

A Hydro-diplomacy in Northeastern Africa: A Trajectory for Regional Integration +

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Abstract

- Northeastern Africa is endowed with numerous and permanently shared waters
thereby the countries in the region are permanently linked with one another by the trans-boundary waters.
- out of the 12 water basins of Ethiopia eight are trans-boundary creating permanent linkages with the downstream countries.
- Ganale-dawa river system binds together Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya.
- Wabeshibelle river bind together Ethiopia and Somalia
- Ethiopia and Kenya are permanently linked by Omo-Turkana water system
- South Sudan is linked with Ethiopia, Uganda and the Republic of Sudan with Baro-Akobo /Sobat and the White Nile river systems. All trans-boundary water systems of the region, including those within the Nile Basin
- Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania are linked together by Lake Victoria and its waters.

- The trans-boundary waters are the most permanent basis for 1) environmental 2) socio-economic 3) security 4) institutional, etc. interactions
- The trans-boundary waters are the potential basis for integration between the riparian countries and regionally.
- The Nile Basin has presented geopolitically distinct and complex case of hydro-diplomacy in Northeastern Africa.
- The riparian nations of the Nile have come a long way through many ups and downs of negotiations to the significant milestones of interactions and agreements
- The trajectory for more interaction and eventual integration of Northeastern Africa can be primarily enhanced and cemented through the cooperative use, management and protection of the permanently shared water resources.
- Hydro-diplomacy can be utilized as the most preferred instrument and mechanism towards a future integration through environmental, socio-economic, security and institutional interactions among the riparian nations of Northeastern Africa.

Shared waters as permanent “commons”



Major Issues

- 1) Shared waters as Permanent “Commons”
- 2) Crucial vehicle for livelihood and long term development
- 3) Water as key concern for governments
 - The issue of equitable utilization & and causing no significant harm
 - The issue of protection and conservation of shared waters
- 4) Prospects for interaction, cooperation and integration in North eastern Africa?
- 5) Hydro-diplomacy as a venture into choosing shared future

Shared Waters as Permanent “Commons”

- Gift of nature, a common heritage and inalienable endowments
- A binding factor
- Generously and faithfully flowing without discrimination
- Transcend all diversities

Crucial vehicle for development

- Water supply and sanitation (MDG & SDG)
- Irrigation
- Hydro-power
- Fishing
- In-land transportation
- Ecosystem services

Water & the Geopolitical Context of North Eastern Africa

Ethiopia provides:

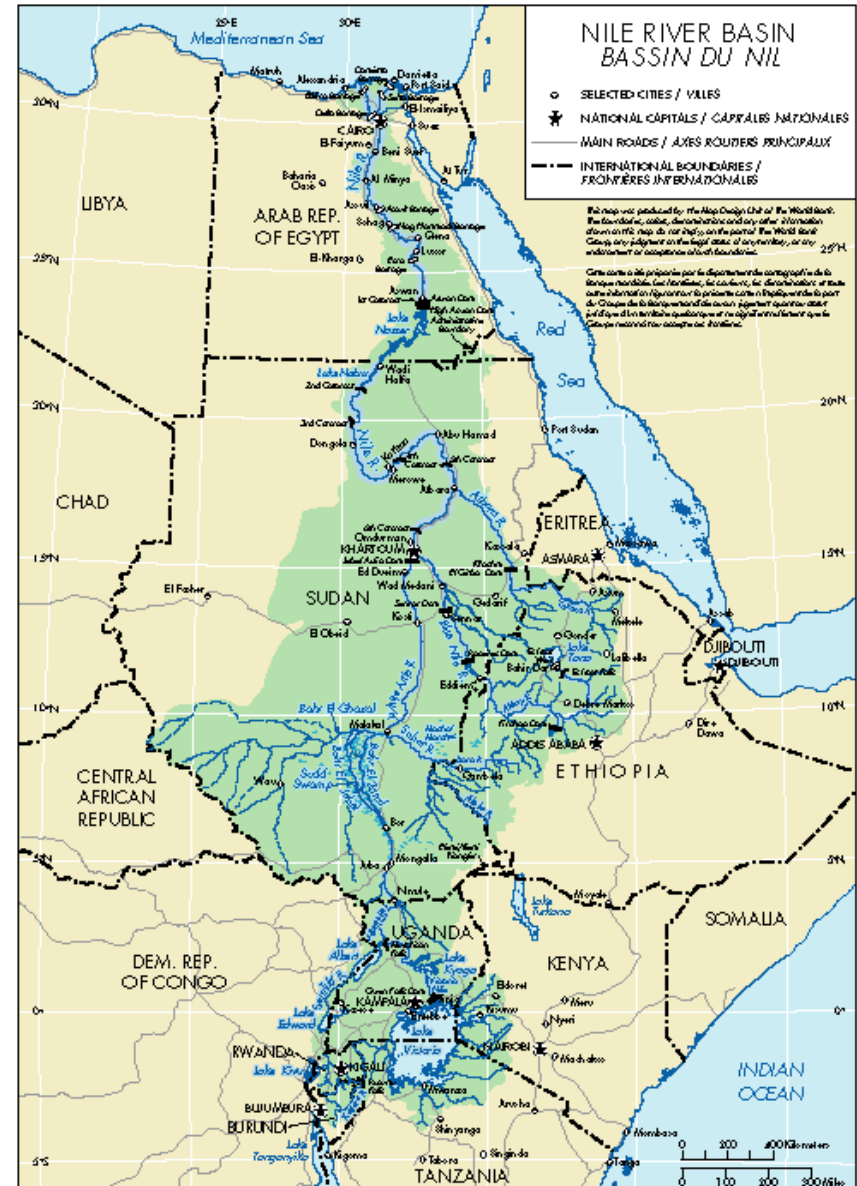
- 86% of the Nile
- 90% of Omo-Turkana
- 100% of Wabeshibelle
- 100% of Ganale-Dawa
- 23bcm of Baro-Akobo /Sobat
- 100% of Tekeze /Atbara, .

Ethiopia remains a water tower of North Eastern Africa



The Nile Basin as the most dominant feature of NEA

- 11 nations, 1/10 of African with an area of 3,038,100 sq.km,
- 7 upstream, 3 midstream & 1 downstream countries
- Upstream humidity, downstream aridity



A Historical Context of the Hydro-politics of the Nile Basin and NEA

The Nile Valley:

- "No international river basin has a longer, more complex and eventful history than the Nile", As I.B. Taurus aptly noted
- The more recent history of the Nile has also witnessed that great leaders including: Winston Churchill, Dewieght Eisenhower, Nikita Kruschov, Benito Mussolini, Gamal Abdul Nasser, Emperor Haile Sellassie and Julius Neyerere were all preoccupied with the Nile question, from aggressive or defensive perspectives, As T. Tvedt explains.

A Hydro-political Perspective of the Nile Basin

Over the years and today, the main hurdle of the hydro-politics of the Nile has been

-
- The question of overcoming the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial legacies
- The question of changing status quo
- Power asymmetry
- Lack of upstream-downstream cooperation
- Wrong water management policies mechanisms
- Changing geopolitical circumstances

An Era for Hydro-diplomacy in North Eastern Africa

“The stakes are high and mistakes cannot be afforded”. (as David Grey former World Bank expert aptly remarked during the ICCON forum in 2001)

The need to overcome the long drawn upstream-downstream tension

The need to leave behind the strong national stand offs

Strong international support for negotiated solutions

International financial support through ICCON (International Consortium on the Cooperation of the Nile)

Two Track Diplomacy in Operation

Track one diplomacy

NBI, CFA, NBC, IPoE, DoP, TNC, official and intermiant public diplomacy troupes

Track two diplomacy

Nile 2002 conferences (1993-2002), Econile Project (1999-2004), NBRP, NBTP

- Hydro-diplomacy has got a new height in the Nile Basin
- The discourse of monopoly or hegemony over the Nile has changed
- Unilateral approach to water use and management yet to change

Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam as Game Changer



Hydro-diplomacy and new controversy

- Ethiopia builds a new dam on the Abbay River
- Largest dam in the country in the Nile Basin the basin and in the continent
- Egypt was alarmed, international community astounded
- Ethiopia initiated IPoE (2012-2013)
- TNC with IPoE recommendations



RCC in progress



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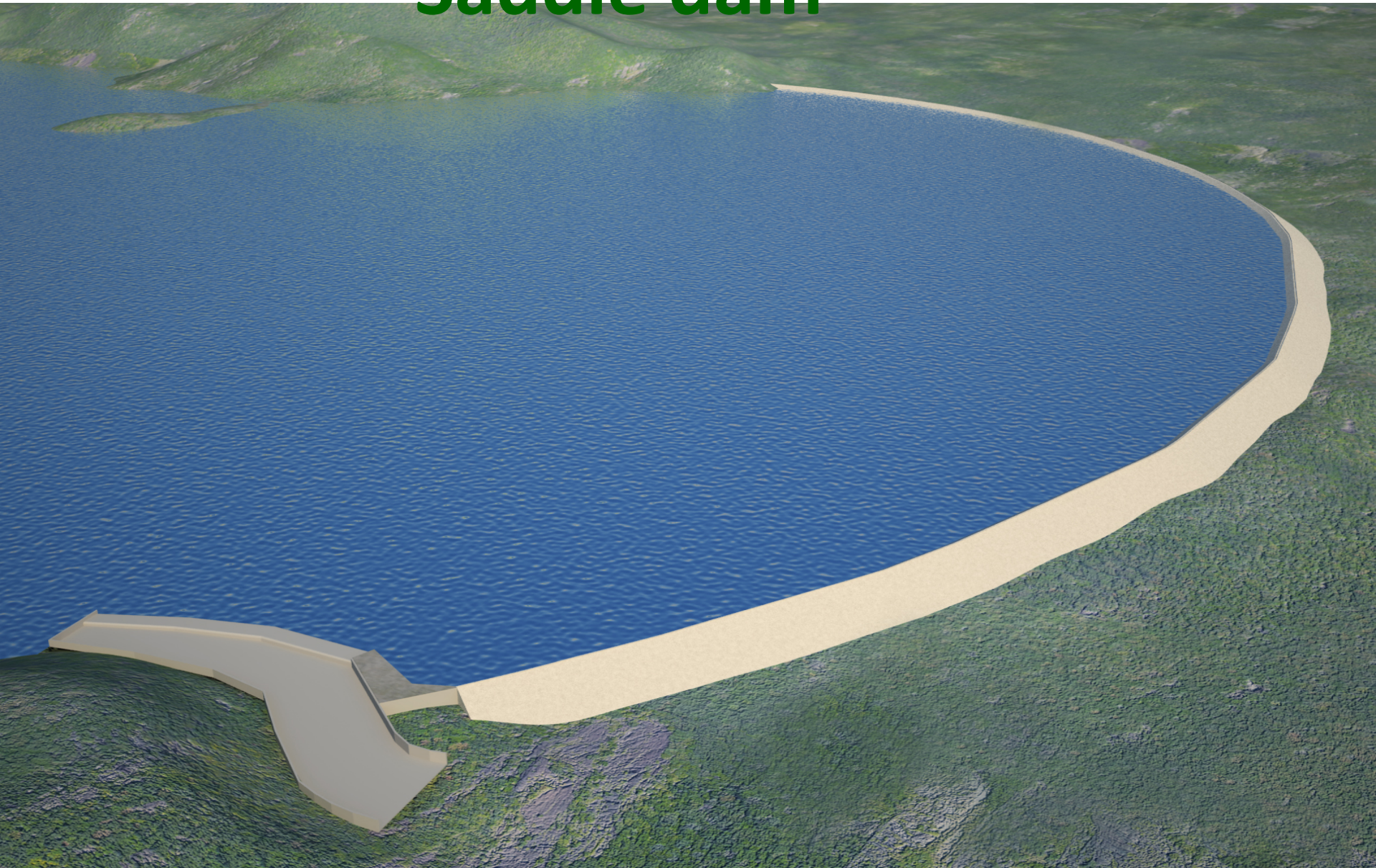
GERD RCC, under construction



GERD construction in progress



Saddle dam



When completed

High tension cables



A trajectory for Regional Integration in North Eastern Africa

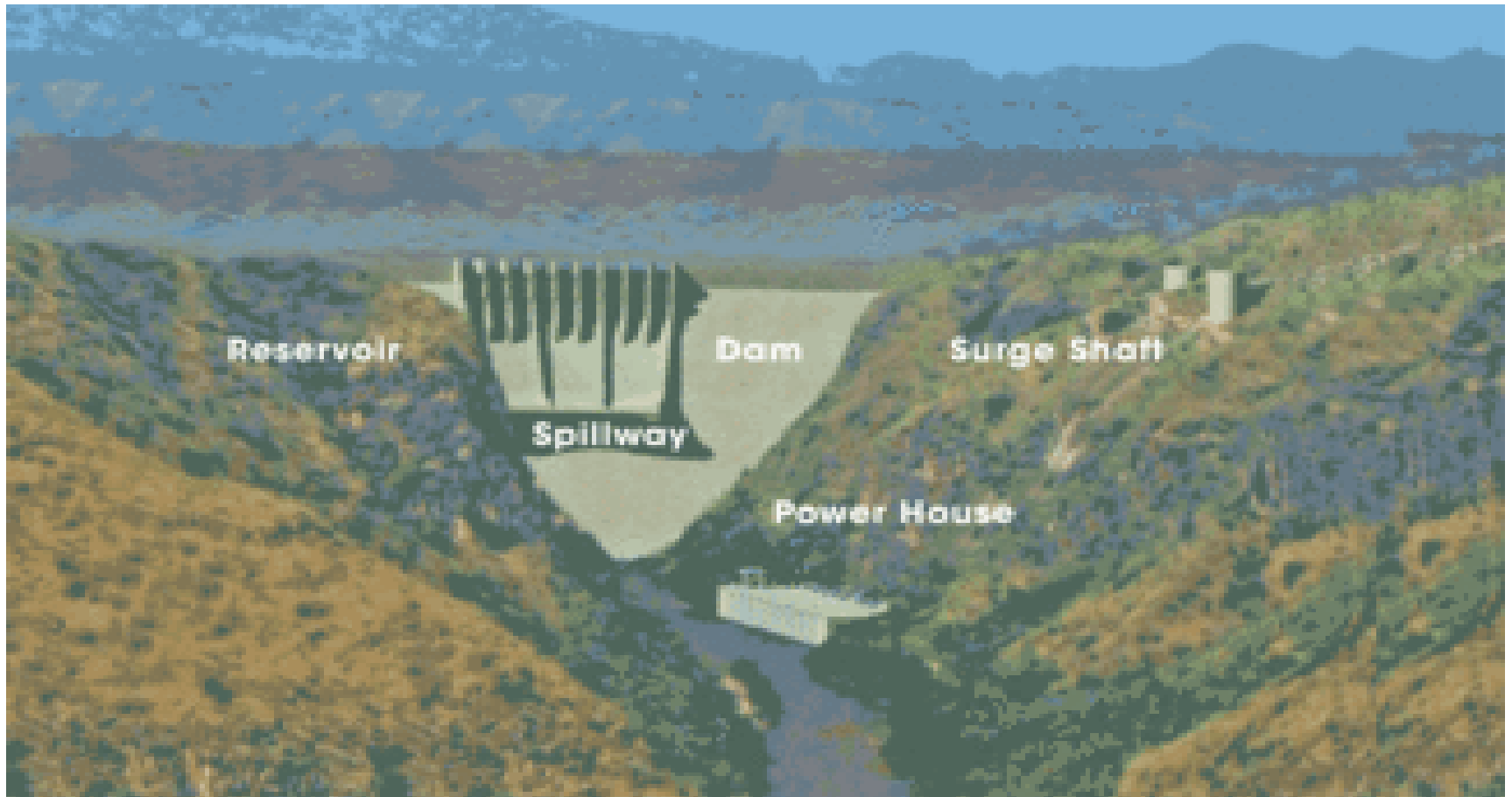
- Enlarging the pie, away from zero-sum game
- Era of continued negotiations, engagement in hydro-diplomacy
- Maximize on mutual benefits
- Basin wide approach as a modality
- Division of labor with comparative advantage

Trajectory

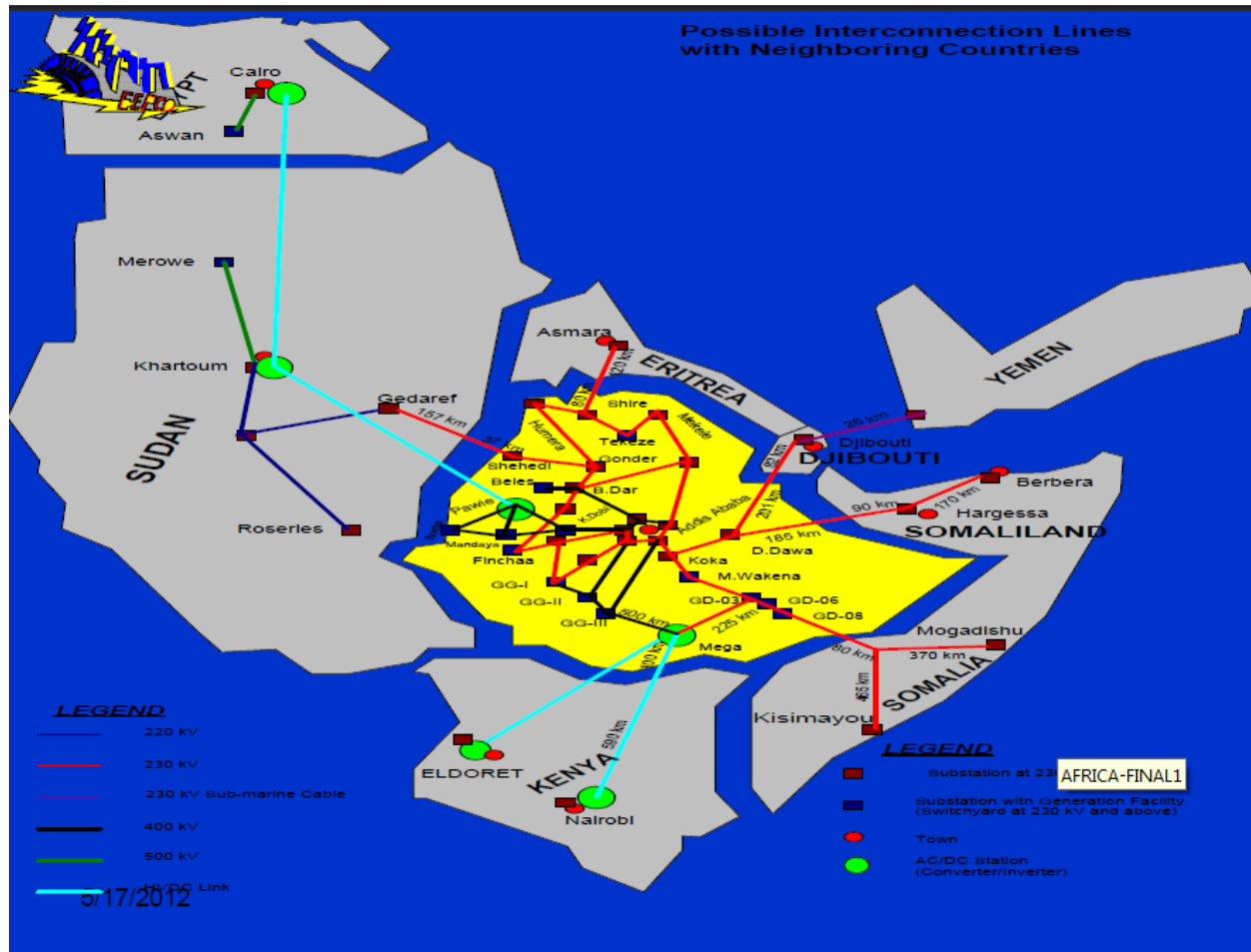
Imperatives for integration in the Nile Basin and
North Eastern Africa

- Environmental unity
- Socio-economic necessity
- Security architecture
- Legal /Institutional framework

New opportunities for regional integration



Clean Energy for Regional Market



Clean energy for broader linkages in NEA & beyond



Outstanding Issues of Hydro-diplomacy

Unprotected water



Unprotected land ...



Evidence of lack of protection



Desirable protection of the water



Conclusion

- It goes without saying that the countries of the Nile Basin and North Eastern Africa can benefit from future integration
- The hydro-diplomacy should prioritize to maximize greater benefits to each and all basin countries
- The trajectory is more engagement, more interaction, more cooperation and strategic prospect for future integration
- Hydro-diplomacy can be employed for mutual benefits and incremental integration beyond drops of water

Beyond drop



Many Thanks