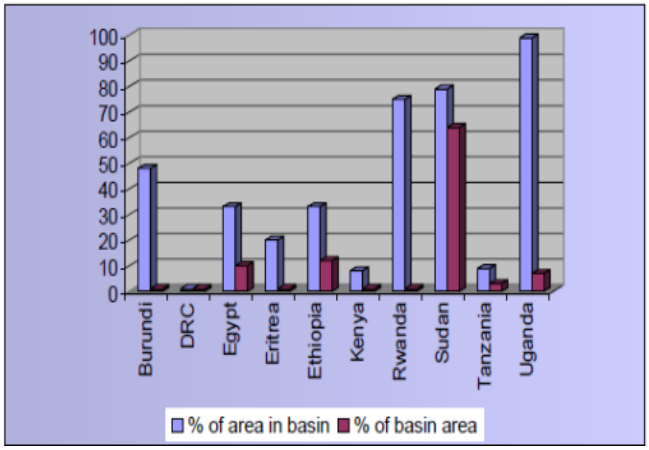
nile basin discourse
one nile, one family

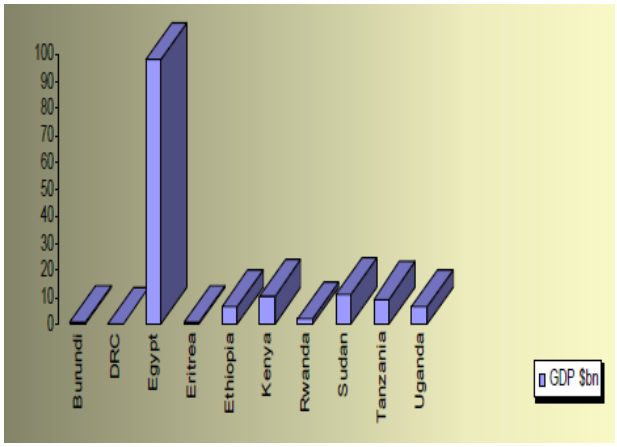
Fact Sheet on
Civil Society Participation in
Adaptation to Climate Change in the Nile Basin

Background

African countries are within the most vulnerable countries to climate change and climate variability. The Rive Nile Basin, which is the longest Nile worldwide, running over 6,671 kilometers, The Nile is a shared basin between ten riparian countries namely; Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda, Egypt and Sudan. South Sudan will soon be the eleventh officially sharing the Nile resources.



Source: WaterWiki 2010



Source: WaterWiki 2010

The Nile has always played an essential role in securing the livelihoods of the populations of its basin, which are currently estimated at 171 million inhabitants (Martens A. 2011). The River Nile contributes to 30-50% to the overall GDP of the Nile basin countries and provides employment 60-90% of the population, except for Egypt which has lower figures. The primary water uses in the basin are water supply (agricultural, industrial and urban) and energy generation.

Problem

The Nile Basin is expected to be hardly hit by climatic changes. It is expected that climate change will adversely affect the hydrological, social and economic conditions of those countries. There is a high confidence that temperature will rise but there are disparities between models on rainfall predictions over both the Blue Nile and White Nile. Nine recent climate scenarios showed decreases in Nile flows from zero to approximately 40 percent by 2025.

Consequently, the impacts of climate change will involve increase in water related diseases, likelihood of droughts episodes and extreme events, and conflicts among Basins countries, as well as decreasing the

fish populations. Moreover, climate change impacts will be more severe as a result of the low socioeconomic status of the Nile Basin region, which is considered among the poorest worldwide. Eight out of ten riparian states are classified as least developed counties by the UN and almost 100 million people's live on a daily income less than one dollar (except Egypt and Kenya).

Accordingly, adaptation to climate change is an imperative requirement for effective water management. However, water management and yet reforms in the water sector often have very weak links to climate.

One of the most important challenges face water related adaptation activities is the lack of strong collaboration and coordination amongst state organizations (governmental and non-governmental actors) on one hand, and within the Nile Basin countries on the other hand, as adaptation and even mitigation need collective action. This is because water management is concerned with the planning, design, implementation, and maintenance of a water project or programme to ensure that water, as a resource is efficiently and effectively used by the community.

Role of Civil Society Participation

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) should be involved from the beginning, at the appraisal and planning stages. Civil society will act as advocates between the community and national government. This will be resulted in supporting communities' resilience to climate change, aligning the priorities of communities with regional and national policies and plans and mobilizing communities' members towards water adaptation activities through advocacy activities.

Furthermore, many studies had emphasized the expensive cost of adaptation technologies, placing the estimates of the total cost of adaptation in Africa at about USD2 – 10 billion each year, besides normal overseas development assistance. Those technologies should also consider the social acceptability by the community through testing the cost by civil society.

At the implementation stage, civil society should be involved to ensure that the effective water management is sustainable, for success stories demonstration, scaling up and replication.

Future perspectives:

Strengthen the CSOs Capacity to understand, participate, and decide, on effective measures to implement water related adaptation is vital for the Nile basin's economic and social sustainability. This will entail:

- Civil Society knowledge and expertise on climate change adaptation issue in the Nile Basin enhanced
- Awareness of the local community on adaptation measures raised, to build their resilience to face the adverse impacts of climate change in vulnerable areas
- Multi stakeholder consultations on climate change adaptation are supported and implemented to influence the decision makers and policy shapers on the integration of local community perspectives in climate change policies and plans.