



24 July 2020

COMMUNIQUE OF THE 2nd EXTRAORDINARY AFRICAN UNION (AU) BUREAU OF THE ASSEMBLY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT VIDEO-TELECONFERENCE MEETING ON THE GRAND ETHIOPIAN RENAISSANCE DAM (GERD) HELD ON 21 JULY 2020

His Excellency President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa, in his capacity as the Chairperson of the African Union (AU), convened an Extraordinary Meeting of the African Union (AU) Bureau of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, on 21 July 2020, to review progress pertaining to the Trilateral Negotiations on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). This was a follow-up to the 1st Extraordinary Meeting of the AU Bureau on the GERD held on 26 June 2020.

All the Members of the AU Bureau participated in the video-teleconference (VTC) Meeting as follows:

- His Excellency, President Felix Tshisekedi of the Democratic Republic of Congo;
- His Excellency, President Abdel Fattah al Sisi of the Arab Republic of Egypt;
- His Excellency, President Uhuru Kenyatta of the Republic of Kenya;
- His Excellency, President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita of the Republic of Mali;

His Excellency, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and His Excellency, Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok of the Republic of Sudan, participated in the Meeting.

His Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC) also participated in the Meeting.

The Meeting of the Bureau of the Assembly of AU Heads of State and Government was held in a fraternal spirit guided by the principle of Pan-African solidarity and cooperation and the attendant desire to find an African solution to an African problem.

The Bureau of the Assembly of AU Heads of State and Government welcomed the report of AU Experts on the resumed Trilateral Negotiations on the GERD, which reflected notable progress in the negotiations and presented options for resolving outstanding legal and technical issues.

The Parties to the GERD expressed their confidence in the AU-led process and reaffirmed their utmost commitment to finding a mutually beneficial and negotiated agreement pertaining to the GERD matter. They underscored the importance of cooperation as a basis for integration, sustainable development and prosperity for the three countries.

The Bureau of the Assembly of AU Heads of State and Government commended the Heads of State and Government of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan for displaying statesmanship and for their commitment to finding a durable solution through diplomacy, negotiations and compromise.

The Meeting of the Bureau of the Assembly of AU Heads of State and Government held extensive discussion on the matter of the first filling and annual operation of the GERD, and future development projects on the Blue Nile River upstream of the GERD. Consequently, the Meeting of the Bureau of the Assembly of AU Heads of State and Government agreed on the process of finalising negotiations on the text of a binding Agreement on the Filling and Operation of the GERD, which should include a Comprehensive Agreement on future developments on the Blue Nile River.

The Bureau of the Assembly of AU Heads of State and Government urged the Parties, with the support of the AU experts and observers, to work expeditiously to finalise the text of a binding Agreement on the Filling and Operation of the GERD.

The Bureau of the Assembly of AU Heads of State and Government welcomed the agreement amongst the Parties to the GERD to work on a Comprehensive Agreement on the Blue Nile River as soon as possible.

The Bureau of the Assembly of AU Heads of State and Government also expressed its deep appreciation for the support, the AU-led process has received from the United Nations through the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Antonio Guterres, and welcomed the willingness of the international community to mobilise financial and technical resources to support the Parties on transboundary water management and related issues as soon as an Agreement is concluded.

The Bureau of the Assembly of AU Heads of State and Government commended the three Parties for their commitment to resolve their differences through dialogue and agreed to maintain regular, dynamic contact with all the Parties at this critical stage of the negotiation process. Furthermore, the Bureau renewed its call to the Parties to refrain from making statements or taking any action that may undermine the AU-led process.

The Republic of South Africa in its capacity as the Chairperson of the AU will communicate with the Parties regarding the next Trilateral Negotiations session to address outstanding legal and technical issues on the GERD.

In conclusion, the Bureau of the Assembly of AU Heads of State and Government and the GERD Parties expressed their sincere appreciation to His Excellency, President Ramaphosa for his persistent efforts and commitment to helping the Parties find a sustainable and permanent solution on the GERD matter.

The Bureau of the Assembly agreed to remain seized of the GERD matter.

ENDS.