



Amman-Al Quds Model United Nations

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UNGA TOPIC 1

Examining the Legal Disputes Over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and Its Implications for Transboundary Water Rights Under International Law.

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (referred to as GERD for short) is a hydroelectric power plant built on a tributary of the Nile River. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam construction work started in 2011. Ethiopia sought to build this dam to generate hydroelectric power and boost its economy. However, constructing the GERD has led to a pressing and high-stakes crisis between Ethiopia and Egypt over who has control over and the ability to use the Blue Nile's waters. Ethiopia views the GERD as an integral part of its development and power needs. Egypt views the dam as disruptive to its national water security and agriculture-based economy. The GERD project is a key issue in the region, as it poses a threat to the accessibility of fresh water to some countries, leading to disputes and tensions between Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia. International law principles, like equitable and reasonable utilization and the obligation not to cause significant harm, are central to the debate.

It all started when the Ethiopian government gave the idea of smoothing the variation of water flow and increasing water availability during droughts for the downstream countries surrounding Ethiopia. Initially, all three countries were supportive of constructing the dam until Egypt's and Sudan's share of the Nile River started decreasing, creating a threat to the stability of water resources. The conflict has escalated due to Ethiopia's unilateral filling of the dam reservoir without a binding agreement, which has led Egypt to seek every option, including the use of force, to protect its water rights. Moreover, experts believe that the conflict is very dangerous, as it will destabilize the region of the Horn of Africa, increase tensions on scarce water resources, and possibly trigger wider geopolitical and military confrontations with Sudan and other players in the region. The conflict is further complicated by shifts in power among regional actors and outside interference by powers with strategic interests, such as international powers and regional blocs. The GERD dispute thus intersects sovereignty of resources, regional security, and economic development, preventing countries from finding a middle ground on the issue.

The GERD conflict itself is then closely tied to the theme "**Empowering the Excluded**" at AQMUN'25 since it illustrates how previous power disparities and the deprivation of basic rights affect regional politics and access to vital resources to this day. The conflict at hand is not merely a war for water but a cry for development justice. GERD has now come to represent silenced voices, ranging from rural Ethiopian citizens to Egyptian farmers and the millions of poor people who

remain so due to underdevelopment. An effective resolution will entail inclusive dialogue in which not only powerful states but also vulnerable populations reliant on the Nile are front and center. To that extent, the GERD agenda compels representatives to redefine diplomacy as a tool not just of negotiation but of empowerment, where those hidden in the dark are heard and brought into the light of justice.