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| pressr1 | **NILE BASIN INITIATIVE** *To achieve sustainable socio-economic development**through the equitable utilization of and benefit from Nile Basin water resources***Contacts:** P.O Box 192**,** Entebbe- Uganda**; Tel**+256 (414) 321 424**/**+256 (414)321 329**Email**: nbisec@nilebasin.org**Website**: [www.nilebasin.org](http://www.nilebasin.org) |

## PRESS RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## 19th February, 2014

**Trans-boundary water cooperation as a solution to national energy challenges**

**Entebbe, Uganda -** At least 500 participants including Ministers in charge of Water Affairs in the 11 Nile Basin countries, diplomats, development partners, government officials, Members of Parliament, researchers, academia, civil society, youth, media, school children as well as the general public are set to gather at the Sheraton Kampala Hotel for the 8th Regional Nile Day celebrations on 21st February, 2014 (a day before the actual date of 22nd February).

Nile Day is an annual celebration of the establishment of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) on 22nd February 1999, by Ministers in charge of Water Affairs in the Nile Basin countries (Burundi, DR Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, The Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda). The theme for this year’s celebrations is **Water and Energy: National Challenges, Trans-boundary Solutions.**

The NBI, working closely with Member States and other stakeholders will use this year’s celebration to raise awareness about the inter-linkages between water and energy and to reaffirm the importance of Nile cooperation in addressing national economic growth/development challenges such as energy demand/shortages while at the same time celebrating their collective achievements.

Water is needed for energy generation and transmission, particularly for hydroelectric, nuclear, and thermal energy sources. Energy is needed to produce, transport, treat and distribute water. The more energy we need, the more water we use, and vice versa.

Today, each of the Nile riparian countries has ambitious national development plans to fuel economic growth and promote poverty alleviation efforts; undoubtedly all the plans depend on energy availability. The NBI led comprehensive study on Basin-Wide Power Development Options and Trade Opportunities in the Nile Basin (December 2011) indicated that the total energy demand in the riparian countries is expected to increase from 183,711 Giggawatt-hour in 2010 to 1,170,328 Giggawatt-hour by the year 2035, representing an increase of 300% and higher over present demand.

Hydro-power is the preferred source of energy in all the riparian countries for various reasons, key among them is the low production cost of electricity from hydropower options, which makes power affordable to the urban and rural poor. Indeed with its characteristic landscape, the Nile Basin offers huge potential for hydroelectric power generation, which largely remains untapped.

However if each Nile Riparian State was to pursue and implement its national hydropower infrastructure development plans on the River Nile without consideration of the larger river basin context, there is a risk that some of the national hydropower investments could be sub-optimal (seen regionally) and may foreclose future development opportunities.

Trans-boundary water cooperation could offer real solutions to national energy challenges if countries, while preparing their power development plans, could take into consideration the larger river basin context and ensure optimization of the development opportunities as well as efficient location and operation of the hydropower infrastructures. Trans-boundary cooperation in power infrastructure development would provide significant reduction in project financing; promote regional power trade and improve power reliability and affordability.

The Nile Basin Initiative is leading efforts to transform the region’s power sector in various ways: it provides a forum for joint planning and cooperative development of hydropower generation and transmission options as well as power trade among the Nile Basin countries. This it does through strengthening trans-boundary planning, coordinating the construction of the regional transmission grid and encouraging further integration of the regulatory and supervisory framework.

**Note to Editors:**

Nile Day has been observed since 2007, with celebrations taking place both at regional and national level in the NBI Member States. The Day provides an opportunity for riparian citizens to come together to exchange on topical issues related to the cooperative management and development of the common Nile Basin water and related resources. On a lighter note, Nile Day provides an opportunity to celebrate the rich and varied cultures which exist within the Nile Basin.

This year’s regional celebration is jointly organised by NBI and the Ministry of Water and Environment, in collaboration with the Nile Basin Discourse and Global Water Partnership Eastern Africa. Activities on Friday 21st February, 2014 will include a brass band led procession starting at 8.00 a.m. from the Sheraton Kampala Hotel - Lion Gardens, ministerial speeches, theme focused Key Note speech, children’s performance, exhibition and a cultural show.

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The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) is a transitional, 10-Member intergovernmental partnership institution guided by a **Shared Vision objective: ‘***To achieve sustainable socio-economic development through equitable utilization of, and benefit from, the common Nile Basin Water resources’*. **NBI Member States are: Burundi, DR Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, The Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.** Eritrea participates as an observer. Launched on 22nd February, 1999 NBI provides the only all- inclusive regional platform for multi stakeholder dialogue, for sharing information, joint planning and management of water and related resources in the Nile Basin.

NBI is governed by a Council of 10 Ministers in charge of Water Affairs in the NBI Member States (Nile-COM), which is the highest decision and policy-making body. The Nile-COM is supported by a Technical Advisory Committee (Nile-TAC), comprised **of 20 senior government officials from the partner states.**

**Professional day to day management of NBI is from three centers – a** basin-wide Secretariat, the Nile Basin Initiative Secretariat (Nile-SEC) located in Entebbe, Uganda responsible for overall corporate direction. The Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO) based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia executes the Eastern Nile Subsidiary Action Program (ENSAP) - comprising Egypt, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Sudan. The Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program Coordination Unit (NELSAP-CU) based in Kigali, Rwanda executes the Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program (NELSAP)- comprising Burundi, DR Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. In each Member State there is an NBI office, the Focal Point, which coordinates and links trans-boundary NBI, and national plans and activities. At national level, the Ministries in Charge of Water Affairs are the NBI focal point in each Member State.

**NBI Core Programs:**

**Basin Cooperation -**To facilitate, support and nurture cooperation amongst the Nile Basin countries so as to promote timely and efficient joint actions required for securing benefit from the common Nile Basin water resources

**Water Resource Management -** To assess, manage and safeguard the water resource base that supports the peoples of the Nile Basin through applying the principles of knowledge-based integrated water resources management to water development planning and assessment

**Water Resource Development -** To identify, prepare and facilitate investment in Regional/trans-boundary water development projects and programs whilst avoiding negative impacts on the health of the Nile Basin’s resources through applying the principles of integrated water resources management