GERD: new norms of cooperation in the Nile Basin?

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GERD: A catalyst of change?

or

GERD: An outcome of change?

GERD is an outcome of shifting and complex regional hydropolitical processes
Pre-GERD: Nile region in a state-of-flux

- Set of new and unprecedented economic, socio-political and hydropolitical dynamics in the Nile region
- Structural changes in the Political Economy at national, regional and global level

- Key structural changes in Ethiopia are a key driver to the GERD
- But internal changes in Sudan and Egypt as equally important factors
Pre-GERD cooperation norms and processes

Multilateral cooperation process(es) since mid-1990s

- NBI and Shared Vision
- ENTRO and investment projects
- JMP: investment plan to develop the untapped development potential
- CFA negotiations and agreement (1997-2007; 2010-…)

Multilateral cooperation ‘norms and process’ have contributed to changing status quo in the Nile Basin > Directly and indirectly contribute to the status of GERD as major new factor in the hydropolitical landscape
JMP (Joint Multipurpose Project) – Window of Opportunity

- Example of a new set of cooperation norms (NBI/ENTRO)
  - Long-term
  - Large-scale
  - Multipurpose
  - Regional benefits
  - All three countries pro-actively involved

- Goal: identifying major optimal development outcomes (eg Scoping Study)

- Political obstacles (2008 and 2010): Missed opportunity!
Discussion on the GERD as an outcome of change

# GERD: An outcome of failed (or too much ambitious) expectations regarding the multilateral process

--> namely in the legal/institutional track (still an incomplete process)

# GERD: An outcome of change in the regional balance of power (and decreasing power asymmetries in the Nile Basin)

--> an indirect (and perhaps unintended) consequence of 20 years of multilateral cooperation

--> Changes in ‘bargaining power’ are evident: upstreamers’ increasing knowledge on development opportunities & improved capacity to influence dialogue, agenda-setting, negotiations and policy formulation
GERD-related norms and processes

New cooperation norms and processes
➢ Started as national/unilateral Ethiopian project
➢ Ad-hoc trilateral talks and technical/political negotiations
➢ A new agreed trilateral framework

Shaper of future development and cooperation?
➢ Parallel process to multilateral cooperation
➢ Trilateral and multilateral processes can co-exist (*to an extent, at least*)
GERD: A shaper of future cooperation?

➢ Emerging different relationship between Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan
➢ Increasing understanding of tangible economic benefits of cooperation
➢ Awareness of the need to comprehensive agreement(s) to minimise risks/impacts
➢ Cooperation is desirable and possible

➢ New ‘regime’ over shared water resources?
➢ New dynamics of water utilisation and management?
➢ New incentives for regional economic integration?
➢ New ‘modus operandi’ for transboundary cooperation?

GERD process: provides a strategic opportunity for countries to reflect on the pressing need for a new transboundary water regime in the Nile Basin