

Water Security and Peace building

Reflecting on the Nile River's Egypt / Ethiopia
Conflict for Southern Africa

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Introduction

*is conceptualizing the notion of water scarcity leading to international conflicts is overly simplistic due to its focus on supply side ignoring the social and political issues related to water management and distribution?

Water Security

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*Water security unlike food security is still under research to fully understand its dynamics. Water in this context is not only commodity but also natural resources and perceived human entitlement. While much is known about food security and environmental security, little is known about the appropriate mixes of policies, institution and market mechanism that could help achieve water security in water stressed environment.

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*Water security is defined as “the reliable availability of an acceptable quantity and quality of water for health, livelihoods and production, coupled with an acceptable level of water-related risks” (Grey and Sadoff, 2007), while Ariyabandu and Dharmalingam (1997) states that “water security is to have an adequate domestic water supply, so that the productive livelihood of peasants can be sustained”. The given definition of water security provides a holistic approach by including both qualitative and quantitative measures in determining water security.

*Though wolf, et al (2003) has observed that in more than 4,500 years no actual wars have occurred between nations over shared water sheds. The re-emergence and sustained water conflict over usage on the Nile River between Egypt and Ethiopia is the motivation in this presentation

Why Water

*Water is vital for human life, crucial for a number of economic activities and essential for the functioning of all ecosystems.

*less than 1% of world's freshwater (0.07% of all water on Earth) is readily accessible for direct human use.

- *With an estimated 1.2 billion people (20% of people on Earth) not having a safe source of water;
- *while, the global demand for water rose 6 to 7 times over last decade (more than double the rate of population growth).
- *By 2025, it is estimated that about two thirds of the world's population (around 5.5 billion) will live in areas facing water stress.

- *Complicated by freshwater resources which are finite, unevenly distributed worldwide, and often shared by more than one country.
- *Implying the 21st Century will experience an increased concern with the use, access and distribution of water resources.

*Groundwater levels are dropping, water bodies are increasingly contaminated, and delivery and treatment infrastructure is aging.

Why Nile and Zambezi Basin

*The Nile river basin involves ten countries and the Zambezi river has eight riparian states involved, each of these countries have their own national water management policies in which these shared water resources have to be developed and implemented, this itself present a complexity in managing transboundary water resources.

*The problem can be associated with different aspects of shared plans between riparian states, political dynamics among and between the riparian states, differences in economical capacities among participating riparian states. Security and economic interests of each riparian state in the shared water resources.

- *Egypt / Ethiopia sustained conflict over the water usage in the Nile basin should not be surprising.
- *But to be seen as an opportunity to reflect on the current water crisis on whether shared water resources may or contribute indirectly to causing conflicts in Southern Africa.

*The predicated effects of climate change especially for the Southern Africa presents a complicated scenario for possible water crisis among the Zambezi river basin riparian states,

Water Conflict

*Conflict is likely to erupt when the rate of change within a basin exceed the institutional capacity to absorb that change caused by different environmental, socio – economics or anthropogenic actions.

- *How conflicts may hamper the solution to water problem especially if preventive actions are usually impended by related politics concerning nations.
- *Hence the need to examine the water governance (transnational, regional and global) and actors at sub regional level to distinguish between preventive action and the information on which these actions can will be based.

Water Security and Peace building

*Although wars over water have not occurred, there is ample evidence showing that the lack of clean freshwater has been linked to poverty and has led to intense political instability, and that acute violence has occasionally been the result.

*While these disputes also occur at the sub-national level, the human security issue is more subtle and more pervasive. As water quality degrades – or quantity diminishes - over time, the effect on the stability of a region can be unsettling, nowhere more so than in basins which cross political boundaries

*It is important to explore the relationship among water, security and peace; because,
*according to Mr. Jan Kubis, Secretary General of the OSCE, water resources – their scarcity, distribution and quality aspects – have been recognized as a potential factor that can lead to political pressures; the
*“history shows, however, that water is more likely to trigger co-operation than conflict”, (Kubis)

*a paper on “Water, Security and Peace”, prepared for the 3rd World Water Forum, notes: “Some of the most vociferous enemies around the world have negotiated water agreements or are in the process of doing so, and the institutions they have created frequently prove to be resilient over time and during periods of otherwise strained relations.”.

*On the other hand, the idea of security has changed in the last decade. Today, the notion of security is fused with a wider agenda, which includes (human and natural) threats in military, political, societal and environmental sectors.

Water and Security

*Schulz (1995) introduces the link between water and politics and the complexities associated

*In his definition of Hydro politics security complex

Include those states that are geographically part

‘owner’ and technically those of the [share] river and, or

as a consequences, consider rivers as a major national security .

*Further notes that , what happens in the field of hydro politics when water management is linked to national security concerns, or issues of politics.

Hydropolitics of the Nile Conflict

*According to Waterbury, J (1979) Hydropolitics as "the tensions characterizing competing interests in the use of the River Nile".

*Hydropolitics "in terms of political imagery and symbolic relations, the tensions characterizing competing water interests

*(Maury 1994: 123)

Riparian states to the Nile

*Burundi, Congo DR, Kenya, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Egypt, Uganda, Sudan and Tanzania

Root causes of hydropolitics

1. Socio-economic development.

1. Colonial / Pre-colonial of region

- irrigation schemes in Egypt and Sudan

- Damming

- population growth

3. water security

- water scarcity & stress (sufficient quantity & appropriate quality)
- management provisions
- Value of the Nile river / National security depends of the other riparian countries (Egypt - fear & aggressive

*4. Individual water-related national plans in the upstream countries e.g. Ethiopia with 85% source of the Nile water.

*5. No international agreements regarding the use of the Nile water for common benefit

*6. No existing functioning international forum for negotiations and planning for its use.

Reflection on the Zambezi Basin

- *The Zambezi river basin is the fourth largest African freshwater catchment and the
- *largest river system in the Southern African Development Community (SADC),
- *Shared by eight countries (Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe).
- *It is populated by around 30 million people

Similarities Between Nile and Zambezi basin

*The hydropolitics of the Zambezi is highly likely that all the six areas that affect the Nile could apply to the Zambezi riparian states.

1. Socio-economic development and population growth
2. Colonial / Post - colonial of region
*Damming schemes in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

*Value of the Zambezi river / National security depends of the other riparian countries South Africa and Mozambique – Hydro power production at Cahora Bassa dam for the South Africa industrial making it a key downstream riparian even it has no direct link to the basin.

3. Water security

- *water scarcity & stress (sufficient quantity & appropriate quality)

- *Individual water-related national plans in the upstream countries e.g. Botswana, Namibia and Zambia

*4. No international agreements regarding the use the flow and release of Zambezi water especially the upper riparian states water for common benefit covering the whole basin. (management provisions)

*Though there is a SADC Regional Water Policy and Strategy of 2006 yet to be implemented due to political dynamics.

Potential areas of conflicts

*The absence of effective international cooperation on water allocation issues, population and economic growth, expansion of irrigated agriculture, and water transfers, combined with climatic changes the most likely to have very important transboundary impacts.

*No legally binding international law regulating the distribution and use of the trans boundary water resources.

*Another source of heterogeneity and potential conflict among the ZRB countries emanates from the fact that they differ very much in terms of their investment potential and river basin shares.

*Different level of social, economic and political interests complicate the search for the an equitable and sustainable solution to the shared water resources.

*Botswana and Namibia have a higher investment potential at present that could for example be used for water abstraction projects in response to water scarcity.

*Zambia is also likely to have a potentially large share by claim due to its very large geographic and hydrological share in the Basin as it receive the largest allocation of the water.

Prospects for a strengthened conflict mechanisms

International Water Laws provide a framework for regulations usage. They are several but only a few are presented below:

- The convention relating to the development of hydraulic power (1923)
- The Rasmar convention on Wetlands of International importance (1971)
- The UN Convention on Combating Desertification (1994)



Treaties are some of the examples used in preventive structural action to avoid water problems rising above reasonable proportions, examples are;

- Exchange notes on the use of the waters in the Nile for irrigation- 1929
- Agreement on the Nile water – 1959
- SADC protocol on shared watercourses system – 1995 for southern Africa countries

Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)

*promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources in order to maximize the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems

*Traced back to the 1940s, the recently promoted IWRM concept by the Global Water Partnership integrated the Dublin principles in 1996.

*By 2009, there were a total number of

* 13 - Regional Water Partnerships,

*73 - Country Water Partnerships

*2,069 - partners in 149 countries.

Water Security and Climate Change

*The potential for conflicts to be ignited by the environmental impacts of climate change is also attracting international interest especially on water sustainability and scarcity

*For example, the 2013 World Bank Report indicates increasing temperature at the rate of 0.8°C per decade, with annual decrease of rainfall of 30% for sub Sahara within the limit of 2°C , predicated risks are substantial including the associated damage.

*Water security in the current water stressed continent will be worsened by the Climate induced changes exerting considerable stress on the regional vulnerable sectors. The report '**Turn Down the Heat: Climate Extremes, Regional Impacts, and the Case for Resilience**', further noted

Conclusion

*The challenge here is having one supportive, well informed policy framework for climate change adaptation and mitigation, with concise information on the magnitude of the impact, and equally to help define a response strategy to the lived experience of water resource-dependent communities.

*Lies the answer to the growing water insecurity in the shared water resources especially trans boundary

*Governments, both local and national, seldom have sufficient data or (analytical) capacity to respond quickly to changing circumstances such as drought, floods, natural disasters and population growth,

*The tension between knowledge systems suggests the need for climate adaptation policy to discover a better balance between the traditional and modern, both of which have their own limitations.

*With science and technology leading in current policy prescriptions, there is an opportunity to further study and integrate indigenous adaptation measures into national climate policies to mitigate water conflicts in shared water resources.

*Climate change continues to undermine the state capacity to provide opportunities and services that help the people to sustain their livelihood, consequently increasing water insecurity

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