

\$6.5b worth of projects registered along Nile Basin in 20 years

The Nile Basin Initiative reached a two-decade milestone since its inception, staking its relevance for the riparian populations with \$6.5 billion worth of projects registered in its two-decade existence.

The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), formed in 1999, marked its 20th anniversary during Nile Day celebrations on February 22, 2019 in Kigali, Rwanda.

Although diplomatic fallout has often happened as some member states quarreled and disagreed over the use and management of the Nile waters – especially the construction of multibillion hydro-power dams and irrigation systems – officials argue that the achievements of NBI override the occasional diplomatic tiffs.

For instance, among its achievements, NBI boasts of at least 84 joint investment projects with an accumulated

investment volume of \$6.5 billion.

“These projects, like the Nile itself, span across national borders and play an integral part in achieving not only water security, but also food and energy security as well as eradicating poverty in the Nile Basin,” said Francois Tetero, while addressing the media in Kigali on February 21, ahead of the celebrations.

But Mr Tetero, who represented Rwanda’s Minister of Environment, added this anniversary offered an opportunity for reflection on both the successes and challenges of the last 20 years of the Nile Cooperation as well as consolidation of member states’ commitment



Fishermen on River Nile in Jinja. The Nile is a source of livelihood for people leaving near it.

Photo by Morgan Mbabazi

to the Basin cooperation agenda, as laid out in NBI’s 10-year strategy.

This especially comes at a time as African governments and water resources and man-

agement experts lay more emphasis on the significance of shared water resources, showing that hydro-diplomacy is key to strengthening trans-boundary water cooperation.

The United Nations

Environment Programme and Atlas of International Freshwater Agreements, say that throughout Africa, there are 59 transboundary river basins which make up 62 per cent of the continent’s land surface.

Of these, 19 are at least partially covered by basin-wide agreements and 40 have no specific agreements in place, meaning transboundary water diplomacy is a multi-stakeholder process that, under the authority of the state, works with water users at all levels to

MEMBER STATES:

THE NBI BRINGS TOGETHER 10 MEMBER STATES THAT SHARE THE NILE RIVER: THESE INCLUDE UGANDA, WHICH ALSO HOSTS OF NBI SECRETARIAT HEADQUARTERS AT ENTEBBE.

transform their lives.

Indeed, this is the message that the Nile Council of Ministers during its annual meeting in August last year in Bujumbura, Burundi, set out to put across for the populations that share the Nile waters, NBI Executive Director Eng Innocent Ntabana explains.

“By declaring 2019 as the Year of the Nile Basin, countries want to draw attention to the fact that all developments in the basin are linked to our shared waters. This is why we must put water at the heart of regional transformation,” he said.

The NBI brings together 10 member states that share the Nile River: these include Uganda, which also hosts of NBI Secretariat headquarters at Entebbe. Others are Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Egypt, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania.

With Africa initiative, IUCN sets pace for global conservation

By A Correspondent

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is a member organisation that is uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations whose global reach enables it to set the pace for in conservation.

It provides public, private and non-governmental organisations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development and nature conservation to take place together.

In Eastern and Southern Africa, the IUCN covers 24 countries, with its work structured across thematic regional programmes geared at supporting and working alongside Governments, Civil Society and the Private Sector in addressing critical challenges and sustainably harnessing the values of natural resource at multiple levels.

The latest of IUCN’s initiatives and its World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) is the Africa Protected Areas Congress (APAC) – the first of its kind on the continent – to hold its first conference from November 18th to 23rd this year.

This will be a landmark forum that will be a continent-wide gathering of African People to develop and drive their home-grown agenda for vital ecological resources within the broader goals of sustainable development.

It will also provide an opportunity



Dr Mwakima launching the Africa Protected Areas Congress (APAC)

for Africa to develop a united voice in the management of protected areas and biodiversity, with representatives from all 54 African Governments, NGOs, protected area managers and communities expected to attend.

What does the conference aim to achieve?

Besides reviewing Africa’s overall progress towards implementing global commitments related to conservation, the congress will discuss and identify key issues and challenges related to biodiversity and protected areas, showcase inspiring African examples of practical and sustainable solutions that harmonize conservation and human development goals, agree on priority issues of common interest,

identify approaches and partnerships needed to secure a sustainable future for Africa’s protected areas, people and biodiversity.

It will also be an opportunity to agree on specific input to relevant regional and global efforts related to conservation.

Stakeholders will discuss how to protect Africa’s resources and develop a united voice in conservation of biodiversity and promoting sustainable development, hence a moment for the continent to set a common agenda to facilitate action towards greater investment in protected areas so that they can contribute to the regions’ development goals.



CONGRATULATIONS!..

The Board of Directors, Management and Staff of Conference & Interpretation Services (CIS) wish to extend hearty congratulations to Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) on this memorable day that marks 20 years of uninterrupted service to Uganda. CIS has enjoyed a cordial relationship with NBI through provision of different services.

About CIS
Conference and Interpretation Services Ltd (CIS) is a fully registered interpretation, Translation & Event Management Company in Uganda. We also operate in Rwanda.

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Supporting food, water and environmental sustainability: a fresh transboundary water governance model in Kenya and Uganda

The Sio-Malaba-Malakisi (SMM) basin, a spectacular watershed system spanning 3,240 km² between Kenya and Uganda, consists of a variety of ecosystems including lakes, rivers, forests, game reserves, and national parks that are home to a rich variety of flora and fauna. Each day, an estimated 4 million people wake up to derive the life supporting services of this crucial basin.

The water it provides is of critical importance to the economies of the two countries. It fuels one of the region's most important robust, thriving agricultural production, supports local livelihoods and businesses while contributing to the downstream integrity of Lake Victoria. In recent times, the basin has been facing constraints primarily from deteriorating water quality and increasing water scarcity. Poor agricultural practices have resulted in extensive degradation. Intensive sand harvesting in river beds has resulted in water quality decline. This has been further exacerbated by climate change in the way of increasingly unpredictable rainfall in the region. Most importantly, much has been said and heard about disagreements concerning transboundary water allocation and use among or between riparian countries. "Water is a 'catalyst' for cooperation, not conflict" according

The story is however changing: a benefit opportunity assessment dialogue conducted from 2016 - 2018 has shown that transboundary water cooperation will enhance regional peace, security, and socio-economic development for the nearly 4 million people living in the SMM basin.

The Dialogue is part of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Building River Dialogues and Governance (BRIDGE) Initiative. BRIDGE supports the capacities of countries sharing river or lake basins to implement effective water management arrangements. Its goal is to enhance cooperation among riparian countries through applying water diplomacy at multiple levels.

The assessment dialogue facilitated engagement of multiple



A section of Mt. Elgon ecosystem, the headwaters of the SMM basin

engaged in learning exchange programmes by visiting the International Sava River Basin Commission and the Rhine River Commission and participated in a special session of the IUCN-BRIDGE Academy.

Expected impact for the communities in the Sio-Malaba-Malakisi basin

The Dialogue series resulted in a step-by-step roadmap for building cooperation. This included preferred investment projects addressing a variety of stakeholder needs, such as infrastructure development, catchment restoration, livelihoods enhancement and; the SMM investment and institutional frameworks.

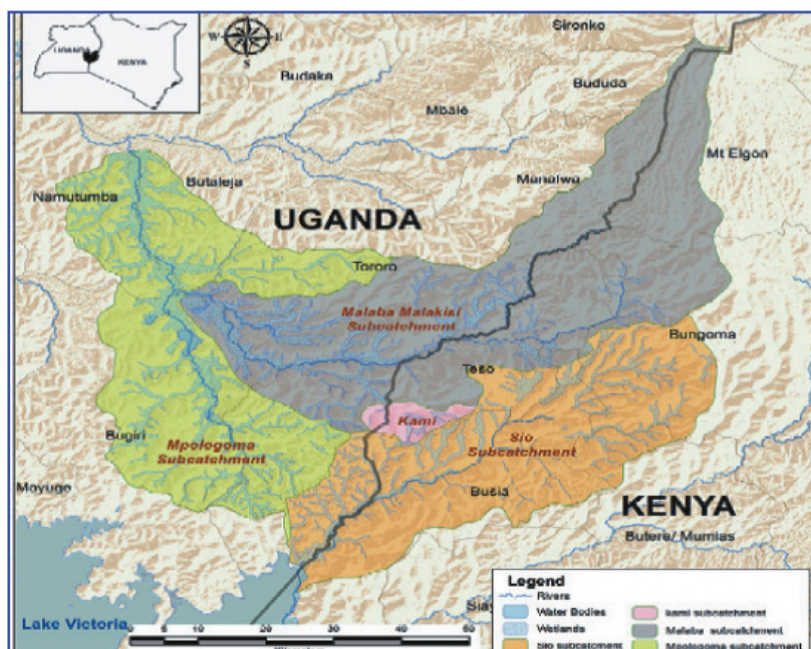
Some of the benefits opportunities expected as a result of implementing

the SMM investment framework include:

Shared basin identity, increased agriculture activities, nature-based tourism, conservation of biodiversity, improved water quality and reduced risk of water-related disasters, social welfare from increased employment and reduced poverty, development of regional markets for goods, services and labor, increase in cross-border investments, development of transnational infrastructure networks, increased geopolitical stability and strengthened diplomatic relations.

The results of this assessment and lessons learned will be useful in supporting other cooperation processes in the IGAD region.

The Benefit Opportunity Assessment Dialogue in the SMM basin was jointly implemented by IUCN, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Water Convention Secretariat and the Secretariat of Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and IGAD Member States with funding support from the Oceanic, Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES) of the US State Department and Swiss Development and Cooperation (SDC).



Source: 2008 SMM Investment and Development Strategy

to UN chief Antonio Guterres who stressed the importance of diplomacy to prevent and resolve transboundary disputes over water resources

stakeholders in jointly identifying benefit sharing scenarios and investment opportunities. As part of the capacity building, stakeholders

Did you know?

- The Sio-Malaba-Malakisi (SMM) River Basin is shared by Kenya and Uganda
- Total combined population is approximately 4 million people with 85% engaged in rain-fed agriculture
- All the rivers originate from Mt Elgon- and the combined catchment area is 3,240 km².
- Good climatic conditions contribute to an ecosystem rich in fauna and flora
- Poverty is very high (30%-66%); many of the rural population struggle to meet their basic needs