers, last access in January 2022, available at: <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2013/10/egypt-congo-river-water-nile.html>

⁶⁸ Water sustainability: Egypt’s only choice is to connect the Congo River with the Nile, last access in January 2022, available at: <https://english.alarabiya.net/views/2021/08/24/Water-sustainability-Egypt-s-only-choice-is-to-connect-the-Congo-River-with-the-Nile>

through external intervention.

Improved relations among Egyptians, Ethiopians, and Sudanese can go a long way in enhancing the ability of their leaders to negotiate and adopt agreements that reflect the interests of citizens, especially regarding economic development and poverty alleviation. For example, Ethiopians and Egyptians are more likely to understand and appreciate the challenges that they face, particularly in the areas of water security, climate change, food production, and poverty alleviation, if they regularly interact with each other and engage in more bottom-up, participatory and inclusive approaches to the resolution of their conflicts. Both citizens and governments should be made part of the solution to the water-related conflicts that now threaten peace and security in the Nile Basin.

If the relevant parties can agree to these goals, the agreement, in the end, will need to include technical language that ensures equitable sharing of the Nile. Basically, Ethiopia should cooperate with the other riparian states in developing and adopting an effective drought mitigation protocol, one that includes the possibility that GERD managers may have to release water from the reservoir, when necessary, to mitigate droughts. Such a mitigation program can make it much easier for Egyptian and Sudanese authorities to cooperate with Ethiopia and the other riparian states in creating and adopting an agreement for management of the Nile.

In the end, all 11 riparian states must understand that the way forward calls for the establishment of a meaningful resource-sharing agreement, one that sees and recognizes the Nile River as a regional watercourse. Success on this endeavor will only occur under a legally binding regime that ensures mutually beneficial rights.

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