United Nations
Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Arab Republic of Egypt

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POSITION OF EGYPT REGARDING WATER FLOW CRISES WORLDWIDE

General information

Egypt has earned the moniker “the Gift of the Nile” for a reason. The river is the only major, permanent surface drainage in the country, responsible for 98% of its water supply. The country is facing severe water scarcity and it is heavily dependent on upstream countries’ management of the world’s longest river. The Nile flows through many countries (Nile riparian states), which together make up the Nile River Basin Initiative (NBI) that aims to increase cooperation, share the river’s socioeconomic benefits, and promote regional peace. There have been persistent tensions regarding the Nile for over a decade now between Egypt and Ethiopia around the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), Africa’s largest dam on the Blue Nile.

Position on the matter

Diplomatic clashes with Ethiopia have been frequent and ongoing since construction on the GERD started. The picture is complicated by colonial era agreements, which are often brought up by Egypt to support its claims, but which did not have Ethiopia at the negotiating table. Some Ethiopian voices have also suggested that Egypt's opposition is partially due to it feeling threatened by the emergence of a more developed regional rival..

Proposed solutions

Egypt is one of the strongest voices on the topic, keeping water high on the global agenda. It advocates for stronger global water governance and a larger role for the UN in addressing the growing interlinkages between water, sustainable development, climate action, food security, energy and regional stability. Egypt has also underscored the importance of promoting innovation, reducing technology costs and linking proposed initiatives to sustainable financing mechanisms capable of turning them into practical, scalable projects, and proposed a roadmap for integrating water issues into the three Rio Conventions on climate change.

Potential Blocks

The country’s closest ally might be Sudan, which is also a Lower Nile Basin country. It also has good relations with its Arab neighbors and might share some objectives on water with Germany. Egypt has also recently held bilateral talks on water with Uzbekistan, aiming to sign a memorandum of understanding. Relations with Ethiopia remain adversarial.

Read More

Egypt - Encyclopedia Britannica
Nile River Conflicts - The Organization for World Peace
Egypt-Ethiopia Tensions - Horn Review (Ethiopian Think Tank)
Egypt Faces Water Scarcity - SIS Egypt
Egypt Global Water Governance - Daily News Egypt
Egypt-Uzbekistan Meeting
Egypt Diplomatic Relations

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