



January 23, 2020

Statement: Women in Water Diplomacy in the Nile Basin, 2020

On this day January 23, 2020, we, women water leaders from Nile Basin states conclude our participation in the Third Annual Women in Water Diplomacy Workshop hosted with appreciation by the Shared Waters Partnership programme at Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI). Together, we recognize the unique and intrinsic social, cultural, ecological, and economic value of the Nile Basin and its essential role and relevance in all aspects of our lives and communities. It is due to this shared heritage that we join together to elevate our voices in sisterhood, as peacemakers, mediators, and water stewards. Evidence from water cooperation and peacebuilding efforts throughout the world has demonstrated that women play an essential role in the provision, management, and safeguarding of water as well as ensuring a more durable peace.

Cooperation over the shared water resources of the Nile Basin is essential to sustainable water management and realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) throughout the Basin. To mitigate and manage potential and actual drivers of water-related challenges in the region, *more inclusive decision making is critical*. Specifically, this necessitates the importance of enhancing women's role as decision makers. We are blessed with a strong and knowledgeable generation of women water leaders across the Basin. We call upon our fellow decision makers to leverage all available skills, experience, and leadership to improve cooperation across the Basin and achieve our shared goals of sustainable water management and development.

We share a cooperative vision for the Nile Basin – a vital life-force across our communities and countries. As water leaders and professionals, we recognize the remaining challenges that weigh heavy on our peoples. The path towards sustainable water management has been long and difficult at times - but also one rich with opportunities. Despite the challenges, we are bound together and thus recognize the significant benefits to regional development and economic integration that can result from improved transboundary cooperation. In our Workshop, we discussed common challenges, enhanced our understanding of each other and our countries, and together sought to identify mutually beneficial opportunities for cooperation. These opportunities include, but are not limited to, increasing our resilience to climate change impacts through improved watershed management and water use efficiency, as well as efforts to reduce pollution of our shared water resources.

In this call, we stress the urgency of action to address our shared water and climate challenges. We agree, in our capacity as women water leaders, to continue to work together to further cooperation as well as contribute to the enhancement of inclusive decision making across the Nile. We call for sustained support and partnerships at home and across the international community in these critical endeavors.

In partnership and sisterhood,

Participants of the 2020 Women in Water Diplomacy in the Nile Workshop

Naivasha, Kenya