

Egypt, Ethiopia in further talks over Nile dam

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The Blue Nile in Guba, Ethiopia, during a diversion ceremony in May. Ethiopia and Egypt have agreed to hold further talks on the impact of an Ethiopian dam to quell tensions between the two countries, the foreign ministers of both nations said Tuesday.

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"We agreed that we will start immediately on consultations at both the technical level... and the political level," Egyptian [Foreign Minister](#) Mohamed Kamel Amr told reporters, after meetings in Addis Ababa with his Ethiopian counterpart Tedros Adhanom.

The [countries](#) have been embroiled in a heated row after Ethiopia began diverting the Blue Nile River last month for the construction of the 6000 MW Grand Renaissance Dam.

Concerned over how the dam could impact downstream water levels, Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi warned that "all options are open" over its construction.

But Amr and Tedros said that relations between the countries remain "brotherly" and that they will continue talks on the impact of the dam.

Amr said that previous statements had been made "in the heat of the moment."

"Both ministers stressed the need to continue the dialogue and communication with each other," they said in a joint statement.

"We have two options, either to swim or sink together. I think Ethiopia chooses, and so does Egypt, to swim together," Tedros said.

An international panel has issued a report outlining the dam's impact on water levels.

The report has not been made public, but Ethiopia has said the report confirms that the [impact](#) on [water levels](#) are minimal.



Boats from the Blue Nile Sailing Club float on the river in Khartoum in 2007. Both Sudan and Egypt, arid nations that rely heavily on the Nile for water including for agriculture, are extremely sensitive about projects that could alter the flow of the Blue Nile.

"(We agreed to) ask for further studies to ascertain the effects of the dam, not only the safety of the dam, the environmental effects, but also the effects of the dam on the downstream countries," Amr said, adding that consultations involve Sudan as well as Ethiopia and Egypt.

Egypt relies on the Nile River for 86 percent of its water, and has said the construction of the dam is a security concern.

Ethiopia's parliament ratified a controversial treaty last week ensuring its access to Nile water resources, replacing a colonial-era agreement that granted Egypt and Sudan the majority of [water](#) rights.

The new deal allows upstream countries to implement irrigation and

hydropower projects without first seeking Egypt's approval.



Members of the Ethiopian Orthodox church walk in the source of the Blue Nile in northern Ethiopia in 2010. The Blue Nile joins the White Nile in Khartoum to form the Nile river which flows through Sudan and Egypt before emptying into the Mediterranean.

Ethiopia is building the \$4.2 billion (3.2 billion euro) Grand Renaissance Dam in order to generate electricity for export to neighbouring countries, including Kenya and Djibouti.

Set to be complete in 2017, it is slated to become Africa's biggest hydroelectric [dam](#) and is being funded entirely from internal resources.

The Blue Nile joins the White Nile in the Sudanese capital Khartoum to form the Nile, which then flows through Egypt.

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