



# Security Council

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## **Letter dated 1 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council**

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the briefing provided by Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of China, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, the Niger, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam, in connection with the video-teleconference on peace and security in Africa convened on Monday, 29 June 2020. Statements were also delivered by the representative of Egypt, His Excellency Mr. Sameh Selim, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the representative of Ethiopia.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/372), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, these briefings and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

*(Signed)* Christoph Heusgen  
President of the Security Council



**Annex I****Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary DiCarlo**

The Blue Nile, which contributes approximately 85 per cent of the main Nile volume when it merges with the White Nile in Khartoum, is an important transboundary water resource critical for the livelihoods and development of the people of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Republic of the Sudan.

The construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, a major hydropower project located on the Blue Nile in Ethiopia's Benishangul-Gumuz region, began in April 2011. Through the generation of hydroelectricity, the Renaissance Dam will significantly boost Ethiopia's energy sources, allowing it to increase electrification, accelerate industrialization and export excess electricity to the region.

Recognizing the need for cooperation on the Renaissance Dam to fully realize its benefits and mitigate its potential negative effects on the downstream countries, the Blue Nile riparian countries have undertaken several commendable initiatives over the past decade. Those include the establishment of an international panel of experts in 2012 to examine the Dam's design and construction plans, a follow-up Tripartite National Committee in 2014 and the 2015 Declaration of Principles on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

The Declaration takes note of the rising demand on the transboundary water resources of Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan. These three countries committed to several principles, including cooperation, equitable and reasonable utilization, security and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

In 2018, the three countries formed a National Independent Scientific Research Study Group to discuss the filling and operation of the Renaissance Dam. Since 2019, trilateral discussions have been held at the ministerial level, as well as among the Heads of State, with the assistance of the United States and the World Bank. A draft text was discussed, but the three riparian States were not able to reach an agreement on the text presented in February 2020.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, the Sudan therefore took the initiative earlier this month to seek to narrow differences on this issue. We understand that 90 per cent of the technical issues have already been settled.

Following the inconclusive negotiations in February, the three countries agreed to appoint observers to the talks, including the Republic of South Africa, the United States and the European Union, whose representatives have been observers to the recent meetings.

On 26 June, South Africa, as Chair of the African Union (AU), convened the Bureau of the African Union Heads of State. President Al Sisi, Prime Minister Ahmed and Prime Minister Hamdok attended the session and agreed to an AU-led process aimed at resolving outstanding issues. The parties will meet over the next two weeks for that purpose.

I commend the parties for their determination to negotiate an agreement, and I applaud the African Union's efforts to facilitate a process to that end. The remaining differences are technical and legal in nature. They include the binding nature of an agreement, the dispute-resolution mechanism and the management of water flow during droughts.

While the United Nations has not participated in the negotiations on the Renaissance Dam, the Secretary-General is fully seized of the matter. I reiterate

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the Secretary-General's call, on 19 May, for the parties to peacefully resolve all outstanding differences with urgency.

Those differences can be overcome and an agreement reached if all parties show the necessary political will to compromise, in line with the spirit of cooperation highlighted in the 2015 Declaration of Principles on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

The United Nations stands ready to assist, through technical and expert support, as appropriate and as requested by the three countries. That includes any support required by the AU-led process.

Transboundary water cooperation is a key element in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. I would like to emphasize that climate change, combined with projected demographic growth and socioeconomic changes, will increase water management challenges — not only for Blue Nile riparian countries but worldwide.

Cooperation is not a zero-sum game. It is the key to a successful collective effort to reduce poverty and increase growth, thus delivering on the development potential of the region. We firmly hope that Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan will persevere in their efforts to achieve an agreement on the Renaissance Dam that is beneficial to all.

## Annex II

### **Statement by the Acting Deputy Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Yao Shaojun**

I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing. I welcome the participation of the Foreign Minister of Egypt and the Ambassadors of Ethiopia and the Sudan.

China places great importance on the issue of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, and takes note of the positions expressed in the letters from the Foreign Ministers of Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan. China fully understands the concerns of the three countries on this matter, welcomes that the Bureau of the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government held a video-teleconference on an extraordinary basis on 26 June and commends that relevant countries have committed to resolving differences through negotiations.

The utilization of cross-border water resources must take into account the combined interests of upstream and downstream countries, and is therefore highly complicated and sensitive. China holds the view that this issue should be resolved for mutual benefit by the three parties through dialogue and consultation.

The African continent has a good tradition of solving regional issues through dialogue and consultation. Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan are all important countries in the region and good friends of China. China sincerely hopes that the three parties will reach a solution acceptable to all through patient dialogue and consultation. We hope that the international community will create a conducive external environment and support the three parties in narrowing differences through dialogue and consultation in an effort to maintain peace, stability and development in Africa. The Council's consideration of the Renaissance Dam issue should not set a precedent. China is ready to work with all parties to play a constructive role.

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**Annex III****Statement by the Special Envoy to the Security Council of the Dominican Republic, José Singer Weisinger**

We would like to begin by thanking the presidency for organizing today's meeting, and we thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing.

It is our belief that the best way for the three countries to resolve their differences over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is through direct talks. It is encouraging to hear that the parties have decided to continue a negotiation process led by the African Union (AU). In this regard, we welcome the announcement by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission that more than 90 per cent of the disputed issues have been resolved and that a legal and technical committee to discuss outstanding issues has been formed.

The decision taken by the three parties to refrain from making statements or taking any action that may threaten or further complicate the AU-led process shows their good faith and willingness to compromise in striving to reach an amicable agreement. It is encouraging that the parties involved are displaying a constructive and positive approach in the negotiations, which may lead them to reach a mutually acceptable solution on the outstanding technical and legal issues.

All three parties will need to make compromises in good faith in order to reach a deal in the coming weeks. We highly encourage them to keep building trust, and we stand ready to closely follow the developments of the AU-led negotiation process and collaborate with the parties. Resolving outstanding key issues like water sharing, drought mitigation and setting up a dispute-resolution mechanism would set an excellent regional and international precedent for future disputes on such issues. It is important to avoid any potentially negative effects on the populations' households, incomes and ways of life.

We humbly recommend that the parties take into account each other's legitimate concerns and interests to avoid mutual mistrust so that the necessary compromises can be made, and a timely agreement reached. Let us preserve this renewed spirit of conciliation and take advantage of the window of opportunity that has opened up to steer clear of any possible confrontation, with a view to creating a joint instrument through which the three countries could build trust and formalize cooperation.

Finally, we would like to reiterate the need to continue the discussions based on common understanding, good faith, mutual benefit and trust until an agreement is reached. The diplomatic path should always prevail.

## **Annex IV**

### **Statement by the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Sven Jürgenson**

I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her comprehensive briefing. I also welcome the participation of our friends from Egypt, the Sudan and Ethiopia at this meeting.

All three stakeholders — Egypt, the Sudan and Ethiopia — have legitimate interests in the Nile River and its water resources. We therefore remain convinced that the issue of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam can be amicably resolved only through direct talks and understanding among the three countries. In that regard, we particularly welcome the resumption of the dialogue at the meeting held by the African Union Bureau on 26 June, and we welcome the subsequent commitment of the parties to finding a peaceful negotiated solution to all outstanding issues.

The African Union Bureau meeting was a positive step. We urge the parties to maintain the course and encourage them, first, to continue the talks in good faith; secondly, to make necessary concessions; and, thirdly, to reach a tripartite agreement that is beneficial to all three countries. We hope that the parties can reach an agreement in the coming weeks, as envisioned by the African Union process. We remain committed to supporting the process in constructive ways.

Rivers can be a source of conflict or a source of cooperation. It is up to the parties to determine how they choose to proceed. Right now, there is a historic opportunity for the parties to lead by example. Through the spirit of empathy and understanding, they can show the rest of the world how a source of potential conflict could be turned into cooperation, which is a result where everyone would win. We are counting on their leadership.

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**Annex V****Statement by the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Nicolas de Rivière**

[Original: French]

I thank Ms. DiCarlo for her briefing and welcome Foreign Minister Selim and the Permanent Representatives of the Sudan and Ethiopia to the Security Council.

The dispute surrounding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, if not resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, could lead to further tensions in the region. As my European Union colleagues have already said, every effort must be made to avoid an escalation. I therefore call upon the parties to act responsibly.

I welcome the efforts of the Sudanese Government to relaunch the negotiation process, as well as the involvement of South Africa, the United States and the European Union in those talks. The African Union has a major role to play in facilitating and supporting those negotiations. In that regard, the discussions held among the parties last week, led by President Ramaphosa, are a step in the right direction. They must continue in a constructive spirit in order to reach an agreement. We encourage their continuation in that framework and call for their early conclusion, in accordance with the spirit that prevailed in the recent discussions among the Heads of State and Government.

A mutually beneficial agreement would make it possible to turn the dam into an opportunity for development and prosperity for all the peoples of the region, rather than a factor of tension and division. We call on all parties to respect international law and related conventions, as well as the Declaration of Principles adopted by the three parties in 2015. France also encourages the Secretary-General to use his good offices in support of those efforts. As we have just celebrated the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations, conflict prevention and the peaceful settlement of disputes must be at the heart of the work of the United Nations.

Finally, we solemnly call upon Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan to exercise restraint and show their sense of responsibility. Indeed, it is through dialogue — and dialogue alone — that we will be able to avoid escalation and resolve this dispute. I therefore call on each of the parties to refrain from any action that could undermine this objective and the continuation of the discussions.

## **Annex VI**

### **Statement by the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, Christoph Heusgen**

I can be brief. On substance, I rally behind what my European Union colleague, the Permanent Representative of Estonia, said a moment ago. Having heard the debate so far, we can see that there is a lot of unity in the Security Council on this matter. I think such unity is very important, as it sends a strong signal of support for an early conclusion of the negotiations among the stakeholders. We count on Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan — whose representatives I would like to welcome to the Council, namely, Foreign Minister Selim and my brothers from the Sudan and Ethiopia — to find a solution balancing their interests. Germany is committed to continuing its technical support for this process. We hope that these negotiations will come to an early and amicable result.

## Annex VII

### **Statement by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, Dian Triansyah Djani**

I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing. I would also like to welcome to the Security Council Ambassador Sameh Hassan Shokry Selim, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt, and our colleagues the Permanent Representatives of the Sudan and Ethiopia.

Like others, we have been following this issue closely, both as a member of the Security Council and as a country that has had a long-standing relationship with each of the three countries. On various occasions and in other instances, we have stated our position on this issue to all the parties concerned. We had hoped that this issue could be settled amicably among these three neighbourly and fraternal countries. I would like to note that meeting in the Security Council to discuss this issue should not create a precedent, but should be seen as part of our collective efforts to help all parties resume negotiations and come up with an acceptable, amicable and implementable solution.

I should like to add the following points.

First, all parties must continue negotiations with the intention of finding a win-win solution. From what we understand, most of the technical issues have been resolved. However, there are some outstanding issues. Like in a marathon, the most important yard, I believe, is the last yard, and it is crucial, of course, for all runners to cross the finish line. I would therefore like to emphasize that all parties should spare no efforts in amicably resolving these issues. Often, when there are outstanding issues, it is not due to the lack of a solution, but to a lack of political will. We implore all parties to come together at the highest level and in the spirit of cooperation and solidarity — in the spirit that we strongly adhere to in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, namely, good-neighbourliness, whose analogue is the spirit of Ubuntu, for which Africa is famous in the resolution of all kinds of issues.

Secondly, all negotiating avenues should be explored and utilized by all parties. All relevant parties should pursue facilitating or mediating roles as necessary. With the concurrence of all parties, any persons or institutions that could assist in finding peace, including the United Nations and its Secretary-General, should be considered.

In line with our long-standing position on advancing the role of regional organizations, we believe that settling this issue in the regional context is always one of the best options. We commend the initiative of the President of South Africa, His Excellency Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa, in his capacity as Chairperson of the African Union Assembly, to facilitate discussion among parties under the auspices of the Bureau of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union. We welcome the fact that at the Extraordinary Meeting of the Bureau, all parties renewed their commitment to finding a peaceful, negotiated solution to all the outstanding issues as well as to establishing a tripartite committee.

Thirdly, we appeal to all parties to refrain from any unilateral action that would hamper the continuation of negotiations or further exacerbate the already-fragile situation. We must be continuously aware that, in exercising rights, we are also bound by responsibilities, including to our neighbours. Let us show that we are all responsible parties. What is at stake is the lives and livelihoods of millions of people all along the River Nile.

I think that Sir William Golding, British author and poet, was quite correct when he said that “he who rides the sea of the Nile must have sails woven of patience”. I hope that all parties can weave this sail of patience, allow negotiations to conclude

at the earliest and refrain from actions that will not serve the purpose of all those whose lives depend on the Nile.

I would like to conclude by quoting an old Kanuri proverb from West Africa: “At the bottom of patience, one finds heaven”. Let us all find the heaven that we seek, in the form of peace, stability and prosperity for our peoples.

## Annex VIII

### **Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations, Abdou Abarry**

As a landlocked country and home to the Niger River, the third-longest river in Africa, my country considers the management of transboundary waters to be essential for the peaceful coexistence of countries that share the important natural resource that is a river. That is why our States set up the Niger Basin Authority, the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the Mano River Union. Indeed, water must be a source of cooperation and shared prosperity; it must not be a source of conflict or discord among riparian nations. Accordingly, the escalation of tensions over the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam project, although a source of concern, should have a happy outcome, as it concerns three sister countries, united by history and geography.

When, a few days ago, the Security Council discussed the opportunity of addressing this issue, the situation among the three countries concerned had become tense as a result of an impasse in the negotiations. Our discussions today are taking place against the backdrop of the different atmosphere that I hope will emerge from the statements to be made by the three countries concerned.

I would add that our discussions are taking place following the auspicious initiative undertaken by Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa, President of South Africa and current Chairperson of the African Union Assembly, of convening, on 26 June, an Extraordinary Meeting of the Bureau of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, by videoconference, with the participation of the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Prime Ministers of Ethiopia and the Sudan.

I would like to take this opportunity to mention, with satisfaction, some of the outcomes of the videoconference, which we believe to be positive milestones on the path towards a negotiated solution to the problem. Indeed, the Extraordinary Meeting of the Bureau revealed that more than 90 per cent of the issues in dispute had already been resolved by the three countries and that they are determined to discuss the remaining issues within the framework of the African Union in a constructive spirit, reflecting the excellent relations and solidarity that have always existed among the three countries.

The Niger is confident that the tripartite negotiating mechanism, which was expanded by decision of the Extraordinary Meeting, will produce a report in the coming days, which it will submit to the current Chairperson of the African Union Assembly, who can then convene another Bureau meeting in early July to decide on the outcome of the negotiations.

In conclusion, my delegation welcomes the appeal made to the Council by the Extraordinary Meeting of the Bureau of the African Union Assembly to take note of the fact that the African Union is seized of this issue. In this regard, the Council could support this regional initiative, as it would send a strong signal of recognition of the essential role played by regional organizations in the peaceful settlement of disputes of this nature. Regional organizations such as the African Union often have a better understanding of regional dynamics. Accordingly, they can detect the early warning signs of impending conflict and, through that knowledge, promote dialogue and reconciliation among the parties, as has been pointed out in the reports of the Secretary-General on strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on issues of peace and security in Africa.

While the role of the Security Council is essential to the maintenance of international peace and security, in the name of the principle of subsidiarity, the African initiative should truly be supported in this particular case in order to give full force to the principle that African problems should be solved through African solutions.

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**Annex IX****Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Vassily Nebenzia**

We thank Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo for the information provided. We welcome Minister Shokry and the Ambassadors of the Sudan and Ethiopia to today's meeting.

The Russian Federation has always supported the negotiation process between Addis Ababa, Cairo and Khartoum on the major hydropower project on the Blue Nile, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, and on all related issues of water resource management. We have stressed that the modalities of the use of the Nile's water resources should be determined by all the countries in the Nile basin on an equal footing, taking into account tasks relating to their social and economic development. The modalities should also be based on international law and be in the interest of maintaining regional stability.

The search for a mutually acceptable solution to the problem should be carried out in keeping with the spirit and letter of the 2015 Khartoum Declaration, while taking into account the progress achieved in the trilateral format on a range of issues related to the regime for filling the hydropower station's dam and the timelines for its entry into operation, as well as the principles of water management and further operation of the dam, ecological run-off volume, drought mitigation measures and the project's safety.

We take note of the positive nature of the trilateral technical consultations held on 15-17 June. We welcome the meeting of the Extraordinary African Union Bureau of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held on 26 June via video-teleconference, with the participation of leaders from Ethiopia, Egypt and the Sudan and chaired by President Ramaphosa of South Africa. The summit produced a promising format of cooperation, the tripartite committee on technical and legal issues, which was tasked to sort out all outstanding problems regarding the dam's operation. We also take note of the contribution that African States made to address the differences between Ethiopia, Egypt and the Sudan with a view to accompanying the tripartite negotiations. Thus, our African colleagues demonstrated their commitment to realizing the principle of African solutions to African problems.

We express the hope that Addis Ababa, Cairo and Khartoum will be in a position to achieve, on that basis, a mutually acceptable agreement on dam-related issues in the interest of maintaining stability in the region. We see no alternative to bridging the differences on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam other than through negotiations based on international law, with due respect paid to the interests of all sides.

To conclude, I would like to underscore that the Russian Federation is genuinely interested in seeing the issue sorted out in an expeditious and just manner. Doing so would contribute to progress, development and prosperity in the African continent, in line with the spirit of the first Russia-Africa economic forum and summit, held last year in Sochi, and with the goals set out there.

**Annex X****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, Inga Rhonda King**

I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

Let me begin by saying that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines expresses its solidarity with our Egyptian, Ethiopian and Sudanese brothers and sisters. In the spirit of camaraderie, we extend our sincerest support to their collective struggle for an equitable, reasonable and lasting agreement on the allocation of water resources from the Nile River.

As a small island whose identity is inextricably linked to a body of water, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines recognizes and fully appreciates the intrinsic value of the Nile to each of the parties, not only as a symbol deeply enmeshed within their national identities but also as a critical resource upon which their dreams of development and prosperity depend. Therefore, we respect each country's national interests and wholeheartedly accept their very credible concerns. At the same time, their collective identity, crafted through the existential links of the Nile, gives us confidence that they are more inclined to work together than to pull further apart. In this regard, we are encouraged by the parties' determination, as demonstrated at the 26 June meeting of the Extraordinary African Union Bureau of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, to continue their trilateral negotiations, in good faith and in the spirit of solidarity, towards an agreement that is reasonable, equitable and amicable. We urge them to take the requisite bold political steps to conclude those negotiations.

Given the intensified droughts and resource shortages precipitated by climate change, we acknowledge the need for a comprehensive, sustainable agreement that thoroughly addresses each party's concerns so that current and future generations of Egyptians, Ethiopians and Sudanese can live, work and play together as they peacefully coexist with their neighbours along the Nile. On issues as complex and consequential as this, final settlements can only be achieved through a shared journey in which each party builds a reciprocal and recognizable sense of understanding.

It is important to note that the concerned parties are almost at the end of this painstaking journey, as more than 90 per cent of the issues have already been resolved. We are therefore confident that our Egyptian, Ethiopian and Sudanese brothers and sisters will settle their outstanding disagreements, as all families do, with discretion and harmony. It is the collective wisdom of Africa that will facilitate a lasting solution to this situation.

## Annex XI

### **Statement by the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations, Jerry Matjila**

We thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing and welcome the participation of the representatives of Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan in our discussions today.

Over the last few weeks, the Security Council has received letters from each of the three countries detailing their perspectives on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. What is no doubt clear from the letters and the interest in this matter is that the Nile River is an extremely important resource for the African continent, specifically those three countries — Ethiopia, as the origin of the Blue Nile, the Sudan, where the confluence of the White and Blue Niles is found, and Egypt, where the Nile flows into the Mediterranean Sea.

The River is a source not only of development but also of survival for all riparian States, and, as a shared natural resource, it is essential that there be cooperation on its utilization. The construction of the dam has been under way for almost a decade and is expected to usher in a new era of development, not only for Ethiopia but potentially for the entire subregion as well. It will be the biggest hydroelectric dam on the continent and should therefore be celebrated as a symbol of much-needed development and not become a source of conflict and disagreement.

The Security Council discussion today is taking place under the agenda item “Peace and security in Africa”. This is a clear recognition that the issue of the Renaissance Dam affects the African continent.

The President of the Republic of South Africa and Chairperson of the African Union (AU), Cyril Ramaphosa, convened a meeting of the Extraordinary African Union Bureau of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government on 26 June, inviting the leaders of all three countries concerned to participate and discuss developments pertaining to the Renaissance Dam. The Bureau was represented by the Presidents of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Kenya and Mali. The Prime Ministers of Ethiopia and the Sudan and the Chairperson of the AU Commission were also invited to participate in the meeting.

The meeting was characterized by a positive and constructive spirit that clearly showed the willingness of all the parties to find a mutually acceptable agreement on all outstanding issues pertaining to the Renaissance Dam. Importantly, the Bureau of the AU Assembly recognized the potential of the dam project for the African Union and committed to a process facilitated by the AU Chairperson. We welcome the three parties’ undertaking at the meeting to refrain from making any statements or taking any action that might jeopardize or complicate the AU-led process aimed at finding an acceptable solution on all outstanding matters.

While noting that most of the issues in the tripartite negotiations between Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan have already been resolved, the Bureau of the AU Assembly agreed to augment the tripartite committee dealing with the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam issue, which consists of Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan, with the participation of observers. The observers will be South Africa, in its capacity as Chairperson of the AU, members of the AU Bureau and experts from the AU Commission. The committee will address all outstanding technical and legal issues and will present its report to the Chairperson of the Bureau in one week. Furthermore, the Bureau of the Assembly and the participating Heads of State and Government agreed to reconvene in two weeks to consider a report on the outcome of negotiations on the outstanding issues concerning the dam.

The Bureau of the African Union Assembly and participating Heads of State and Government have requested the Security Council to take note of these developments and of the fact that the African Union remains seized of this matter of concern to the continent. It is therefore important that the Security Council respect the continental efforts and provide space for the parties, through the agreed upon mechanisms, to find a solution that will ensure a peaceful and prosperous future for these three neighbourly countries.

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**Annex XII****Statement by the Acting Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, James Roscoe**

Let me begin by thanking Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing and all three parties — Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan — for joining the meeting today.

The United Kingdom is a friend to all three nations, with partnerships that support each to prosper. We recognize the rights of all three countries to utilize Nile waters and believe that, done right, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam has, as Ms DiCarlo set out, real potential to be a positive development for the region.

The United Kingdom places strong emphasis on consensus between parties on developments that impact a shared natural resource. We are pleased that many of the key elements needed to reach such consensus are captured in the Agreement on Declaration of Principles, reached by the parties on 23 March 2015, in particular the principles of not causing significant harm and of equitable and reasonable utilization.

Since the Agreement on Declaration of Principles, the three parties have continued talks, including with the support of mediation by the United States, to reach a more detailed trilateral agreement on the filling and operation of the dam. The progress and commitment have shown the spirit of cooperation across the Nile. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Sudan for Prime Minister Hamdok's current role in brokering talks, even though it is a party to the discussions. We also thank the Chairperson of the African Union (AU), President Ramaphosa, and the Chairperson of the AU Commission for their actions last Friday and over the weekend to support that effort, with a further round of talks to resolve those issues that remain outstanding. I am grateful to Ambassador Matjila for South Africa's update on those talks and on next steps. We are encouraged by the engagement and commitment shown.

We recognize, however, that reaching agreement requires compromise by all parties. It is important that all parties keep sight of those key principles agreed as part of the Agreement on Declaration of Principles. It is in that spirit that talks should continue and conclude. The United Kingdom is confident that, working together, Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan have the strength and resolve to reach an accord to the benefit of all.

In concluding, let me once again reaffirm the United Kingdom's support for the Governments and the peoples of Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan in their endeavours to reach a mutually fair and equitable agreement. I hope that they have all heard the message of Council members today that all three sides refrain from actions that would undermine negotiations and that they engage constructively and urgently, in a spirit of compromise, to conclude negotiations and reach an agreement.

**Annex XIII****Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Kelly Craft**

I thank you, Mr. President, for your efforts over the past several days to accommodate this important issue before the Security Council. We appreciate Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo's insightful remarks.

Through our engagement as a facilitator and observer of the negotiations on an agreement for the filling and operation of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam over the last several months, the United States understands and appreciates the importance of the Nile River to the histories and futures of Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan. We have seen first-hand how the Nile is deeply intertwined with the national identities of Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan and how its future is of paramount importance to the livelihoods and well-being of their peoples. I know first-hand that President Trump has prioritized the Renaissance Dam within our Cabinet.

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam poses a unique opportunity for this part of Africa, where droughts, desertification and economic underdevelopment have befallen generations of people. An agreement on the Renaissance Dam has the potential to transform a region that is home to over 250 million people, expanding economic opportunities through transboundary cooperation and regional integration. Increased food security, improved energy access and expanded agriculture projects are just a few of the transformational benefits that the dam can afford the region.

The considerable work by Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan over the past several months shows that it is possible to reach a balanced and equitable agreement that takes into account the interests of the three countries if there is a commitment among all to do so. We commend the Government of the Sudan and Prime Minister Hamdok's Administration for the ongoing efforts to encourage this process and bring the parties together, including by hosting talks earlier this month.

The United States takes note of the recent efforts of the African Union to facilitate additional discussions among the three countries on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. We acknowledge the efforts of South African President Ramaphosa to bring this issue before the Extraordinary African Union Bureau of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

We recognize that this issue is before the Council because time is short and the window to achieving such an agreement may be rapidly closing. We encourage all countries to build on their substantial progress in prior negotiations and the compromises that led to that progress, and further call on all countries to refrain from making any statements or taking any actions that would undermine the goodwill necessary to achieve an agreement.

We strongly believe that, with constructive dialogue and cooperation, a solution is within reach, and we reaffirm our commitment to remaining engaged with the three countries until they conclude a final agreement. We look forward to receiving further reports on this very important issue.

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**Annex XIV****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Dang Dinh Quy**

At the outset, I would like to thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, for her informative and important briefing.

I welcome His Excellency Mr. Sameh Shokry Selim, Foreign Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt, I also welcome the Permanent Representatives of the Sudan and Ethiopia to this video-teleconference.

We take note of the positions of the relevant parties, including as elaborated in the letters addressed to the President of the Security Council recently on the matter under consideration today.

We are concerned about the tendency that many international watercourses are being increasingly utilized in unsustainable ways that may not ensure the rights and legitimate interests of riparian countries, especially downstream countries, which are placed in a naturally more disadvantageous position. The adverse effects of this tendency, compounded by those of climate change, have posed challenges to security, stability and development in many regions, including in Africa where the lives of millions of people depend on shared rivers.

As to the Blue Nile, we recognize and support the efforts of the parties directly concerned to promote a sustainable and equitable utilization of water resources, including through cooperation, consultations and negotiations with regard to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam project. We call on all parties concerned to continue building upon the results achieved and fully implement the 2015 Agreement on Declaration of Principles on the project. Outstanding issues need to be resolved peacefully, in a friendly spirit and in good faith, in accordance with international law and the 2015 agreement.

Towards that end, we welcome the important role of the African Union (AU) in promoting negotiations and mediating among the three parties, most recently at the Meeting of the Extraordinary AU Bureau of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government on 26 June, as well as results deriving from the meeting. We look forward to the continued earnest efforts of the parties concerned to resolve the remaining issues, including legal and technical questions, as soon as possible. It is important that the views of all parties concerned be taken into account. All parties must refrain from any unilateral measure that could escalate tensions, undermining the opportunity to achieve a negotiated solution to the issue.

Such efforts will help not only to bring about a comprehensive solution that addresses the legitimate interests of all parties concerned but also to advance confidence, deepen friendly relations among the countries and promote peace, security and development in the region.

In that regard, we would also like to emphasize the need to promote best practices on transboundary watercourses, including, among others, the exchange of data and information, notification, consultations and negotiations to address any concerns, and the full implementation of legal frameworks among the countries concerned.

We are of the view that the utilization of international watercourses must be in line with international law and the commitments of the countries concerned, on the basis of harmonizing the interests of riparian States, especially downstream ones, to ensure the sustainable use and equitable share of water resources.

It is also important to foster further codification and development of international law regarding the use of transboundary watercourses, including through the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses.

**Annex XV****Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt, Sameh Hassan Shokry Selim**

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the President of the Security Council on his able leadership of the Security Council during a time of unprecedented challenges and daunting crises.

Indeed, these are truly tumultuous times. Humanity is being tested by an invisible foe that has robbed us of countless souls, wrought untold economic suffering and brought life to a standstill across the world. But, as we face the scourge of this global pandemic and our frailty is laid bare before us, we are reminded of our common humanity.

We are reminded that beyond the multitude of cultures and creeds and the diversity of nations and peoples, we are ultimately a single human family, the welfare of which demands that we look beyond narrow self-interest and promote the bonds of solidarity within our global community.

The matter on which I am addressing the Council today is of the greatest consequence to the Egyptian people. Like our efforts to combat this global pandemic, it requires a commitment to upholding the spirit of cooperation and to recognizing that no nation is an island unto itself, entire of itself, but part of a community bound by a common destiny.

A threat of potentially existential proportions has emerged that could encroach on the single source of livelihood of more than 100 million Egyptians, The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, a colossal project that Ethiopia has constructed across the Blue Nile, could endanger the security and very survival of an entire nation by imperilling its wellspring of sustenance.

While we recognize the importance of this project to the development objectives of the Ethiopian people, a goal that we share and support, it is essential to realize that this mega-dam, which is Africa's largest hydropower facility, potentially threatens the welfare, well-being and existence of millions of Egyptian and Sudanese citizens.

Therefore, the unilateral filling and operation of the dam, without an agreement that includes the necessary precautions to protect downstream communities and to prevent the infliction of significant harm on their riparian rights, would heighten tensions and could provoke crises and conflicts that would further destabilize an already troubled region.

Accordingly, it is important that the Security Council consider this matter. As the body entrusted by the international community with the unique responsibility to maintain international peace and security, the Council is expected to exercise watchful vigilance to avert the escalation of tensions, to prevent the outbreak of conflict and to contain crises that threaten to prejudice the peace in a fragile region. We trust that, in discharging these duties and fulfilling its responsibilities, the Security Council will act with diligence and vigour to resist instances of unilateralism that could undermine the foundational tenets of our international system enshrined in this Organization's hallowed Charter.

As a responsible stakeholder, Egypt elected to bring this matter to the attention of the Security Council to forestall further escalation and to ensure that unilateral actions do not undermine efforts to reach an agreement on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, prejudice the riparian rights and interests of downstream States or, more alarmingly, endanger the lives of almost 150 million Egyptian and Sudanese citizens, thereby generating greater tension in an unstable region.

We are therefore encouraged that the Security Council is holding today's meeting. This reflects the commitment of its members to ensuring that this essential organ of the United Nations fulfils its responsibilities, as enshrined in the Charter.

We in Egypt populate the most arid of the Nile basin riparian States and one of the most water-impooverished nations on Earth. This harsh reality compels us to inhabit no more than 7 per cent of our territory along a slender strip of green and a fertile delta teeming with millions of souls, whose annual share of water is no more than 560 cubic metres, which places Egypt well below the international threshold of water scarcity.

On the other hand, our brethren in Ethiopia have been endowed by divine providence with plentiful water resources, which include an average annual rainfall of almost 936 billion cubic metres of water, of which a mere 5 per cent flows into the Blue Nile, and 11 other river basins, some of which are shared with neighbouring States, all of which provide endless opportunities for regional economic cooperation and integration.

This means that if the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is filled and operated unilaterally in the absence of a mutually beneficial agreement that protects the lives and livelihood of downstream communities, it could place further stress on an already severely strained hydrological reality and endanger millions of people in both Egypt and the Sudan.

Concurrently, however, we are unwaveringly committed to supporting our fellow African nations, especially in the Nile basin, including Ethiopia, in their efforts to realize greater prosperity. This is evident in the fact that Egypt has cooperated with every State of the Nile basin in constructing dams, in rain-harvesting projects, in digging water wells and in removing waterweeds that constrict the flow of the river. This reflects our unshakeable belief in our common destiny as Africans and confirms our conviction that the Nile river is not the exclusive property of Egypt or of any riparian State but the common heritage and sacred trust of all our peoples.

Therefore, for almost a decade, Egypt has initiated and engaged in painstaking negotiations on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. Our objective, throughout these arduous talks, was to reach a fair and just agreement that ensures that Ethiopia achieves its legitimate development objectives, while minimizing the harmful effects of the dam on downstream communities. We endeavoured tirelessly to reach an agreement that harnesses the developmental potential of this dam for Ethiopia, while limiting its many perils for Egypt and the Sudan.

Because the two letters addressed by the Government of Egypt to the Security Council on 1 May and 19 June 2020 (S/2020/355 and S/2020/566) detail the successive stages of the negotiations on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, I will recount only the main milestones of these arduous talks, throughout which we conducted ourselves with good faith and demonstrated a genuine political will to reach a fair and balanced agreement that preserves the rights and equities of all three riparian States that share the Blue Nile.

Since Ethiopia unilaterally commenced the construction of the dam, our negotiations have included numerous trilateral and bilateral summit meetings between the leaders of our three countries. Moreover, in a testament to our enduring commitment to and abiding faith in the values of our African continent, we attended and convened several regional bilateral and multilateral summits and meetings with our other African brethren in a bid to facilitate the reaching of an agreement that assures Ethiopia that the dam will generate hydropower efficiently and sustainably, while limiting and minimizing the adverse effects and preventing the significant harm of this dam to downstream States.

We also held countless trilateral meetings between the ministers of water affairs and their technical teams and many meetings of the ministers of foreign affairs to provide political support to these talks. We established an independent committee of hydrologists to provide impartial scientific analysis of the scenarios of the filling and operation of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. Unfortunately, however, all those efforts came to naught.

To overcome the hurdles facing our negotiations and invigorate these talks, on 23 March 2015 our three countries concluded the Agreement on Declaration of Principles between the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Republic of the Sudan on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Project.

This treaty, the content and terms of which are unambiguous and unequivocal, was intended to provide greater political impetus and guidance to our discussions. It reconfirmed the legal obligation incumbent upon Ethiopia to conduct studies on the transboundary hydrological and socioeconomic effects of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and to undertake an assessment of its environmental impact. It also reaffirmed Ethiopia's political commitment and its legal obligation not to fill the dam without an agreement with its two downstream co-riparians on the rules governing both the filling and operation, which would guarantee Ethiopia the hydropower benefits of this project while minimizing its many harms on downstream States.

Regrettably, however, despite the fact that we contracted an international consultancy firm to conduct the studies on the effects and impacts of the dam, the process of undertaking these studies was obstructed and, as a result, they were never completed. Nor do we have unassailable guarantees regarding the safety and structural soundness of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. This means that, in the absence of sufficient scientific data, communities downstream of this great structure appear condemned to live in the dark shadow of a great unknown.

If, God forbid, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam experiences structural failures or faults, it would place the Sudanese people under unimaginable peril and would expose Egypt to unthinkable hazards. Indeed, our concerns in that regard are not unwarranted. In 2010, the headrace tunnel of the Gibe II dam, constructed across the Omo river, collapsed within days of the completion of its construction.

It is also deeply disheartening that, throughout the winding path of these negotiations on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, Egypt has been subjected to an unjustifiable campaign of unfounded claims that we sought to bind other parties to agreements from the dark era of colonialism. The reality, however, is that every treaty relating to the Nile that was concluded by Ethiopia was signed by its Government, free of any compulsion or coercion and as an independent and sovereign State. These include a treaty freely signed by the Emperor of Abyssinia in 1902, which prohibited the construction of any waterworks across the Blue Nile that affect the natural flow of the river, and a general framework for cooperation, also freely signed by Ethiopia's late Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, and Egypt's President in 1993, in addition to the 2015 Agreement on Declaration of Principles. Needless to say, all these treaties remain binding and in force.

As construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam neared completion, and as every other path towards an agreement proved unsuccessful, Egypt called upon our partners in the United States of America and the World Bank to join our talks in an attempt to bridge the gap between our three countries. That led, after intensive negotiations in which the three countries fully participated, and for the first time after almost a decade of talks, to an agreement that was prepared under the auspices of the United States and with technical input from the World Bank.

That agreement, which Egypt accepted and initialled on 28 February, but which Ethiopia rejected at the eleventh hour, provided a fair and balanced, win-win solution that promotes the interests of our three countries and preserves their riparian rights and equities.

That agreement, which is annexed to our letter addressed to the Security Council dated 19 June 2020, is now available to the international community as a testament to Egypt's good will and as evidence, beyond any doubt, that an equitable and fair agreement was available for the parties to sign.

Furthermore, because Egypt is dedicated to exploring every possible avenue to reach an agreement on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, it partook in the latest rounds of negotiations, which were held at the initiative of the Republic of the Sudan. However, those talks were also unsuccessful.

It is Egypt's belief that an agreement on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam must be a legally binding instrument under international law, which must also include clear definitions establishing the threshold of significant harm that must be prevented, in addition to a binding dispute-resolution mechanism to ensure the effective implementation of the agreement. On the other hand, it was argued that mere guidelines of uncertain and ambiguous legal value that could be unilaterally adjusted should suffice. It was also suggested that any such document would not include a firm obligation to prevent the infliction of significant harm on downstream riparians.

Moreover, in keeping with our principled position that the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam must be filled and operated in accordance with a mutually beneficial agreement that promotes the common interests of our three countries, Egypt accepted the invitation of President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa to hold a meeting of the Extraordinary African Union Bureau of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government on 26 June to deliberate this matter.

The object and purpose of that meeting was to ensure that an agreement on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam be reached expeditiously. As such, it was agreed that intergovernmental technical negotiations will be held with a view to achieving this goal within two weeks.

Moreover, during that meeting, Ethiopia committed not to take any unilateral measures by commencing the filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam before an agreement is reached. That commitment can only be interpreted as an unequivocal undertaking to ensure that the filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is executed in accordance with rules agreed upon among the three riparian States. Any other understanding or interpretation of that commitment would reflect the lack of political will to reach an agreement on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and reveal an underlying intention to impose an unacceptable *fait accompli* on downstream States and enforce the unilateral will of an upstream State on its co-riparians, and turn any talks into an exercise in futility.

It is incumbent on the Security Council to take note of and welcome these outcomes of the meeting of the African Union Bureau and to call upon the three countries to comply with their commitments and pledges.

Filling the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam unilaterally, without an agreement with Egypt and the Sudan, would jeopardize the interests of downstream communities, whose existence and survival depend on the Nile River.

Furthermore, the unilateral operation of this mega-dam could have disastrous socioeconomic effects that would diminish every dimension of the human security of Egyptians, including food security, water security, environmental security and human health. It would also expose millions to greater economic vulnerability,

leading to increasing rates of crime and illegal migration. It would reduce water quality, disrupt the riparian ecosystem, damage biodiversity and aggravate the dangers of climate change.

That eventuality represents a serious threat to international peace and security. It could also have serious, if not seismic, political ramifications. Downstream States would find themselves in an intolerable situation and it would create an atmosphere of animosity between our countries and sow the seeds of discord between our peoples. It is therefore necessary for the Security Council and the international community to exert every effort and support every initiative that is intended to lift this looming threat and remove this ominous peril on the horizon.

While our position remains that the only viable solution to the question of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is to reach a fair and balanced agreement, Egypt will uphold and protect the vital interests of its people. Survival is not a question of choice, but an imperative of nature.

Accordingly, we call on the Security Council to encourage the parties to negotiate in good faith to reach an agreement on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, and to refrain from any unilateral measures until such an agreement is reached. Until our efforts are successful and an agreement is concluded, the Security Council should, as it discharges its duties, remain actively seized of the matter.

In this context, Egypt has presented a draft resolution for deliberation by the Security Council that is consistent with the outcomes of the African Union Bureau meeting. It encourages the three States to reach an agreement within two weeks and not to take any unilateral measures in relation to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, and emphasizes the important role of the Secretary-General in this regard. This draft resolution is not intended to pre-empt or forestall any negotiations but to express, at the highest level, the keen interest of the international community in reaching an agreement on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and its appreciation of the dangers of acts of unilateralism in this matter.

While we continue to extend an unflinching hand of friendship to our brethren, we expect our kinsmen with whom we share the Nile River to reciprocate our good will and to act with responsibility. Much as we wholeheartedly support Ethiopia's right to development, including through the use of our shared water resources, we believe that justice dictates that Ethiopia respect Egypt's right to life.

Indeed, as President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi declared in his statement before a joint session of the Ethiopian Parliament:

"I urge us to lay the foundations for a better future for our children and grandchildren ... a future where all classrooms in Ethiopia could have electricity ... and where children in Egypt could drink water from the Nile as their parents and grandparents did ... a future where the economies of both our countries would expand to absorb their entire labour force ... with the purpose of guaranteeing a decent life to our peoples ... so as to restore their standing among the family of nations given their glorious history and immense potential".

In conclusion, I must reiterate that we stand ready to exert every effort to reach an agreement on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. I call on my friends and colleagues in Ethiopia and the Sudan to summon the spirit of brotherhood and kinship among our countries and peoples. Let us embrace the undeniable truth of our commonality and camaraderie. Let us grasp the opportunity that is before us to shape our fate, rewrite history and chart a new course of peace and prosperity for our peoples.

**Annex XVI****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations, Taye Atske-Selassie Amde**

As a founding Member of the United Nations, Ethiopia's commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations has been solid and consistent. It has always been a staunch supporter of the principle of collective security and multilateralism. Ethiopia's track record in this regard speaks for itself. It has always adhered to and actively supported and promoted these principles at the regional and international levels. In its entire history, Ethiopia has never caused a threat to any country. It has, rather, contributed to the cause of peace through its active participation in peacekeeping and peacebuilding since the early days of the United Nations up to this day.

That said, let me be clear that Ethiopia does not believe that the issue being discussed today has a legitimate place in the Security Council. It is bound to set a bad precedent and open a Pandora's box. The Security Council should not be a forum for settling scores and for exerting diplomatic pressure. It is therefore regrettable that the Council has allowed itself to be politicized in this manner.

As we have informed the Council, the tripartite negotiations between Ethiopia, Egypt and the Sudan have not yet been concluded. The three countries have in fact reached consensus on most of the prominent technical issues in the latest rounds of negotiation. That is why Ethiopia is of the view that progress is at hand and a mutually beneficial agreement is within reach.

Even if the three countries fail to resolve their differences on the outstanding issues, the Agreement on Declaration of Principles on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam — signed in 2015 by their leaders — provides for dispute-settlement mechanisms, which are yet to be exhausted. Furthermore, the African Union (AU) has the necessary good will and expertise to help the three countries in bridging their differences and reaching a mutually acceptable solution.

It is indeed lamentable, to say the least, that the principle of complementarity and subsidiarity between the United Nations and regional organizations, much talked about in this Council, was ignored when the issue related to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam was unjustifiably brought to its attention. It also contravenes Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations, which stipulates that parties to any dispute, among others, shall first “resort to regional agencies or arrangements”.

Members of the Council are aware that, three days ago, the Extraordinary African Union Bureau of the Assembly of Heads of State held a meeting under the chairmanship of President Cyril Ramaphosa. As stated in the communiqué issued on 27 June 2020, the three countries agreed to resume negotiations and resolve the remaining issues through tripartite consultations, under “an AU-led process” in the spirit of pan-African solidarity and within the framework of African solutions to African problems. Therefore, the African Union is now seized of the matter, and it is only appropriate that the Security Council allow the AU-led process to take its course.

Needless to say, the Nile is as important to Ethiopia as it is to Egypt and the Sudan as a source of livelihood and economic development. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is conceived as a centrepiece of our national development aspirations. Ethiopia generates 86 per cent of the total average annual flow of the Nile waters, but it has never benefited from the river at all. The 1959 agreement between Egypt and the Sudan has apportioned the entire waters of the Nile between the two of

them, with Egypt securing the lion's share, leaving nothing for Ethiopia. That was the most unilateralist decision to have ever been taken concerning transboundary rivers.

That is not all. In 1997, Egypt again took another unilateral decision and built the Toshka and Salam Canals, taking the Nile waters away from their natural course. Ethiopia's repeated complaints over these projects since the mid-1950s have fallen on deaf ears. The first complaint was made by the Government of Emperor Haile Selassie regarding the 1959 agreement. Egypt ignored Ethiopia's subsequent objections. Despite these historical facts, Egypt continues to accuse Ethiopia of taking unilateralist actions with respect to the building of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

Ethiopia is not asking too much; it is seeking to correct past injustices and share this precious resource in an equitable and reasonable manner. Despite being endowed with abundant water resources in the Nile basin, for years, the people of Ethiopia have been deprived of their rights to use this resource to extricate themselves from abject poverty. This is why, for Ethiopia, accessing and utilizing its water resources is not a matter of choice, but of existential necessity.

The unfortunate reality is that today, in 2020, tens of millions of Ethiopians still use firewood as a primary source of fuel, with severe consequences to their health and the environment. All rural households, where 85 per cent of Ethiopians live and nearly two-thirds of school children are, are forced to stay in darkness. By contrast, nearly 100 per cent of the Egyptian population, both in cities and rural areas, has access to electricity.

Therefore, Ethiopia believes it has a national and moral imperative to do everything in its power to improve the lives of its people. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is an answer to Ethiopian mothers' cries for help, so that they do not have to trek hours to collect firewood. The unfortunate reality is that pregnant mothers are still being carried on stretchers over long distances due to the lack of electricity to access life-saving emergency obstetrics care. The images of young girls with back-breaking loads of firewood on their shoulders are also a daily reality.

Once completed, the dam will generate 15,700 gigawatt hours annually, bringing electricity and an opportunity for a dignified life to more than 65 million people who currently live in darkness. That is why we have emphasized again and again that the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is a development project and cannot in any way be a matter of security threat. If there is a security threat to be discussed, it has to do with the fact that there are millions of Ethiopians living under the poverty line. The dam is meant to uplift these people and, in a way, it is averting a potential threat rather than posing any. Seeking social progress and better living standards for our people — leaving no one behind — is indeed consistent with the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and the Sustainable Development Goals that we all aspire to achieve by 2030. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is also one of the megaprojects envisioned under Ethiopia's efforts to realize the African Union Agenda 2063.

I should also underline here why the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is a people's project, which is being built by Ethiopians from all walks of life with unprecedented zeal. It is to be recalled that various obstacles have been created to prevent Ethiopia from accessing international support. My Government is just coordinating a public-owned and public-funded project. Therefore, it has a solemn responsibility to bring this project to successful completion.

From the very beginning, Ethiopia has taken unprecedented initiatives to create understanding with both Egypt and the Sudan on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam by establishing, inter alia, an international panel of experts and a

tripartite national committee to implement its recommendations, and later a national independent scientific research group to formulate various scenarios related to the filling and annual operation of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. All these initiatives have failed to deliver the desired result because of Egypt's intransigence and its insistence on historic rights and current use. Egypt's consistent efforts to try to scuttle the tripartite negotiation has more to do with its own internal domestic situation than anything else. On the other hand, the Sudan knows full well the benefits of the dam, but we understand that the challenges of political transition with which the country is grappling at the moment are a factor.

Be that as it may, Ethiopia has been guided by the internationally accepted principle of equitable and reasonable utilization and is not causing significant harm in building the dam. Ethiopia cannot harm Egypt and the Sudan through the dam because, if not releasing water is tantamount to harm, then building it in the first place would have been meaningless. We are all people of the Nile. Ethiopia therefore cannot harm Egypt without harming itself. The Agreement on Declaration of Principles clearly encapsulates Ethiopia's firm commitment to the principles of transboundary water utilization.

In fact, Ethiopia's good faith efforts have been unprecedented in the history of transboundary rivers. My country does not deserve to be mistreated; it should instead be commended for demonstrating exemplary cooperation. Neither Egypt nor the Sudan consulted Ethiopia when they built dams on the Nile River.

In October 2019, at the request of Egypt, the United States Government invited the three countries to Washington, D.C., for consultations. Ethiopia responded positively and in good faith, in the hopes that the presence of observers would help facilitate the negotiation. However, Egypt sought to impose unacceptable terms on Ethiopia by leveraging and instrumentalizing the process. Indeed, Egypt's actions unfortunately muddied the waters even further.

Throughout the course of the negotiations, Ethiopia has shown a great deal of flexibility in the tripartite process to build the necessary trust and confidence. As a demonstration of its good faith, Ethiopia agreed to fill the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam reservoir over a period of four to seven years, although the dam could be filled in three years without causing significant harm to Egypt or the Sudan. Furthermore, Ethiopia agreed to postpone the second phase of the first stage of filling if annual inflow at the dam is below 31 billion cubic meters.

The three countries have already agreed on the initial filling of the dam. Mother nature is in agreement, too. This year is an opportune time to begin impounding water in the dam reservoir. Currently, both the Blue Nile and the White Nile have above-normal flow. Lake Victoria is at a record-high level. The Aswan High Dam is also at its full supply level of 182 meters above sea level, which is a record high for the past four decades. During the first stage of impoundment, which is a testing or trial phase, Ethiopia will retain only about one-tenth of the average annual flow of the Blue Nile.

By contrast, every year twice the amount of the water retained during the initial filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is lost to evaporation from the Aswan High Dam. This is in addition to the wastage through water-intensive flood irrigation practices in Egypt. Water is increasingly becoming a scarce commodity. More than 60 per cent of Ethiopia's surface area is dry land, with no sustaining water resources. On the other hand, Egypt is endowed with plenty of groundwater resources and has access to sea water, which could be desalinated for use.

In any transboundary watercourse, drought management is the joint responsibility of all riparian countries. But Egypt wants Ethiopia alone to shoulder

the burden of drought. This is not acceptable. Water-use or dam-operation rules are dependent on the availability of water; hence operation rules must have special guidelines, catering to different hydrological conditions, including drought. The three countries must therefore agree on drought thresholds and cooperative mechanisms for sharing the responsibility for addressing and mitigating any consequences of drought and climate change.

Furthermore, Ethiopia believes that any future dispute arising from the use of the Blue Nile waters should be resolved in line with the principles agreed in the Agreement on Declaration of Principles, which provides for a mechanism that allows the three countries to address their grievances through “conciliation, mediation or [by referring] the matter for the consideration of the Heads of State [or] Government”. Ultimately, Ethiopia believes that any agreement must not in any way constrain its sovereign rights to future use and upstream development on the Blue Nile.

Finally, the involvement of the Security Council on this issue risks hardening positions and making compromise even more difficult. Instead of pronouncing itself on this matter, the Council should defer to the African Union and encourage the three countries to return to the tripartite negotiations as the only means of finding an amicable solution to the remaining outstanding issues. We also hope the Council will be cautious not to amplify differences and undermine the AU-led process.

In this momentous year marking the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, I wish to recall a moment in history when another Ethiopian leader, Emperor Haile Selassie, spoke before the League of Nations to make a moral case against the scourge of colonialism and the invasion of his country. He warned that “[i]t is us today, it will be you tomorrow”. Unfortunately, the League of Nations did little to heed that call. It would be regrettable if Ethiopia’s call today not to politicize or internationalize the issue of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam were not heeded by the Security Council. We can only hope that the Council will choose to be on the right side of history, for in many ways the matter being dealt with by the Council today is deeply rooted in a colonial legacy.

Let me conclude by emphasizing the fact that the Nile basin countries enjoy one of the oldest relationships in human history. The seeds of our common development were planted thousands of years ago. Our time-tested links through the Nile should provide us with the truth and faith to do what is just for the betterment of all of our peoples. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam offers a unique opportunity for transboundary cooperation among our sisterly countries. It should never be an object of competition or mistrust. In this spirit, Ethiopia will pursue an amicable solution through win-win negotiations. We also seek the understanding of our brothers and sisters from Egypt and the Sudan. We are confident that, under the AU-led process, we will reach a cooperative agreement in the coming weeks.