

PETITION REGARDING
THE GRAND ETHIOPIAN RENAISSANCE DAM (GERD)

WHEREAS, the efforts of the United States and the World Bank to resolve the dispute between Egypt and Ethiopia are well intentioned;

WHEREAS, the Joint Statement of Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan, the United States, and the World Bank, issued on November 6, 2019, sets dates that do not allow sufficient time for consultation or for a realistic examination of the ramification of any agreement to Ethiopia's sovereignty and future generations;

WHEREAS, the assessment of the feasibility of a dam on the Blue Nile was completed more than half a century ago, and the site of the belated GERD project was identified during geological surveys conducted between 1956 and 1964 by the United States Bureau of Reclamation (Brookings, July 25, 2013);

WHEREAS, a robust framework was laid out under the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) in 1999 by ten countries and the World Bank, which subsequently refused to fund the current project (Liersch, Koch and Hattermann, 2017), but appears now to play a "neutral" observer/mediator role;

WHEREAS, an agreement between Ethiopia and four other upstream riparian States (Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania), signed on the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA), favoring the equitable and fair use of the waters of the Nile River, was ratified by the Ethiopian Parliament on June 13, 2013;

WHEREAS, Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia had agreed on a technical team studying the impact of filling the GERD, but Egypt still continues to backtrack on the agreements and refuses to negotiate in good faith;

WHEREAS, Egypt, instead of using modern transboundary water treaties, such as the NBI and the ones between the United States and Mexico as a framework for cooperation and negotiation, has demanded the inclusion of skewed colonial-era treaties, which are irrelevant to current realities and have no binding effect on Ethiopia because the latter was not a party to the treaties in spite of being a sovereign state at the time;

WHEREAS, at a time when the transition in Ethiopia is experiencing considerable challenges, Egypt has seized the opportunity to advance its own interests by undermining the NBI framework and the ongoing change in Ethiopia, as was evidenced by the official pronouncements of successive Egyptian politicians threatening implicitly to take a military action against Ethiopia while supporting clandestinely subversive activities through funneling funds to anti-government adversaries;

WHEREAS, it is well recognized that Egypt's objective of thwarting the filling of the GERD within the appropriate time would cause extreme economic hardship on Ethiopia due to escalating costs and lost opportunities;

WHEREAS, the Agreement on Declaration of Principles on which the joint statement is founded is a step backward from the NBI, which requires three countries to negotiate separately, while deliberately giving large concessions to Egypt;

WHEREAS, a fair and balanced solution can be formulated and implemented only on the basis of a framework that guarantees and respects the sovereignty of Ethiopia over the sources of the Blue Nile and the operation of the dam;

WHEREAS, failure of a fair and balanced solution will create a major Afro-Arab conflict, with horrific and catastrophic consequences;

NOW, THEREFORE, We academics and professionals of Ethiopian origin in the Diaspora have filed this petition to:

- (1) The Secretary General of the United Nations, to exert influence against Egypt's unacceptable behavior and avert potential conflict in the region;
- (2) The President of the Pan African Parliament, to support the Nile Basin Initiative and to demand Egypt to refrain from undermining Ethiopia's sovereign rights over the sources of the Blue Nile and the dam; including but not limited to its operations.
- (3) The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, to support the Nile Basin Initiative and to demand Egypt to refrain from undermining Ethiopia's sovereign rights over the sources of the Blue Nile and the dam, including but not limited to its operations;
- (4) The President of the United States, to be a neutral facilitator;
- (5) The President of Russia, to be a neutral facilitator;
- (6) The President of the World Bank, to use its good offices to play the role of a neutral facilitator and revisit its refusal to finance the GERD project;
- (7) The President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, to cease and desist undermining the Nile Basin Initiative, and the sovereignty of Ethiopia on the basis of a water security mindset;
- (8) The Speaker of the Arab Parliament, to retract the recent letter and to cease intimidating Ethiopia;
- (9) The Egyptian academics and professionals, to find an amicable and mutually beneficial solutions to the problem; and
- (10) The Prime Minister of Ethiopia, to fight for a reasonable resolution, taking into consideration the water rights of future generations, based on a framework that does not compromise in anyway the sovereignty of the country over the sources of the Blue Nile and the dam, including but not limited to its operations.

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