



One Nile... One family

المنتدى الوطني لحوض النيل - مصر

Egypt National Discourse Forum

(EgNDF)

The Fourth National Forum for the Eg NDF

28 / 29 March 2012 – Pyramisa Hotel – Hurghada

"Think locally Act globally"

Introduction:

"Think locally ... Act globally" the slogan adopted by the Fourth National Discourse Forum in Egypt NDF, based on the recommendations that came out from the Third National Discourse Forum held on last January, which was one of the most important recommendations of the event putting a strategic action plan dealing with the Egyptian – African relations which coincides with the new phase in Egypt's history and when the Egyptian people has the revolution not to demand only better economic, social and political conditions, but also to return the pioneering role of Egypt in the Arab region and Africa. Which required the need to work out to change the Egyptian policies towards cooperation with the Nile basin countries After remaining attempts of cooperation for a long time dominated by differences over the agreements, especially on the government side, so now is the time to make the Nile Basin and its issues forefront all the Egyptians, and to strive through this meeting for deepening the idea of directing all concerned parties to try to find solutions not only locally but to compromise solutions enable all the Nile basin countries to raise the rates of Development through the sustainable development.

Upon all these changes and important variables we do the best seeking to involve all partners in this important stage, and to agree on a fixed and specific visions and requirements to be implemented in the Nile basin countries to activate and maximize the concept of the sustainable development.

Therefore the National Discourse Forum keen in its 4th workshop to invite specialists from all the concerned parties representing the government the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, Egyptian Ministry of state for Environmental affairs, and the Ministry of Trade and Industry, and the Nile Basin Initiative NBI, and representatives from Media and a number of NGO's Forum partners in addition to the experts and creators.

Opening session

The workshop has started with an opening speech by Dr. Emad Eldin Adly, Chairman - of the Nile Basin Discourse NBD – welcoming all the attendees in whom he expressed his appreciation of all the efforts and the lasting cooperation made by the members of the National Discourse Forum NDF.

And he also welcomed the representatives of the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation – Nile Water Sector, and he assured that the cooperation between the NDF and the Ministry has a great impact on the NDF's role. In addition he pointed at the NDF's history, and the National forums which came to activate the role of the civil society a side the governmental sector to work on the Nile issues in order to promote the sustainable development within the Nile basin countries.

And we find that the Nile Basin Discourse NBD, was able to form a successful model where was able to highlight its role on the national and international levels during the previous period and now has a Prominent features, and this revealed on its participation in the Nile day 2012 in Jinja – Uganda, in the presence of Dr. Hisham Kandil the Minister of Water resources and Irrigation and ministers of Water and Energy in Ethiopia and deputy ministers from many countries, during the celebration the NBD has

shared in many activities represented in cleaning campaigns, the Nile march, and finally the NBD called all the attendees to raise their hands while they chant the NBD slogan " One Nile ... One Family".

Finally, Dr. Emad clarified that the NDF has a great role in solving many issues, where it can open many of a dialogue channels and communication which facilitates the negotiation between countries especially after the Egyptian Revolution where it give an opportunity to remove all the previous policies which made a poor relation between Egypt and the Nile basin countries.

Also he wished all success for all the attendees and a fruitful cooperation through the workshop, which is characterized by the presence of various experiences which it will help the NDF to set a future action plan, for having a leading role in all levels.

First session:

The first session has started by a welcoming words from Eng. Essam Nada – the National Coordinator of the NDF, he thanked all the partners and attendees for their efforts, and he asked for the more of cooperation and working closely in this workshop, pointing out the sever importance of the current situation, because the 2ndundergoing phase will be ended on this April 2012, so we should go out with an action plan for the coming period starting from May till December 2012>

In addition he presented and discussed the program of the workshop and its objectives, then began to review the activities were implemented during the period from Feb - March 2012, summarized in the following points:

NDF actives:

- Promote benefits participation.
- Strengthen cooperation between the East Nile basin countries.
- Include the Nile Basin issues within the New Parliament.
- Promote the concept of the Virtual water and Water footprint.

Then he presented the activities have been implemented by the National Discourse Forum, for instance:

- The embodiment of the real cooperation between the NDF, NBI and NBD through a workshop on exchange agricultural productivity, water footprint to the National Forums in Egypt, and have been addressed many issues through the Workshop for instance strengthening cross border trade between the Nile basin countries, and Virtual Water as a new source and how to calculate the Water footprint.
- The NDF has organized the celebration of the Nile day, under the theme "Water, Energy, Food....importance of Nile cooperation", with a participation of the stakeholders and the concerned parties whether governmental or executive alongside the civil society and media representatives as well, for discussing the visions and strategic issues, between the Nile basin countries.

Second session

Through the second session Eng. Essam has showed the recent activity carried out by the NDF, the exchange visits which it had a great impact on deepening of the relations between the Nile basin communities, also he mentioned the organized visit by the Forum in Egypt by hosting the East Nile countries (Sudan – South of Sudan – Ethiopia – Eretria) in Menia governorate, with a participation of the civil society and media representatives, a number of water experts, and marked with a number of parliaments along with the national forums.

In addition the national coordinator presented that this visit was relying on concerning the hot spots in Menia, to show the similarities in economic and social conditions between Egypt and the other basin countries, and Egypt is not only a touristic country having hotels along the Nile, but there's another face we must consider.

Also he added that the visits helped out the visitors to enhance the idea of exchanging to be extended to the farmers to exchange their experiences to implement other trade activities within the basin countries.

Also he referred to the fruitful visit hosted by Ethiopia – Bahr Dar, and how this visit proved the greatness of the Ethiopian civilization and the similarities between them and Egyptians in customs and traditions, where it can ease finding one vision and one message between both countries.

Then he discussed the recommendations of the 3rd forum, defying the mechanism of enhancing the cooperation at the governmental – nongovernmental level, and stressing on the need of increasing the rate of the development relying on the concept of sustainable development, on both governmental and civilian level along with win – win theory.

The second session has included also the presentation of Dr. Magdy Ahmed Ali – Nile Water Sector – Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation, and presented the NBI activities which referred that Egypt never been an obstacle in front of the Basin countries and their investment, on the contrary that Egypt has participated in providing the technical and financial support for the Nile Basin countries, and he added that after the Egyptian Revolution the Nile issues must be a national issues and taking its power from the people not only the government and the civil society, and the recent crisis have been occurred were a result from the wrong policies, then he mentioned the history of the Nile Basin Initiative and its objectives, principles, theme of work, achievements and implemented projects.

Finally he mentioned the water security concern and the worries especially after the Millennium dam in Ethiopia and its results, and even now the published information doesn't claim any worries, and he added, in this context we must unify the message directed to the communities in Egypt and the to the Nile Basin countries.

Third session

The third session began with the speech Mrs. Amal Shehaata - Poet and Writer, displaying a set of poetry has written about the Nile River, by one of the most famous poets in Egypt for instance; Ahmed Shawky, Ahmed Ramy. She analyzed the famous songs which wrote about the Nile, and performed by the greatest singers such Om Kolthoum and Mohmed Abdel Wahab.

And she clarified the Art as it's the Language of expressing and penetration, which can deliver any message and it, would integrate communities, strengthen the relation and it melts any differences.

Then included the third session dividing the attendees into working groups, in order to find a mechanism to promote the cultural, social, and educational dimensions, where the purpose hot to activate the network of "The Nile Messengers" in order to define the common cultures between the basin countries, and also the groups worked to identify the criteria for selecting the messengers.

Fourth session

The session continued with the working groups to determine how to activate and empower the role of the civil society and enable on the institutional and legal level for managing the water basin resources, and that came through involving the civil society in the Nile commission, establishing a fund for the civil society organizations within the commission, collecting information for a server database and establishing an information centers, and empowering the civil society to get the transparency on receiving information concerning the Nile issues.

On the other hand, the working groups discussed the current crucial period in Egypt, while the phase of writing the constitution and the role of the civil society in general and the National Discourse Forum in particular, to claim the Founding committee to material in the constitution to maintain the national

security for Egypt and its water, and to achieve the full partnership between all the stakeholders involved in the Nile file including the concerned ministers and the civil society.

Fifth session

After discussing and stressing on many important issues, they have translated the outcome into activities which will be included in the action plan of the National Discourse Forum and the national forums during the period from May till December 2012, depending on promoting the cultural, economic, social aspects using many tools for instance the Nile messengers and Media and calling for cooperation to enhance the concept of sustainable development.

Sixth session

The sixth session has begun with the working groups after finishing the frame of the forum activities that have been out from the previous session, to develop an executive plan with a schedule for these activities and define indicators to measure the performance to ensure and evaluate the achievements during implementation.

Also has discussed the recommendations which are concluded in the following:

First:

The proposed role of the civil society to activate its participation in the new institutional framework to ensure the integration of local community voices, in the development procedures in the Nile basin.

- The need to consider the civil society in the commission as an essential partner.
- Create and avail a specific database about the Nile basin countries and to facilitate the access to the civil society.
- Allocate an award to be presented to whom help in developing and preserving the Nile basin, through the celebration of the Nile Day.
- Activate the exchanging visits concept and implement projects between the basin countries.
- Expand the civil society participation in multiple sections (Agriculture – Energy – Irrigation – Law) in a hand with the private sector and Media with the research institutions.
- Highlight the importance of the cooperation between the Basin countries, at the national level.
- Promote the cultural, educational and social aspects between the Nile basin countries.
- Exchange information and to empower the relation between the countries at the bilateral, sub-regional and regional level.
- Participate in the different events and meetings of the countries.
- Collect stories, songs and folklore to urge the importance of the Nile in the basin communities.
- Keen to keep the contact between the Nile Basin countries and the Network of the Nile Messengers.
- Participate in Virtual Water and Water Footprint projects at the national level.
- Open channels of communication between civil society actors and government and the media in return.
- Detect priorities to deal with the Nile issues, and modify the behavior for better and new language.

Second:

The civil society procedures to include the Nile file into the new constitution:

- The need to include the new constitution one or more law concerned the Nile preserving and developing the natural resources.
- The need to contain the new constitution the principle of considering the Nile issue as a national issue.
- The need to create a sovereign body as the one for the high dam, and to peruse the highest authority (the president and his representative), and to point a responsible to manage this body, and its membership includes all the concerned ministers and the civil society.

- The need to hold meetings with the parliamentarians to present the civil society proposal to include the Nile file into the new constitution.
- The need of the civil society representation within the concerned ministers in all the Nile Basin countries.

Third:

Promotion the cultural, social and educational aspects with the Nil basin countries

- Launching a competition under the theme “how can you communicate with the young people from the Nile Basin countries”.
- Launching a poetry competition specified in the Nile, and creates a “Logo” for each participated country in it.
- Launching a competition in preparing project proposals for enhancing the cooperation within the basin countries.
- Launching a competition for wall drawings “Graffiti” expressing the slogan “One Nile ... One family”.
- Holding a competition in preparing “presentations’ about the Nile basin countries.
- Writing a song gathering many artists from all the basin countries by all languages.
- Preparing a documentary movie representing each country in the basin, by the African Studies Institution.
- Organizing festival and cultural celebrations, in each embassy with the presence of all the ambassadors.
- Cooperating with “in search of understanding” band to compose “unity of life” song, lyrics by Mrs. Amal Shehata translated in 3 languages.
- Organizing a championship gathering all the basin champions in the universities, under the theme “Nile basin students union”.
- Selecting some public figures to support the Nile messenger’s idea.
- Opening the chance for nominating the Nile messengers through a publishing advertisement, clarifying the criteria of the requirements.
- Providing trainings and scientific material to the messengers about the forum’s objectives, the basin countries and its cooperation.
- Propose teaching Arabic and Swahili languages.
- Host some African students to study in Beni Sweif University.

Closing session:

- ☐ The representatives form the government, civil society organization, national forums and the Media met from 28 – 31 March 2012, with the 4th The Discourse Forum under the theme “Think locally...Act globally”.
- ☐ The forum has called the founding committee for the new constitution “25th January constitution” to include the new constitution one or more law concerned the Nile preserving and developing the natural resources.
- ☐ The forum has called for a presidential decision create a sovereign body, considering the Nile file with its legal, economic, technical, political, social and cultural perspectives, and includes all the concerned ministers and civil society representatives.
- ☐ The forum assured the cooperation between the Nile basin countries, as it’s a part of Egypt’s permanent message for hundred years.
- ☐ The participants emphasized that the high dam didn’t cause any damage for any country, and aiming to use the wasted water form the Nile floods, which been being wasted in the sea.

☐ The forum affirms to the NDF members, stakeholders and partners, the importance of integrating the civil society into the new institutional phase for managing the Nile basin to ensure that the civil society voices can reach to the decision makers in the Nile basin countries at all levels.

☐ The forum assured the need to extend the invitation to all the civil society organization in various factions, which have dealing with the Nile basin countries to strengthen and enhancing the cooperation between the basin countries.

☐ The forum representatives agreed on building the Nile messengers network, gathering a selective number of public figures, artists, religious figures, and young people with gender consideration, to support in building the confidence between the people.

☐ They also agreed on a set of programmers and activities to be implemented in Egypt, at the national, sub-regional and regional level to enhance the civil society role for serving the Nile basin issues and to raise the public awareness for solving them.

Forum