

His Excellency Mr. Antonio Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations
405 East 42nd Street, New York, NY, 10017

We, the undersigned Ethiopian diaspora professionals and intellectuals in North America, Europe, Australia, and Africa vigorously condemn the call by Egypt and Sudan for submitting the issue of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) to the United Nations Security Council, once again.

1. Recalling that Ethiopia is the founding member of the League of Nations, the predecessor of the United Nations; one of the founders and the seat of the African Union, and a nation of over 100 million people with a strategic significance in the Horn of Africa, and indeed, in the international arena;
2. Recalling that Ethiopia, through the Nile Basin Initiative, had offered to convert its own national water project into a regional cooperative investment which Egypt rejected and walked away; and Ethiopia having had no option but to go it alone, turned inwards and mobilized its population to build the Dam;
3. Revealing the indefensible maneuver of Egypt and Sudan by internationalizing the GERD, drawing the Arab League, the US, the World Bank, and now the UN—to leverage these countries and institutions to impose a zero-sum outcome in which Egypt and only Egypt (and to a lesser extent Sudan) comes out as the winner, maintaining its monopoly on the Nile waters (as stipulated in its colonial agreement whose very title brazenly alludes to their monopolistic aspirations, namely, “Agreement for the FULL utilization of the Nile”);
4. Recalling the GERD as the first-ever Eastern Nile sub-basin-wide energy generation infrastructure that makes possible power trade among the three countries, rendering eventual regional economic integration feasible;
5. Recalling the GERD as a truly people’s dam and that the financing its financing is an innovative mega project that demonstrates to fellow poor, finance-strapped and blockaded sisterly African countries to rely on their citizens, turning them into stockholders of a multi-billion investment;
6. Recalling that more than 85 percent of the Nile’s waters originate in the Ethiopian highlands;
7. Recalling that the Nile and its tributaries amount to 70 percent of Ethiopia’s total annual river flow generated in the Nile basin;

8. Recalling that 65 million Ethiopians live without electricity and that the major task of children and women has diminished to collecting and fetching firewood;
9. Recalling the insistence of Egypt and Sudan to sustain the status quo, as established by colonial agreements that Ethiopia was never a signatory, that greedily apportioned 75 percent of the water to Egypt and 25 percent to Sudan, and none to Ethiopia and the rest of the riparian countries;
10. Recalling that the GERD is a hydroelectric project that does not markedly reduce or in any way “stop” the flow of water to downstream countries as proven in the first filling;
11. Recalling Ethiopia’s unwavering position on equitable use and fair share of water resources in the Nile Basin region and its principles of no significant harm to downstream countries;
12. Recognizing that the dam is now more than 80 percent complete;
13. Appreciating that the dam minimizes the occasional massive flooding from the heavy rainfalls as witnessed this and last year;
14. Recognizing that the dam is benefitting a number of neighboring countries by supplying electricity when it becomes fully functional with direct and indirect significance to African development as stipulated in Agenda 2063;
15. Appreciating the impact of the dam in minimizing deforestation and environmental degradation;
16. Recalling that the GERD meets environmental standards and that it has received recognition from international experts including those in the Nile Basin countries;
17. Appreciating that negotiations are currently underway between the three Nile Basin countries of Ethiopia, Egypt and the Sudan, mediated by the African Union under the chairmanship of President Felix Tshisekedi of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, also the current president of the Union.
18. Acknowledging the international law governing transboundary waters and Ethiopia’s sovereign right to use its resources;
19. Acknowledging the ongoing African Union-led effort under the motto of “African Solutions to African Problems” to support the three parties of Ethiopia, Egypt and the Sudan to find a negotiated solution;
20. Acknowledging the anticipated benefits of the GERD, dubbed as an African Flagship project, for the Nile Basin countries in managing flooding, minimizing silting, multiple annual harvesting, and generating electricity, among others;

We call upon the UNSC to

1. Reiterate the principles of “African Solutions to African Problems”;
2. Appreciate Ethiopia’s long and persistent efforts to peaceful and diplomatic resolutions;
3. Support a peaceful resolution in advancing a cooperative agreement as articulated in the Nile Basin Framework and encourage all the parties to negotiate solely on the filling and operation of the dam in good spirit without regard to the colonial treaties which Ethiopia has nothing to do with;
4. Urge Egypt and its enablers to desist from threatening the national sovereignty and destabilization of Ethiopia overtly and covertly;
5. Persuade all the parties to discuss not just the dam but also engage in cooperative mechanisms to develop the catchment areas to counter the imminent impact of climate change and its implications on volume and flow of the river;
6. Urge all the parties to help finalize the nearly complete USD 5 billion dam which is entirely sourced by the people and government of Ethiopia; and finally;
7. Urge Egypt and Sudan to return to the African Union to continue the ongoing negotiation;
8. Request the UNSC to disregard this misplaced and patently flagrant call, as it has done in the recent past, as GERD is a development issue, and not a security one.

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