

Nile Basin countries reach closer to agreement

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The first meeting between the Nile Council of Ministers and the Members of the Nile Technical Advisory Committee and the Negotiators has ended in Kampala with a commitment to signing the agreement

The two-day meeting, took place at the Speke Resort-Munyonyo attracted Participants from the nine Nile Basin countries including Uganda, Burundi, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Egypt, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Sudan.

According to a press statement from the NBI, the meeting agreed to draw up a road-map toward finalization of the Cooperative Framework Agreement on the use of common water resource the Nile River.

Henriette Ndombe, the Executive Director of the Nile Basin Initiative, says it is very important for the countries to reach a shared understanding on how to use the Nile waters with each other's interests in mind.

Although most countries are pushing for what they call a fairer water sharing agreement by Nile countries, Egypt and Sudan have been reluctant to agree to an agreement that will see downstream countries exploiting more water for River Nile than currently stated.

The other countries argue that the current agreement signed between Egypt and colonial master Britain gives Egypt unfair share and advantage on Nile waters thus reducing equal exploitation of Nile waters for energy and agriculture.

But Dr. Mohamed Nasr El-Din Allam, Egypt's Minister of Water and Irrigation who is also the Chairperson of the Nile Council of Ministers reaffirmed his country's strong commitment to cooperate with all the Nile Basin States, to resolve the pending issues of the Cooperative Framework in a view to establishing a commission for the basin that includes all countries and reflects all their interests and concerns.

The Kampala meeting is a follow-up of the 17th Nile Council of Ministers Meeting held in July 2009 in Alexandria, Egypt.

