

Impact of the Nile Basin Initiative on the Agricultural Policy of Egypt

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Abstract

Since the early ages, Egypt has always relied on agriculture as a major source of income, food security and work opportunity. Currently, up to 40% of the workforce in Egypt is working in agriculture. Population growth and fast development represent a challenge to Egypt's agricultural policy to fulfill nowadays and future needs for food and economic growth. In light of the country's limited water resources, which the Nile River is the main source of water yielding 55.5 Billion cubic meters annually representing 97.5% of the countries total resources, horizontal expansion beyond the political borders looks a more economically viable alternative. The NBI is aiming at stimulating regional cooperation using win-win approach between different Basin countries including agricultural development. To materialize the benefits of the NBI, some policy initiatives are necessary to open the doors for Egyptian agricultural investment to step into the region. On the other hand, the existence of cheap and sustainable agricultural production in the region will combat droughts and desertification in the Upper Nile countries and enable Egypt to concentrate on more cash crops for export. A number of policy measures were studied together with their impacts on the Egyptian economy and the regional integration among the Basin countries through water related data collection and analysis, assessment of NBI projects' impact on actual and future Egyptian agricultural policy. The results were introduced with specific recommendations to materialize them.

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