

Remarks by the Regional Manager, NBD  
At  
23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Nile Council of Ministers' Meeting  
Opening Ceremony  
4<sup>th</sup> June 2015  
Dodoma - Tanzania

-----  
The Guest of Honour,  
The Nile-COM Chair and Council of Ministers' Members present  
The Nile-TAC  
The Representatives of Development Partners  
The NBI Executive Director & Staff present  
The NBD Board Chair, Board members & Staff present  
Ladies & Gentlemen

On my behalf, and on behalf of the NBD's civil society network and community members in 10 NBRS, it is an honour to be in this presence.

I have, myself, full confidence that if Nile Basin Riparian states Governments and NBD – NDF Civil Society do their duty, anchored on the respective mandates, if nothing is neglected, and if best arrangements are made, as they have been made, we shall prove ourselves able to strongly cooperate, to ride out the storm of war, and to outlive the menace of aloneness, if necessary for many years in cooperation on the Nile waters.

Governments ought to take advantage of NBD's niche and use it as a vehicle to communicate with civil society about the benefits of government interventions and leverage civil society's grassroots presence to advance cooperation and development agendas

Ladies and gentlemen,

To enhance cooperation and development on the Nile and working closely with NBI, First, NBD is now engaged in stakeholder mapping exercise to scope-out the actual and potential CSOs & partners, their activities & geographic coverage, and community issues on policies, projects and programs in the NBRS. The exercise that started February 2015 and is envisaged to be conducted in all the 10 NBRS has already been completed in 8-NBRS. The remaining 2-NBRS, are to be completed in this month of June 2015. These two are D.R Congo and Burundi. At this moment, I would like to pause and with the same breath pray to the almighty God for peace and safety of communities to prevail in the NBRS.

By end of April 2015, the NBD saw it wise and timely to share together with NBI and other relevant partners the earlier outcomes in cluster1-NBRS stakeholder mapping. The outcomes opened the eyes of NBD and NBI, and led to further discussions and resolutions to re-think their respective mandates as

spelled-out in the MoU of 2014 - 2017. The outcomes also pointed to the pivotal role of the CSOs in enhancing the Government's agendas in the NBRS. I believe this is a pointer in the right direction.

The outcomes for the 10-NBRS are to be availed in a complete report and National chapter reports by August 2015 to the Governments. The ECO-Mapping of stakeholders and issues, is to be a continuous process, with data & information available in the NBD-Discourse Intelligence Network (DIN). NBD is developing the DIN to entail NBRS web-based windows that can be accessed by the Governments and other relevant stakeholders. However, for the high-ranked outcomes, NBD is to draft policy briefs to guide discussion at dialogue platforms with respective Governments, either bi-laterally or multi-laterally. This is to enhance decision making and dialogue towards implementation of Government Agendas on cooperation on the Nile and enhanced livelihoods of communities.

Second, and to enhance Governments' efforts in the implementation of policies, projects, and programs on climate risk management, NBD is currently engaged in a capacity building exercise to enable the civil society and community members to actively and effectively participate in social and climate resilience in the basin. As a result, NBD is strengthening stakeholders' engagement in Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). Again, already 8-NBRS have been covered and the remaining 2-NBRS are to be covered in June 2015.

Third, and to strengthen the vertical and horizontal communication and outreach to CSOs and communities, NBD working closely with NBI have created a platform where the benefits of cooperation are presented and discussed guided by NBI with the CSOs and the community members brought together by the NBD. As we speak 3-NBRS have already benefitted from this platform, in the 1<sup>st</sup> – round platform. The remaining 7-NBRS are to benefit from the platform in a scheduled for September 2015.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I have full confidence, that the Civil society are key partners who can play a critical role in serving as an important linkage between communities and national Governments in promoting national and regional programs and projects.

In conclusion,

I would like to state on my behalf and that of the CSO Network that the key is for Nile-COM to understand that civil society is a resource and NBD can be a useful vehicle to communicate with communities to mitigate mistrust and enhance community understanding of development objectives. Let me stop here, by wishing this sitting of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Nile Council of Ministers, great success.

-----

Dr. Hellen Natu  
Regional Manager, NBD