



Tourist attraction. The Murchison Falls on River Nile in Uganda. PHOTO BY ERIC DOMINIC BUKENYA

Ethiopia takes chair of River Nile matters

BY FREDERIC MUSISI
musisif@ug.nationmedia.com

ENTEBBE. Water and Environment Minister Sam Cheptoris last week handed over chairmanship of the Nile Council of ministers to Ethiopia's Water, Irrigation and Electricity minister Sileshi Bekele, after the would be chairing country Burundi, opted out.

Bujumbura, sources familiar with the matter said, excused itself from chairing both the Nile Council of ministers (Nile-Com), the highest decision making body of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), a cooperation body for the 10 countries sharing River Nile, and the heads of State assembly.

Uganda previously chaired both the Nile-Com and heads of State assembly. It was under this context that President Museveni invited Egyptian president Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and Ethiopian prime minister Hailemariam Desalegn in Kampala on June 22 to try and arbitrate the long standing issues over sharing the Nile between the two countries but the meeting was fruitless.

NBI's executive director Innocent Ntabana, told *Daily Monitor* on the side-lines of the annual Nile-Com meeting that, "Burundi wrote saying they are not in position to take over NBI leadership. But they did not provide reasons."

But sources familiar with

HIGHLIGHTS

Leadership. NBI leadership rotates among the 10 countries sharing the River Nile, known as the Riparian states.

Rating. Spanning an estimated length of 4,132 miles, River Nile is considered the longest river in the world.

Excused. Bujumbura excused itself from chairing both the Nile Council of ministers and the heads of State assembly.

the matter say Bujumbura's decision was premised on the numerous crises the country is battling, since 2015 when president Pierre Nkurunziza shrugged off international criticism and engineered a scheme to remain in power in violation of the Arusha Agreement that ended civil war in the impoverished East African country.

The NBI leadership rotates among the 10 countries sharing the River Nile, known as the Riparian states: Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Egypt, Kenya, South Sudan and Sudan, every year.

Spanning an estimated length of 4,132 miles, River

Nile is considered the longest river in the world. The river's annual flow volume is estimated at 85 billion cubic metres at the Aswan High Dam - with 80 per cent of the water streaming from the Ethiopian highlands.

Meanwhile at the Nile-Com meeting, Egypt's sustained absence from the NBI activities was reported as stumbling block because all decisions have to be binding to all Riparian states. Egypt [and Sudan] have to date declined to sign a new framework for cooperating on sharing the Nile, the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) adopted in Entebbe in 2010, which they claim does not take into account their issues regarding water sharing.

“Burundi wrote saying they are not in position to take over NBI leadership. But they did not provide reasons.”

INNOCENT NTABANA, NBI'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The water ministers presented and other delegates also raised concern about the continued defaulting on the financial obligation by countries to the NBI secretariat, which they said had led to reliance on donor activities. During the Nile water year ended, for example, NBI tendered to its members a budget of \$13m (Shs4.6b) to run various activities but only \$630,000 (Shs2b) was collected.

In the same regard, delegates from all NBI countries will next week convene in the Rwanda capital Kigali for the Basin Development Forum to explore the concept of water security, mechanisms of raising funding and how cooperation can help achieve it for up- and downstream countries alike.

RURAL ELECTRIFICATION AGENCY
 MINISTRY OF ENERGY & MINERAL DEVELOPMENT
 UGANDA RURAL ELECTRICITY ACCESS PROJECT

CORRECTION

Reference is made to REA advert that appeared in the *Daily Monitor* Newspapers of 17th October, 2017 IFB No: REA-ADB/WRKS/17-18/00070; there was a mix up of bid security of Lot 2, 4 and 5. Therefore, the right bid security for the above lots are as indicated below:

Lot No.	Amount
2	190,000
4	300,000
5	350,000

The rest of the information remains the same. We regret the inconveniences this may have caused.

MANAGEMENT