Statement on Recent Remarks by the Egyptian Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation

The recent remarks by the Egyptian Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation, suggesting that Ethiopians lack education, are deeply regrettable. The statement is once again a manifestation of a crude colonial mentality that defines Cairo's policy in its relations with African states. For Cairo, its approval is a prerequisite for riparian countries of the Abay/Nile to develop their water resources. This is despite the fact that Egypt proceeded with the construction of the Aswan High Dam with no consultation with any upstream riparian state. Inflammatory remarks by Egyptian officials and the double standards they espouse have no place in the context of basin wide cooperation.

Ethiopia reaffirms its sovereign right to utilize its natural resources including Abbay River to meet the needs of its present and future generations. Ethiopia has consistently maintained that transboundary rivers should drive cooperation, shared prosperity, and regional integration rather than monopolistic contention, and exclusion. It rejects any notion of hydro-imperialism that seeks to deny source countries their inherent rights as sovereign nations.

While some continue to frame the Abay river primarily through the lens of security and zero-sum competition, Ethiopia has invested heavily in watershed rehabilitation, afforestation, and environmental conservation to strengthen the long-term sustainability of the basin. Ethiopia's approach stands in sharp contrast to the hostile narrative that has too often dominated official discourse in Cairo. It is time for Cairo to move from its obsolete policy and approach the matter with a 21st century outlook grounded in mutual respect and the enlightened long-term interests of all. It is time to retire outdated hegemonic dreams and embrace the dawn of a new reality.