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The House of People's Representatives Of
The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Office Of The Speaker

ቁጥር MPK/01/01
Ref.No
ቀን 25/11/2019
Date

Hon. Mishaal bin Fahm Al-Salami,

I wish first and foremost to convey my respectful greetings.

It is with great dismay that I learned of the Resolution by the Arab Parliament issued on the 31st Oct 2019 in Cairo regarding Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and the Trilateral Negotiation between Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan.

The House of Peoples' Representatives of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has closely examined the "Resolution" of the Arab Parliament issued on October 31, 2019 regarding the Ethiopian Great Renaissance Dam and the Trilateral Negotiation between Ethiopia, Egypt and the Sudan, and would like to rectify and put on record Ethiopia's opposition to such an imbalanced Resolution.

The Nile River is a common resource of all the eleven Basin Countries under International law. However, the entire Nile water resources have all along been allocated between Egypt and the Sudan, based on the 1929 and the 1959 Colonial Treaties. These are Treaties that Ethiopia has completely rejected from the very outset. Since Ethiopia is not party to these Treaties, we are not bound by them under Internationals law.

Likewise, there has never been a Basin-wide Legal and Institutional Framework for cooperation and equitable utilization of the Nile waters among the Basin Countries. It is only in the past two decades that the joint

efforts of the Nile Basin Countries to create a Framework for the equitable utilization of their shared water resource came to fruition.

In the face of the above vivid fact, the Arab Parliament has chosen to issue a Resolution that asserts its desire to defend the so called historical rights of Egypt on the Nile waters. This assertion of historical rights means denial of any use of the Nile water by upstream countries. Upstream countries, which have not been consulted nor parties to the unjustifiable and exclusive Colonial Treaties, are not bound to them and international norm or practice does not prevent upstream countries of the Nile River from using their equitable and reasonable share of their water resources.

Contemporary international law strongly favours the principle of equitable and reasonable use of international rivers without causing significant harm to other Riparian Countries. This cardinal principle is enshrined in the Declaration of Principles signed in 2015 in Khartoum by the Heads of State of Ethiopia, Egypt and the Sudan. Ethiopia deeply regrets that the Resolution contravenes this Declaration of Principle which clearly reiterates the equitable and reasonable utilization of the Nile water resources without causing significant harm to the riparian countries.

It is very unfortunate that the Arab Parliament chose to express its resolve to stand by Egypt's historical rights on the Nile waters while it has remained silent on the rights of Ethiopia- a country that is the source of more than 85 percent of the Nile waters while 67 percent of the populations do not have access to electricity. By virtue of this Resolution, we see a discriminatory view to Ethiopia's critical rights to bring its population out of abject poverty by improving their access to electricity.

As you recall, the friendship between Ethiopia and the Arab World is rooted in religion, culture, peoples to people relation, inter-governmental engagement and economic relation, which goes back to ancient times. More importantly, this friendship is progressing to fulfill the expectation of the countries to bring tangible and sustainable benefit to our countries. Hence, the "Resolution" greatly undermines these valued strong ties.

The GERD is a hydropower dam and, hence, does not consume water. It merely needs care during filling of its reservoir, so that it does not cause significant impacts on downstream countries. Very often, this issue is highly politicized and misses the very important nature of the economic, social and environmental importance of this hydropower infrastructure.

Furthermore, the Government of Ethiopia had ensured the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam accrues benefit to all countries concerned and that it does not cause significant harm on any of the basin countries. The Government also initiated trilateral dialogue with Sudan and Egypt in order to create confidence, build trust and ensure transparency regarding the Dam. By these initiatives that Ethiopia has taken in the spirit of brotherhood and transparency, it has demonstrated its willingness for cooperation despite the absence of any obligation on its part or for that matter a similar international practice in other parts of the world.

In the spirit of cooperation and transparency, Ethiopia shared its filling plan of the GERD on 19 December 2017 to Egypt and Sudan which is entirely compatible with the principles contained in the 2015 Declaration of Principles.

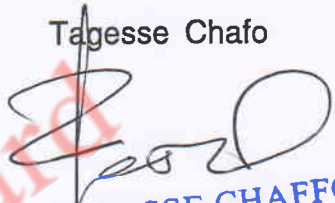
Therefore, Ethiopia urges the Arab Parliament to correct its position on the Nile and the Great Renaissance Dam, and refrain from encouraging the “winner-takes-all” approach of Egypt towards cooperation on the Nile.

Ethiopia believes that the only way to resolve any differences regarding the filling and operation of the GERD is through maintaining the dialogue and by resorting to technically informed consultations without undue politicization and unwelcomed third party meddling in the affairs.

Please accept, Honorable, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Hon. Mishaal bin Fahm Al-Salami,
Speaker of the Arab Parliament
Arab Parliament
Cairo



Tagesse Chafo

TAGESSE CHAFFO
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

CC:

- Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
- President of the Arab Republic of Egypt
- President of the Sovereign Council of the Republic of the Sudan
- Secretary General of the United Nations
- Chairperson of the African Union Commission
- Chairperson of the Pan African Parliament
- Chairperson of the International Parliamentary Union
- Secretary General of the Arab League
- Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference
- Member States of the Arab Parliament