

Beyond Development: political context analysis as a tool for a more effective EU-Africa Partnership

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Climate Change

In this paper I would like to draw attention to the fact that climate change offers a new perspective on development basics and energy provision. Climate change is a global phenomenon that has particularly severe consequences for the African continent. It aggravates the fragility of existing situations of which it is not necessarily the cause. Furthermore I want to bring to the fore the importance of the African political context in which the EU-Africa partnership has to function. Understanding the political economy of African decision making will be crucial for a successful partnership in the future.

Accumulation of climate change effects in Africa

Over the last decade, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has provided extensive scientific proof that there is almost certainly a substantial human contribution to the development and the evolution of climate change. But even if warming occurs worldwide, what makes the African continent different compared to other regions in the world, is the accumulation of different climate change effects.

First, scientific data suggest that Africa is warming up faster than the global average (Hulme, M, et al, 2001), as the following figure illustrates:

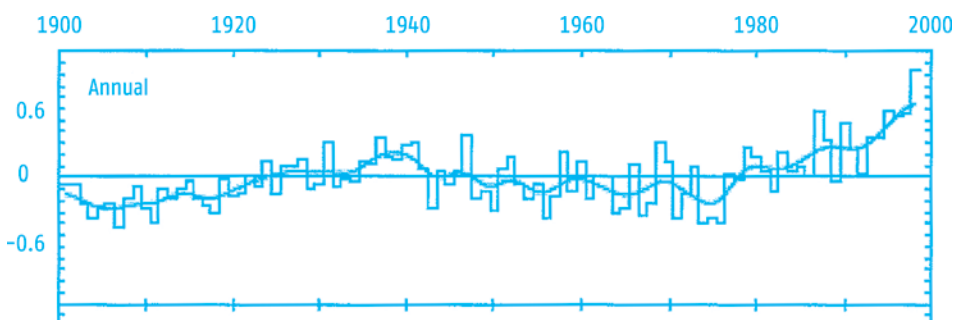


Figure: African annual mean temperature anomalies from 1900 to 2000.

Second, there is not a single continent wide "African Climate Change Effect." Africa is as diverse as it is big. Some areas of the continent will become drier, others wetter. For some it might mean prosperity due to an increase of rain and vegetation. For most other areas, however, it will mean dire adversity due to a decrease in rain. Since the climate variations do not abide by the formal frontiers of countries, this might also be a future cause for concern although exactly how this concern will materialise remains to be seen.

According to the German Advisory Council on Global Change (WBGU)¹ current climate models do not allow us to make a reliable forecast about the average rainfall in the Sahel zone. The Sahel zone is a semi-arid strip of land that passes through Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Chad and Sudan. For the Western Sahara in particular the current models even produce contradictory results, as some say that there will be more rain while others predict desertification. There is consensus, however, about the high vulnerability of the Sahel region and the fact that climate change could amplify the fragile character of states in the region, owing to the susceptibility to socio-economic crises and violent conflicts within these countries.

The third matter to take into account is the agricultural sector, on which climate change has a very direct impact. The IPCC report published in 2007 highlighted that Africa is the most vulnerable continent to climate change because of weak capacity to adapt. In rural environments, adaptation strategies have been put in place to deal with the existing climatic variations. But this may not be enough to enable communities to cope with future climate change which could bring more frequent or more severe flooding or droughts and further temperature rises. Agricultural productivity is likely to decline, which will impact on food security. For Southern Africa in particular, it is likely that the simultaneous occurrence of desertification, salinisation and regional water scarcity will cause declining grain harvests and thus have a direct effect on food security.

For the Sahel and Southern Africa, overgrazing, deforestation and non-sustainable agriculture are vital issues to tackle because these are human induced climate vulnerabilities. These matters will only get worse if weak economic and political structures cannot address widespread poverty and social inequality. Tackling these fundamental problems constitute the building blocks for a sustainable recovery. Chevalier (2008/9) concludes that: "climate variability therefore threatens to destroy the foundations of African economies and the livelihoods of millions of people. For this reason it is necessary...to consider climate change in the context of socio-economic development, and ...to point out the interconnectedness between climate change and development in sub-Saharan Africa."²

The real catch for African countries is that those who will be hit hardest by the impact of climate change lack the capacity to deal with its consequences. Although climate change can have an impact on development, the lack of capacity to appropriately address these issues has nothing to do with climate change but brings us back to development basics such as poverty eradication, education, governance, conflict management, and local and regional cooperation.

Collaborative research: a way out of the energy and development nexus?

Investing in collaborative research and development between developing and developed countries, and their respective institutions, is a necessary and durable manner to close the gap in developing economies between their need for energy and limiting their carbon emissions for the future. An example of this

¹ German Advisory Council on Global Change 2008. *Climate Change as a Security Risk*. Earthscan London and Sterling, 248pp.

² Chevalier, R (2008/9) Addressing Mitigation of and Adaptation to Climate Change in Sub-Saharan Africa While Meeting Development Goals. South African Yearbook of International Affairs 5 2008/9.

approach is the development of carbon capture and storage technology, which involves capturing carbon dioxide (CO₂) and storing it safely in geological structures. On 25th of November 2009 the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Jonas Gahr Støre announced that Norway and South Africa would collaborate on the development of carbon capture and storage capacity. Norway argues that a new climate regime under the Climate Change Convention must ensure that incentives are established to promote the dissemination of carbon capture and storage technology for the major emitters that do not have commitments at present. That is why Norway will support the Carbon Capture and Storage Centre that has recently been set up at the South African National Energy Research Institute.³

This research is all the more important because most African countries still depend heavily on fossil fuels for their primary electricity and have a difficult trade-off to make between energy security and the development of durable energy resources. A good example of this dilemma is the loan of \$ 3.75 billion that South Africa's Eskom secured from the World Bank on 9 April 2009. Of this sum, \$ 475 million was earmarked for the development of renewable power, such as wind and solar projects.⁴ This loan was heavily contested precisely because of the small amount of cash that was destined for durable energy provision and is thereby a case in point of how difficult it is to implement climate-proof projects.

Inclusion of climate change policy

To properly address the development basics and the energy dilemma mentioned above, climate change should be approached as a cross-cutting issue. As a consequence, climate change should be integrated into socio-economic development policy planning at national, regional and continental level. Adaptation measures should be mainstreamed across the board into the most important policy sectors. The fact that climate change can exacerbate threats that can have a major impact on life through a series of possible cascading events must be taken into account: desertification could trigger a vicious circle of degradation, migration and conflicts over territory. Migration in turn may increase conflicts in transit and destination areas. This in turn may significantly increase instability in weak or failing states by overstressing the already limited capacity of governments to respond effectively to the challenges they face.⁵ The EU military operation EUFOR Chad is a good example of the cascading effect that climate change can have. The mission was confronted with what was called "unintended feedbacks". One of these unintended feedbacks from the conflict on the environment in Chad and Sudan was the change in the make-up of the population. There was an increase of urbanisation in Darfur and Eastern Chad due to the improved security. The increase of urbanisation attracted Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) and refugees next to urban centres, which was problematic because it took away the best cultivable lands. In turn, this put food security under pressure due to a lack of arable land and water.⁶

³ Jonas Gahr Støre, Norway, SA Need to Pool Climate Efforts 25 November 2009. <http://allafrica.com/stories/200911250214.html>

⁴ World Bank backs loan for South Africa power station 9 April 2010.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8609179.stm>

⁵ Paper from the High Representative and the European Commission to the European Council HR/SG Javier Solana 14 March 2008.

⁶ Hoste, J-C 2009. Observatoire de l'Afrique conference report climate change & security 20 January 2009. <http://www.egmontinstitute.be/papers/09/afri/090326-Climate-Change-Security-CFReport.pdf>

This example reinforces the idea of the cascading effect that multilayered conflicts can have. It also illustrates the paramount importance of in-depth knowledge of the local and regional socio-economic and political context. Climate change will only aggravate these circumstances if this state of affairs remains unaddressed and if coping mechanisms fail to be implemented.

Implications of African political economy for climate change

The importance of understanding the political economy of the African decision-making processes will be crucial for a successful EU–Africa Partnership in the future. In late 2009, the climate change negotiations in Copenhagen were an illustration of this underestimated factor of influence.⁷

Despite the shared challenges thrown up by climate change, countries acted and reacted to the climate change negotiations primarily from the perspective of their national interests. It would be naive to expect African countries to be driven by anything other than an agenda of domestic needs, notwithstanding the fact that they expect these needs to be catered for by the developed world due to their historical responsibility. Although this domestic agenda is a political reality for each African country, there is very little African analysis on the caveats of their own (common) position. The analysis carried out most frequently does not overcome the dichotomy of the developing and the developed nations. Furthermore, very little attention is paid to the influence of political economy on climate change and the development agenda.

South Africa's position in the climate change negotiations

The first example I would like to elaborate on is South Africa's position at the climate change negotiations in Copenhagen in 2009. South Africa's environment Minister Sonjica stated that the result of the negotiations was unacceptable. But South Africa decided to stay in order to influence the process from within, and not carry out a walkout as had been discussed among African leaders.⁸

South Africa had other motives in addition to the ones mentioned above by its Minister for the Environment.

First, South Africa is seen as a major power in Africa and an anchor state in the Southern African region.⁹ It signed this deal to secure economic growth and energy provision. Since South Africa is responsible for 39% of the emissions in Sub-Saharan Africa and is one of the top 12 carbon emitter's worldwide it needs to strike a delicate balance between mitigation efforts and economic growth.¹⁰ An effective climate change policy in South Africa, that is no impediment to economic growth, needs a fundamental reorganisation of energy production

⁷ Hoste, J-C 2010. Where was united Africa in the climate change negotiations? *Africa Policy Brief* N°2. <http://www.egmontinstitute.be/papers/10/afr/2010-feb-Afr.P.Brief-Hoste-climate-change.pdf>

⁸ South Africa blasts Copenhagen failure, Associated Press, 22 December 2009.

⁹ Niemack A. The Challenges of Carbon Mitigation and Implications for South Africa in the post-2012 Context, in *South African Yearbook of International Affairs*. 2008/2009. Jan Smuts House Johannesburg: SAIIA, 2009.

¹⁰ Chevalier R. Addressing Mitigation of and Adaptation to Climate Change in Sub-Saharan Africa While Meeting Development Goals in *South African Yearbook of International Affairs*. 2008/2009. Jan Smuts House Johannesburg: SAIIA, 2009.

and consumption patterns to become less reliant on coal as its primary energy source.¹¹

Second, South Africa wants to secure continued international investment and was a prominent member of the African delegations that were invited to the China and South Korea summits. Although relations with China are not always straightforward because China has a firm grip on economic development in Southern Africa, it relies heavily on South Africa's non-fuel minerals like platinum and manganese.

Third, President Jacob Zuma put South Africa in the international spotlight as a member of the newly formed BRIC group, a gathering of four emerging economies along with China, India and Brazil. The latter three are emerging economic powers that wield considerable influence unilaterally and South Africa benefits from being part of this heavyweight collective that bolsters its global influence. An illustration of South Africa's use of this international stature for internal politics is the "January 8" statement of the African National Congress (ANC)¹². In the declaration the ANC reiterates that South Africa, together with its counterparts in the developing world, contributed to the progress made at the Climate Change Summit held in Copenhagen.

Environment policy in the Horn of Africa: the political economy of the Nile River water management

The second example I would like to draw attention to is an illustration of how intertwined the measures to be taken in terms of agriculture and water management are with the political context in the case of the Nile basin. An equitable management of the Nile Basin's water in which almost 40% of Africa's population is living would be beneficial for all parties. If there was more cooperation between riparian states it would be mutually beneficial even for Egypt that is afraid it will be cut off from a sufficient water supply and is even willing to go to war over it.¹³ If dams were built upstream by Ethiopia it would actually save water and provide more water for all the riparian states. It would reduce the annual Nile floods and be a solution to the problems of salinisation and evaporation.¹⁴ Politically, however, the issue is very sensitive because several parties are afraid of losing influence and face in any new agreement that is reached.

The Nile Basin consists of 10 riparian states: Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The Nile basin has two major sources, the White Nile originating in Burundi flowing into Lake Victoria and the Blue Nile originating from Lake Tana in Ethiopia, which together form one drainage system.¹⁵ The dynamics between the riparian states around lake Victoria Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, Rwanda

11 Masters L. The Road to Copenhagen: Climate Change, Energy and South Africa's Foreign Policy SAIIA Occasional Paper, No.47, October 2009.

12 This statement marks the party's founding on January 8, 1912 and spells out the ANC priorities for 2010. It is one of the most important statements preceding President Zuma's State of the Union at the beginning of February.

13 Hassan H. A. & Al Rasheedy A. The Nile River and Egyptian Foreign Policy Interests *African Sociological Review* 11, 1, p. 25-37.

14 Tadesse, D. 2009. Review of early experiences, current challenges and opportunities among the Nile Basin riparian states in Climate change and transboundary water resources conflicts in Africa Workshop Report 29-30 September 2009, p 12.

15 Adar K.G. 2007. Kenya's Foreign Policy and Geopolitical Interests: The Case of the Nile River Basin. *African Sociological Review* 11, 1, p. 63-80.

and Burundi are fundamentally different from the dynamics of the riparian states of the blue Nile Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt, although there are connections.¹⁶ In our example we will focus on the political dynamics of the disagreements concerning the use of the Blue Nile water between Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia.¹⁷

The disagreements as regards the Nile Basin have been ongoing for years. Each of the parties has tried to convince its opponent of the validity of its argument by referring to international law.¹⁸ The net result is that the major parties in this dossier, Egypt and Sudan on the one hand, refer to their historical rights, while Ethiopia on the other hand refers to an equitable use of the Nile water, and neither party changed their position until recently.

Political economy of the Nile: Egypt and Sudan

The 1959 Water Agreement or regime change for Sudan

Up to now Egypt and Sudan have been the biggest beneficiaries of the Nile Waters due to the water treaties of 1929 and 1959.¹⁹ Today they both receive the lion's share of the water, 55.5 and 18.5 billion cubic metres respectively, assuming that 10 billion cubic metres evaporates. Despite these facts and although Egypt and Sudan are seen as one party in these negotiations, their relationship is more complex.

The 1929 Water Agreement prioritised Egypt's "natural and historical" rights as the British officials defined it, which automatically rendered the rights of Sudan secondary to Egypt. Sudan was put in the position of a symbolic, unequal and passive partner in the agreement. It was considered as Egypt's backyard.²⁰ Egypt developed irrigation schemes throughout Sudan and other riparian states that were under British rule. In 1956 Sudan became independent, which led to the need for a new water agreement between Egypt and Sudan. Egypt wanted the new agreement to follow the 1929 accord, but the newly independent Sudan government led by Prime Minister Abdalla Khalil did not want to sign such an agreement. They considered it unfair and wanted a revision of Sudan's rights. The 1958 change of government in Sudan from a democratic government to a military regime led by General Ibrahim Aboud was considered "a brainchild of the Egyptian government that had become concerned about the democratically elected Sudanese Government"²¹ The complicity of the Egyptian government became clear when the new military regime not only recognised the legality of the 1929 Nile Waters Agreement but also signed the 1959 Waters Agreement, allowing Egypt to build the Sudd el Aali and the Aswan Dam. Sudan from its side

16 Adar K.G. 2007. The Interface between National Interest and Regional Stability: The Nile River and the Riparian States *African Sociological Review* 11, 1, p. 4-9.

17 Kendie D. 1999. Hydro-politics of the Blue Nile River. *Northeast African Studies* 6.1-2, p.141-169

18 Kindiki K. 2009. Water and food security in the Nile River Basin – Legislative, policy and institutional arrangements for cooperation in Climate change and transboundary water resources conflicts in Africa Workshop Report 29-30 September 2009, p 29-38.

19 Lumumba, P.L.O. 2007. The Interpretation of the 1929 Treaty and its Legal Relevance and Implications for the Stability of the Region. *African Sociological Review* 11, 1, p. 10-24.

Deng, B.K. 2007. Cooperation between Egypt and Sudan over the Nile River Waters: The Challenges of Duality. *African Sociological Review* 11, 1, p. 38-62.

20 Deng, B.K. 2007. Cooperation between Egypt and Sudan over the Nile River Waters: The Challenges of Duality. *African Sociological Review* 11, 1, p. 44.

21 Idem, p. 45.

would build the Roseires Dam on the Blue Nile.²² Egypt developed a strategy of interference and even destabilisation in Sudan to make sure that its rights to the Nile waters remained unaffected.

The Hala'ib triangle and access to the Red Sea

Another illustration of the ambivalent relation between Egypt and Sudan is the issue of the Hala'ib triangle which touches upon the second pillar of Egyptian Foreign Policy: access to the Red Sea. The Hala'ib triangle on Egypt's south-eastern border with Sudan has been the subject of a border dispute between Egypt and Sudan in relation to access to the Red Sea and oil. In 1899 the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium Agreement for Sudan set the border between Egypt and Sudan at the 22nd degree of latitude. However, in 1902, for administrative convenience, Britain drew a separate "administrative boundary" under which a triangle of land north of the parallel was placed under Sudanese administration because it was more easily reached from Sudan. This was an "administrative" rather than a sovereign boundary. In 1958 Egyptian President Nasser sent troops into the disputed region. The reason behind this move was Nasser's resentment of the Umma Party's policies and his desire to teach Prime Minister Khalil a lesson. Abdalla Khalil rejected Nasser's notion of pan-Arab unity, as well as his notion of "positive neutrality" and supported the Eisenhower Doctrine and made the Sudan allies with the United States. Matters deteriorated as troops massed on both sides of the border, at which point Khalil warned Nasser that he would complain to the Security Council.

Finally, Muhammad Ahmad Mahjub (Mahgoub), then Sudan's minister of foreign affairs, convinced Nasser to defuse the conflict by warning Egypt's president that the Hala'ib issue would unite all of Sudan against Egypt and Nasser withdrew his troops.²³

In 1978 Texas Eastern discovered small quantities of crude oil in the region. The American company obtained a concession in the Red Sea region, which included Hala'ib, under Numayri's military rule. The Egyptian government warned Texas Eastern that its concession included Egyptian territory north of latitude 22 and thus it required Egyptian approval if it wanted to pursue its search in that region. A crisis was only averted by an agreement between Presidents Numayri and Anwar as-Sadat, in which they permitted Texas Eastern to pursue its search throughout the concession area on the condition that should oil be discovered north of latitude 22, Egypt would get its share.²⁴ No commercial quantities of natural gas or oil were found.

Egypt protested again, when in January 1992, Sudan granted a Canadian company oil exploration rights in the waters off the Hala'ib triangle. Negotiations began, and the Canadian company pulled out of the deal until sovereignty was settled. Egyptian border troops now occupy positions in the Hala'ib triangle. Egypt insists that the presence of its forces in the disputed region is natural,

²² Idem, p. 50.

²³ Warburg, G. 1994. Hot Spot: Egypt and Sudan Wrangle over Halayib. *Middle East Quarterly* 1,1 <http://www.meforum.org/218/hot-spot-egypt-and-sudan-wrangle-over-halayib>

²⁴ Idem

since it is Egyptian territory. Sudanese statements suggest that Egyptian forces have penetrated slightly beyond the 22nd parallel, the internationally recognised boundary which Egypt claims.²⁵ On 9 December 2009 the Sudanese presidential assistant Musa Mohamed Ahmed publicly stated, after being stopped by the Egyptian military, that he was visiting the area to support the troops in the triangle. This was the first time that a Sudanese official had acknowledged the fact that the Sudanese military was present in the Hala'ib triangle.²⁶

The 1994 assassination attempt on Egyptian President Mubarak

The 1994 assassination attempt on Egyptian President Mubarak during the OAU Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, further deteriorated the relations between Egypt and Sudan. Egyptian Muslim Fundamentalist groups were behind the attempt on his life, in collaboration with Sudanese security forces supported by the National Islamic Front (NIF). Their leader Dr. Hassan El Turabi admitted to master-minding the coup and stated that a number of these security elements had to be eliminated to bury evidence of the involvement of the Sudanese government.²⁷ Egypt, Algeria and Tunisia all accuse Sudan of training and arming Islamic extremists from their countries in an attempt to subvert their existing governments.²⁸

The mutual attempts to undertake destabilisation strategies between Egypt and Sudan are an illustration of the complexity and fragility of the political playing field of the Nile basin in which they are perceived as partners. These examples of mutual subversion understate the importance of understanding the political economy of these constantly evolving relations and the implications for the region of the Horn of Africa.

Political economy of the Nile: Egypt and Ethiopia

In this section I shall argue why there is a fundamental shift in the relationship between Egypt and Ethiopia that might prove fundamental for the future power relations in the Horn of Africa.

From destabilisation to cooperation

Historically Egypt's foreign policy has been shaped by the hydro-politics of the Nile and the access to the Red Sea. The Blue Nile is of crucial importance to Egypt because it is the source of more than 85% of the River Nile's water. In line with Egypt's policy towards Sudan, Egypt asserted that it should be strong enough either to dominate Ethiopia, or to create the conditions to prevent the latter from building dams on the Blue Nile. In addition to that Egypt occupied

²⁵ Dunn, M.C. 1993. Egypt, Algeria and Tunisia Accuse Sudan, as Halaib Dispute Flares Up Washington Report on Middle East Affairs p. 33 <http://www.washington-report.org/backissues/0293/9302033.htm>

²⁶ Egypt bars Sudanese official from entering disputed border region: report Sudan Tribune 10 December 2009. <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article33415>

²⁷ Deng, B.K. 2007. Cooperation between Egypt and Sudan over the Nile River Waters: The Challenges of Duality. *African Sociological Review* 11, 1, p. 53.

²⁸ Dunn, M.C. 1993. Egypt, Algeria and Tunisia Accuse Sudan, as Halaib Dispute Flares Up Washington Report on Middle East Affairs p. 33 <http://www.washington-report.org/backissues/0293/9302033.htm>

certain parts of what was to become Eritrea as proof of historical legitimacy, and has instigated the Arab League, as early as 1945, to declare its intention to put Eritrea under the Trusteeship of the Arab nations. Egypt also played a crucial role in the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea by providing access to education at the Al Azar University in Cairo for Eritrean students, opening training camps near Alexandria. As a result, the political strife that Egypt instigated forced Ethiopia to divert scarce resources from development into security and defence.²⁹

For Egyptian President Gamal Nasser this strategy even had a personal side to it. He had contacts with the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie when he was stationed in Sudan from 1938 to 1941 as an Egyptian army officer. After Gamal Nasser took power in 1952, he extended several official invitations to Haile Selassie to visit Egypt. The Emperor repeatedly declined his offers cordially. In December 1956 the tone changed and the Emperor instructed his ambassador to the Sudan, Melesse Andom, to discuss these invitations in the framework of Nasser's further ambitions on Nile Valley unity with the President.³⁰ Melesse Andom did not mince words:

"You claim to be an Arab and to lead the Arab world, but you interfere in the affairs of your Arab neighbours, and have tried to cause trouble for the Governments of Iraq, Libya, Lebanon, and the Sudan. We Ethiopians do not belong to your world, although like you we drink of the water of the Nile. You have military objectives. We do not know exactly what they may be, but we have no confidence in the strength of your armed forces."³¹

After this indirect confrontation with Emperor Selassie, President Nasser appears to have begun his effort to undermine and to destabilise Ethiopia. Egypt has never publicly admitted that one of its foreign policy objectives was and continues to be the destabilisation of Ethiopia.³²

This policy might have shifted because Egypt had to adapt to the political realities in the Horn. Egypt remains a key state in the Horn of Africa and in the Middle East, but its regional influence is declining despite its impressive diplomatic network and strong rhetoric.³³ Egypt's African neighbours are becoming an increasing concern: the future of Sudan has become uncertain with the upcoming referendum in the South and Somalia has been a continuous issue on the international agenda. Ethiopia might become one of Egypt's preferred partners in the region, despite fundamental differences between the two countries regarding the management of the Blue Nile.

After the third Ethiopian–Egyptian joint Ministerial meeting from 26 to 29 March 2010, Egypt and Ethiopia signed a Memorandum of Understanding. The Ethiopian Foreign Affairs Minister Seyoum Mesfin and his Egyptian counterpart Ahmed Aboul Gheit stressed the importance of the economic relationship between the two countries and they reinforced the image of each other's regional leader-

29 Kendie D. 1999. Hydro-politics of the Blue Nile River. *Northeast African Studies* 6.1–2, p.141–169

30 Idem p. 153–154.

31 Erlich, H. 1994. *Ethiopia and the Middle East*, Lynne Rienner Press: Boulder.

32 Interviews with diplomatic sources on 19 October 2010.

33 Idem.

ship in the Horn of Africa. They stated the desire to develop their relations beyond the issue of the Nile River and stressed the immediate need for focused and concrete action by the international community to support the TFG and its institutions. According to Egypt and Ethiopia, the Djibouti Peace Process is the only viable option to bring lasting peace, security and stability in Somalia. They also expressed their commitment to continue to support the efforts of the Sudanese parties in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the important role of Ethiopia in its implementation through its presidency of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.³⁴

On 14 May 2010 Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda signed a new Nile Treaty to replace the Water Agreement of 1959 between Egypt and Sudan that excluded the other riparian states. The basis for the new agreement is the equitable use of the Nile waters without prejudicing other riparian states. The upstream countries want to be able to implement irrigation and hydropower projects in consultation with Egypt and Sudan, but without Cairo being entitled to exercise the veto power it was given by the 1929 colonial-era treaty with Britain.³⁵ The new deal would need at least six signatories to come into force. Kenya has indicated it would be coming on board soon.³⁶ DRC and Burundi may soon follow suit, but Egypt and Sudan have so far refused to give up the previous arrangement which gave them the lion's share of the river's flow.³⁷ Burundi is taking its time to sign the agreement because it might be able to bring the dithering parties together. It was not able to attend the signing in Entebbe due to its election obligations. Egypt is using its diplomatic network to the fullest to try to prevent Burundi from signing the new treaty. The DRC remains absent from the discussions.³⁸

It is noteworthy that Egypt's public rhetoric has toned down. Although it condemned the signing of the new treaty and fights it, Egypt's Minister for Legal Affairs Mufid Shehab was quoted by state media as saying "We do not want to view it as a destructive act, but we view it as a mistaken action and we should stop it."³⁹ This statement is a long way from the threats of war made in the past and although Egypt's informal language in diplomatic circles remains bullish, it cannot adopt the hegemonic role it once did in relation to these countries.

On 7 July 2010 Egypt and Ethiopia had a meeting on the Cooperative Framework Agreement of the Nile Basin Initiative and both countries reaffirmed, just like in their statement of the 30 March 2010, that they would strengthen their ties despite their differences over the Nile. Both parties stated that "This is a work in progress and we are hoping that we would continue negotiation to bridge the gap that exists in different capitals... because it is possible to achieve a win-win scenario."⁴⁰

34 Ethiopia, Egypt signs diverse cooperation agreements ENA 30 March 2010 <http://www.ethiopian-news.com/ethiopia-egypt-sign-diverse-cooperation-agreements/>

35 Ethiopia, Egypt vow to strengthen ties despite Nile differences 9 July 2010 <http://sudantribune.com/spip.php?article35608>

36 Four African countries sign new Nile treaty AFP 14 May 2010 http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/AleqM5jGG0TBz_8m8-Udatx2YtfswhpBtQ

37 Egypt, Sudan won't be forced to sign Nile treaty: officials AFP 27 June 2010 http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/AleqM5gjR0oQRIL_pIMhYBTjia4x60ih6g

38 Interviews with diplomatic sources on 28 September and 19 October 2010.

39 Four African countries sign new Nile treaty AFP 14 May 2010 http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/AleqM5jGG0TBz_8m8-Udatx2YtfswhpBtQ

40 Ethiopia, Egypt vow to strengthen ties despite Nile differences 9 July 2010 <http://sudantribune.com/spip.php?article35608>

The win-win scenario in the power relations between Egypt and Ethiopia might be as follows: the 7 July meeting between Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Abou Al-Gheit and Minister of International Cooperation Faiza Abou Al-Naga on the Nile Basin Initiative came shortly after Meles Zenawi's re-election on the 23 May. That was not a coincidence. The Ethiopian Prime Minister's party – Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) – won and confirmed his position as the strong man in Ethiopia and the region.⁴¹ This was despite the fact that EU observers said that the elections fell short of international standards.⁴² Egypt is strengthening its ties with Ethiopia because it fears the evolution on its borders in Sudan and Somalia and needs a stable partner in the region. The second reason for the growing entente between Egypt and Ethiopia is the upcoming parliamentary and Presidential elections in Egypt. Egypt will need regional support, while Ethiopia has just survived a heavily contested election result. Therefore, at this point in time both countries might have found their win-win scenario.

An analysis of the relations between three of the ten countries of the Nile Basin Initiative is sufficient to clearly show that if a structural solution for the management of the waters of the Nile basin is to be found – and the influence of climate change makes this even more pressing – any proposal put forward will have to deal with the constantly evolving political relations between the riparian states.

Conclusions

- There is a need for more in-depth analysis of the decision-making processes to uncover the drivers and dynamics within the African Union and African regional institutions. Especially since there are potential differences of interest between oil-producing countries, different (sub-) regions, middle-income countries, Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC), Least Developed Countries (LDCs). What are the factors of consensus and divergence in the African institutional decision-making processes?
- This analysis of the African institutional decision-making processes could be beneficial for the EU-Africa Partnership's common agenda activities to help them guide the enhancement capacities of African negotiators.
- Policy makers and the donor community should be aware of the possibility of political (ab)use of climate change by political elites to avoid their responsibilities on issues such as: good governance, poverty eradication and capacity building.
- If the relationship between the EU and Africa is to change, these political realities must be taken into account across all policy areas.
- Future development cooperation should take the political economy of their partner countries into account to be more efficient and effective.

⁴¹ Meles Zenawi's party 'heads for Ethiopia election win' BBC News 24 May 2010 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10150894>

⁴² EU observers say Ethiopia election 'falls short' BBC News 25 May 2010 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10153216>

