

*Full Length Research*

## **How Public Diplomacy Enhancing Trusts in Ethio-Egyptian Relations? In Referencing to the mutual Utilization of the Nile Water**

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The main purpose of this article is to understand how public diplomacy enhancing trusts in Ethio-Egyptian relations in referencing to the mutual utilization of the Nile water. The researcher has employed pure qualitative methods and the data are mainly obtained from secondary sources. The researcher has also used unstructured interviews that are obtained from purposely selected key informants. Basically, the issue of the Nile water has often been a major sticking point in Ethio-Egyptian relationship and the major challenge is that the prevalent of suspicions and mistrusts between the two countries on mutual utilization of the Nile water. In this regard, currently the role of public diplomacy is a critical position in the realization of country's interests. For clarity purposes, the article includes an overview of public diplomacy, the issue of Nile water, public diplomacy experiences in Ethio-Egyptian relations and related concepts of public diplomacy to understand how public diplomacy enhancing trusts in the two countries relations towards the Nile water. Therefore, the conclusion is that the strapping implementation of public diplomacy tools such as listening (two ways communications), advocacy (honest advocating) cultural exchange (music, art and others), citizen exchange (diasporas), and international broadcasting system (television...etc.) are the main alternative solution tools that enhancing trusts in Ethio-Egyptian relations on the mutual utilization of the Nile water. Following this conclusion, the study suggests that Ethiopia and Egypt should be implemented public diplomacy tools vigilantly and continuously to enhancing trusts between the two countries relationships on the Nile water utilizations.

**Keywords:** Public Diplomacy, Ethiopia, Egypt, Nile, Mutual, listening, Advocacy, Cultural exchange, citizen exchange, international broadcasting

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### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Overviews on public Diplomacy**

There is no consensus how public diplomacy should be

defined or what it entails. Despite this, Public diplomacy is regarded as one of the most salient political communication issues of our times and practitioners and

scholars alike pay increasing attention to it (Hartig, 2016). It was coined in 1965 by Edmund Gullion which deals with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It is the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with another; communication between those whose job is communication, as diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the process of intercultural communications (Nicholas, 2009).

Simply, Public diplomacy means the conduct of international relations through government facilitations of public communications with a wide range of nongovernmental entities (political parties, corporations, trade associations, labor unions, educational institutions, and religious organizations, Media's and so on including influential individuals) for the purpose of influencing the politics and actions of other governments (ibid).

Here, Public diplomacy distinguishes itself from traditional diplomacy by targeting non-governmental publics, whereas traditional diplomacy concerns government-to-government relations. During the past two decades, a theoretical paradigm shift has taken place from traditional, state-centered, and hierarchically organized public diplomacy to a network or 'new' public diplomacy model that involves a wide variety of actors and promotes dialog and collaboration (Ingrind d'Hooghe, 2015).

It is also about building relationships: understanding the needs of other countries, cultures and peoples; communicating our points of view; correcting misperceptions; looking for areas we can find in common cause. It involves a much broader group of people on both sides, and a broader set of interests that go beyond those of the government of the day. And also public diplomacy is based on the premise that the image and reputation of a country are public goods which can create an enabling or a disabling environment for individual transactions (Leonard, 2002).

Important developments like communication technology, advancements in satellite TV and internet as well as change in international relations that resulted on the proliferation of non-government actors were crucial factors in enhancing the need and importance of public diplomacy. In a context of multiple actors that play important roles in a way nations and their policies are perceived, it becomes ever crucial for governments to explain themselves to others (Tadesse, 2015).

In this regard, Ethiopia and Egypt have up and down relation on use of the Nile water. Due to this, Egypt and Ethiopia must work hard in constructing trusts on mutual utilization of the Nile water and Public diplomacy has alternative solutions to enhancing trusts for mutual utilization of the Nile water that water is life to Egypt which is exactly the same thing that electricity is the life of the Ethiopians.

In doing so, the article has contributed to the

knowledge and understanding for diplomats and foreign policy makers as well as enabling them to seriously consider the approaches of public diplomacy in different dimensions with the issues of Nile water. It also incited further research activities in the interface of public diplomacy with regard to the issue of Nile water between Ethiopia and Egypt. Therefore, the main objective of this article is to investigate how public diplomacy enhancing trusts in Ethio-Egyptian relations in referencing to the utilization of the Nile water.

## **METHODS AND MATERIALS**

The main objective of this article is to understand how public diplomacy enhancing trusts in Ethio-Egyptian relations in referencing to the mutual utilization of the Nile water. The researcher has employed pure qualitative methods and the data are mainly obtained from secondary sources. The researcher has also used unstructured interviews that are obtained from purposely selected key informants. The tool selecting the informants is purposive sampling, where respondents are selected on the bases of predefined purposes.

### **The issue of Nile water and Renewed Rivalry**

An enduring element in Ethiopian-Egyptian relations has been the issue of the Nile water. As Herodotus noted in his famous say "Egypt was the gift of the Nile". Egypt is truly and entirely dependent on the water that comes from outside of her territories, particularly from Ethiopia. 86 % of the total waters indeed originate from the three Ethiopian sub-basins: the Abbay, Baro-Akobo and Tekeze sub-basins (Yacob, 2007).

This natural bond between Ethiopia and Egypt has been there for ages and ages and it will be there as long as the countries continue to exist. From its inception, the Egyptian civilization is based on the waters of the Nile. Not less than 85% of the water that enters Egypt originates from Ethiopia. It can therefore be said that from the very beginning, the two countries have been intimately linked by nature (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, 2002:117).

The rivalries between Egypt and Ethiopia have reemerged after Ethiopia proposal to build a Great Renaissance Dam (GRD). The two nations' dispute over the construction of the Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam is escalating. Since its announcement the project has caused a diplomatic battle between Egypt and Ethiopia in the region (Brabeck, 2013).

### **Public Diplomacy Experiences in Ethio- Egyptian Relations on the Nile Water**

According to Government Communication Affairs of

Ethiopia (2012), among the encouraging results Ethiopia has attained since recent years in the area of diplomacy was that the improvement in its relations with Egypt on issues related to the utilization of the Nile Basin resources. Ethiopia has contributed a lot for bringing understanding and trust among riparian nations including Egypt.

And in light of the foregoing development, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia had adopted public diplomacy as an important tool for the attainment of its foreign policy objectives. Public diplomacy practice in Ethiopia is to understand and achieve the priorities of Ethiopia's vision such as: development, peace and democracy, as well as foreign policy (Tadesse, 2015).

The delegation of Egypt was headed by Moustafa El Gendy and comprised three presidential candidates, independent political activists, representatives of different political parties and movements, members of parliament, politicians, jurists, public figures, members of the academia, media representatives and members of the Youth Movement of the Egyptians revolution former parliament members, community leaders, journalists from Egypt and other Arab countries and other public figures from Egypt (Getnet, 2014).

On the occasion of Egyptian public diplomacy delegation in Addis Ababa, there was open discussion among the peoples of the two country and Ethiopia has expressed the reality behind the GERD project and the major aims of constructing the GERD basically, for solely for power generation for the reduction of poverty that affect large number of Ethiopians (ibid).

On the other hand, The Ethiopian public diplomacy delegation to Egypt in December, 2014 represents a new positive development in the Egyptian –Ethiopian relations since it is the first visit ever to the Ethiopia delegation to Cairo (Mostafa, 2015). This was the second and crucial step taken after the launch of the project. On the occasion of Ethiopian public diplomacy delegation in Cairo, there was open discussion to lead win-win outcomes on the use of Nile water (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, 2014).

For instance, during the course of public diplomacy exchanges, Egyptian Prime Minister Ibrahim Mahleab said the cooperation between the two countries needs to go beyond the Nile to strengthen the bilateral ties in all areas. He stressed that it is time to enhance and boost South-South cooperation generally and Ethiopia and Egypt particularly to the benefit of the peoples of both nations. The Prime Minister underlined that the ties of Ethiopia and Egypt should be based on mutual benefit and trust. In this regard the two countries day to day communications through people to people become increases (ibid).

## **PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND RELATED CONCEPTS**

### **Public Diplomacy and Propaganda**

Public diplomacy is sometimes equated with propaganda. Until Gullion introduced the term 'public diplomacy' in 1965, the term 'propaganda' was often used for what we now call public diplomacy activities. Propaganda activities were accepted as an instrument of government and the working of propaganda was extensively studied. Even today, some scholars define propaganda neutrally: as a technique or a tool to disseminate ideas and information in order to influence opinions and attitudes in a way that serves the propagandist. Defined this way, propaganda can be used for either good or bad ends, and aptly covers many activities that we now prefer to call public diplomacy (Ingrind d'Hooghe, 2015).

Propaganda in its neutral meaning thus overlaps to a large extent with public diplomacy, as activities aimed at providing information can be considered a form of white propaganda. Looking at the character of communication, however, public diplomacy is similar to propaganda in that it tries to persuade people what to think, but is fundamentally different in the sense that public diplomacy also listens to what people have to say (Melissen, 2005).

Propaganda often lacks credibility and thus is counterproductive as public diplomacy. Good public diplomacy has to go beyond propaganda because information that appears to be propaganda may turn out to be counterproductive if it undermines a country's reputation for credibility. Simple propaganda often lacks credibility and thus is counterproductive as public diplomacy. Good public diplomacy has to go beyond propaganda. Public diplomacy is not merely public relations campaigns. Conveying information and selling a positive image is part of it, but public diplomacy also involves building long-term relationships that create an enabling environment for government policies (Viktorija and Goran, 2015).

### **Public Diplomacy and Cultural Diplomacy**

Cultural diplomacy is part of public diplomacy and it is an instrument that an international actor's attempt to promote the national culture, to give impacts on public opinions of counterparts and to build integrity and credibility through cultural exchanges. Hence, culture in public diplomacy implies that cultural diplomacy can be practiced as a means of public diplomacy through the multicultural events, the art exhibition, and through various international festivals (Hwajung, 2011).

Cultural diplomacy, which involves "exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual

understanding", is one ingredient of public diplomacy to project the foreign policy goals and objectives as well as advance national interest to win the hearts and minds of foreign public (Nurye, 2017).

In this respect, Culture is fundamental to how people think, behave and communicate, and as public diplomacy is about communication, it is one factor that impacts on a country's public diplomacy. Culture influences the content (messages, narratives, and strategies) as well as the conduct (selection of instruments and style of communicating) of public diplomacy. Culture here also refers to a country's cultural identity, which is a social construct that consists of intangible factors such as a nation's ideas, values, opinions, tastes, customs, symbols, language, religion, art, history, myths, ethnicity, and everything else that distinguishes one country from another (Ingrind d'Hooghe, 2015).

Generally, Cultural diplomacy is part and parcel of public diplomacy and it is the exchange of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding. It refers to activities such as cultural performances, exhibitions, cultural and film festivals, language promotion and participation in World Expositions (Ibid).

## DISCUSSIONS

This study basically used the five alternative solution tools such as listening (two ways communications), advocacy (honest advocating), cultural exchange (films, arts...etc.), citizen exchange (diasporas, students....etc.), and international broadcasting system (television...etc.) to enhancing trusts between the two countries relationships for the mutual utilization of the Nile water. These instruments are used as frameworks of data analysis for the researcher that would playing a great roles in creating trusts among the two countries that water is life to Egypt which is exactly the same thing electricity to the life of the Ethiopians. (Figure 1)

### Listening

Listening is about state's attempt to manage the international environment by collecting data about publics and their opinions overseas and using that data to redirect its policy or its wider public diplomacy approach accordingly (Nicholas, 2009). First, the need to listen as well as to send messages is a recurrent theme amongst public diplomacy practitioners and it is a two-way process in public diplomacy practice. Listening leads to a greater understanding of how a country is perceived by those it seeks to influence and with whom it wishes to build, or rebuild, a relationship of trust (Foreign Affairs of Canada,

2006). In this regard according to one respondent stated

Ethiopia should listen the idea, interests, and policies what Egyptian has been advocating on the Nile water. On the other hand, Egyptian should listen the idea, interest and policy what Ethiopia has been advocating on the Nile water. Listening needs commitments and understanding while information's are disseminated from different directions (Interview, 2018).

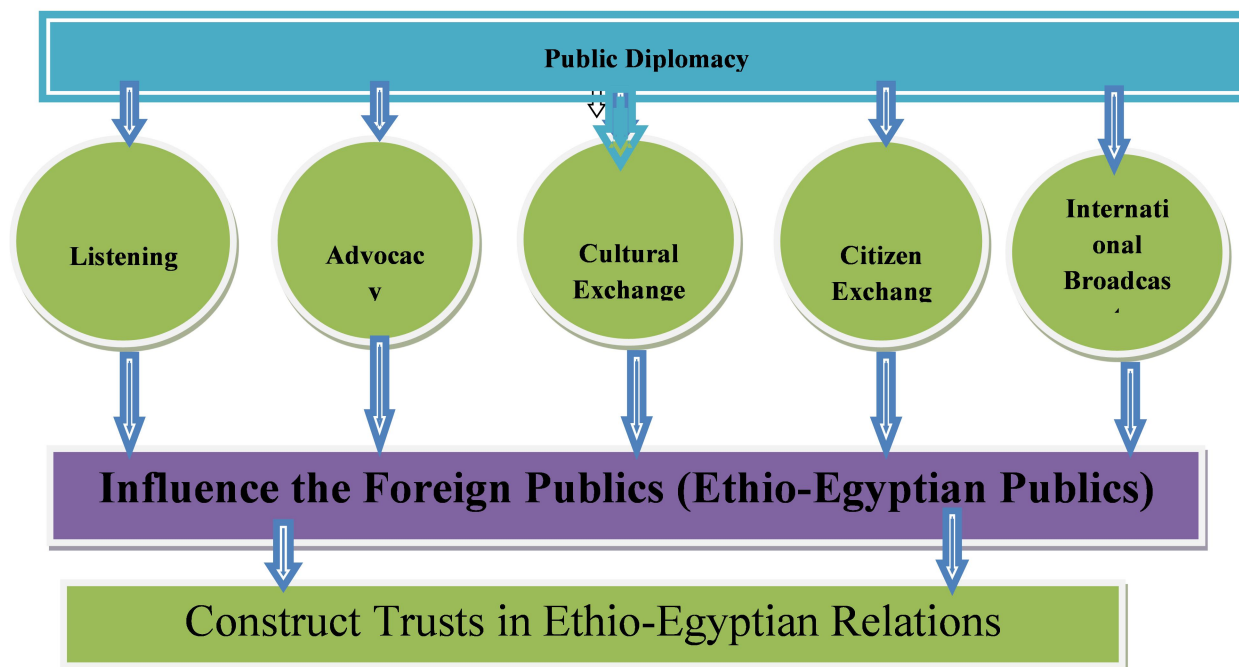
As here it is stated, listening is important for Ethiopia and Egypt to reframing its policy and point out that gap which disturb the relations between the two countries. Beyond this, the two countries must create an understanding about the alarming population growth and climate change that may disturb the relation between the two states naturally. Therefore, the two countries should create listing atmosphere to come up with cooperative mutual utilization of the Nile water by avoided unilateral use of the Nile water. Moreover, the two countries should listen and understand the international principles and exemplary countries in the world that have common resources and they have been using it mutually.

This has traditionally been an element of each constituent practice of public diplomacy, with advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange and broadcasting agencies each attending to their audience and opinion research. Information on foreign public opinion has also been gathered as part of the regular function of conventional diplomacy and intelligence work. In its most basic form, this covers an event whereby an international actor seeks out a foreign audience and engages them by listening rather than by speaking, a phenomenon which is much promised but seldom performed (Nicholas, 2009).

On the other hand, seeing ourselves through the eyes of others, a technique widely used in the business community, is now perceived as a necessary component in the development of effective public diplomacy strategies. In this regard, public diplomacy can effectively adopt the business techniques of stakeholder surveys and consultations that build in a feedback loop. Those consulted are informed about which ideas were helpful and led to changes in policy, while explaining why others were rejected (Foreign Affairs of Canada, 2006).

For instance, if Ethiopia and Egypt have good atmosphere of listing with each other, the threat and insecurity can be avoided which disturb the two countries relations directly or indirectly; common legal framework can be achieved by identifying the gaps what the previous agreements have. In addition to this, rootless misinformation's that are advocating by some Medias and politicians about the GERD project are avoided through public diplomacy instruments of listing (ibid).

Listening is, therefore, an indispensable step at this stage, as it can provide an invaluable insight into the prevalent attitudes, interests, as well as general beliefs of the wider public. It is also important to consider the potential impact of any foreign policy on foreign public



Source: Developed from public diplomacy theories by the researcher (2018)

**Figure 1.** Alternative solution tools of public diplomacy

opinion, incorporating this consideration into the decision-making process (Osipova, 2012).

### Advocacy

Advocacy is about states attempt to manage the international environment by undertaking an international communication activity to actively promote a particular policy, idea or that actor's general interests in the minds of a foreign public. Today this includes embassy press relations (frequently the hard end of policy promotion) and informational work (which can be somewhat softer and less angled to hard and fast policy goals) (Nicholas, 2009). Here one of the respondents at Addis Ababa University stated:

If people know who you are they are not going to hate you and a public diplomacy is a tool of changing the negative attitude of a foreign public upon you. And advocacy should use facts to credibility by others. For instance, the advocacy of Ethiopia on the GERD must be based on truth and transparency (Interview, 2018).

The major purpose of advocacy in Public diplomacy is not selling the government policy but it is telling about what the country doing on the Nile water to avoid any confutation and mistrust. If the Egyptian knows the reality what Ethiopia has, what Ethiopia wants and what

Ethiopia doing on the Nile water in clear manner, they are not going to hate Ethiopians and they can try to cooperate with Ethiopians without giving their ear to some improper analysis of Medias and politicians. On the other hand, the Egyptian Should advocates its idea, interest and policy by understanding what Ethiopia has, need and doing on the Nile water (Ibid).

In this case, advocacy instrument of Public diplomacy is about giving information through people to people exchange is decisive. It is in general the creation of a public voice for foreign policy by which decisions and events are explained to foreign publics to mobilize their consent or blunt their criticism (Nicholas, 2009).

### Cultural Exchanges

Cultural exchange is about state's attempt to manage the international environment through making its cultural resources and achievements known overseas and/or facilitating cultural transmission abroad (Nicholas, 2009). According to one expert at Ministry of Government Communication, Foreign Language and Media Analysis Director (Interview, 2018), 'public diplomacy can strength the two people relations by involving all stakeholders with the language, culture, and religion that everybody cannot undermining them and can convince the conflicting

issues into stability'. As one respondent from ministry of culture and tourism stated that

Currently, Ethiopia and Egypt have been conducting cultural relations in a form of festivals and exhibitions as well as they have cultural agreements. For example in 2014, Ethiopia was organized a photo expiations in Addis Ababa and Egyptians were the major participant and in the meantime Egyptians were also organized a cultural exhibition and Ethiopian were the major participants. In this regard 'Ethiopia and Egypt have been and exchanging values through cultural activates and cultural exchanges (Interview, 2018).

In line of the above statement, Cultural exchange is arguably one of the most effective means of promoting public diplomacy through improved cultural understanding among the societies and encouraging an awareness of what it is like to walk in the shoes of another. Given the multicultural nature of many modern societies, the task of engaging with domestic minorities and their mother countries in order to promote understanding across communities is central to public diplomacy strategy. Religious leaders are valuable partners owing to the level of trust they inspire in their communities and the principles by which they are accountable to their duties (Foreign Affairs of Canada, 2006).

According to (Nurye, 2017), Cultural diplomacy, which involves "exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples fostering mutual understanding", is one ingredient of public diplomacy to project the foreign policy goals and objectives as well as advance national interest to win the hearts and minds of foreign public.

For instance, Ethiopia, endowed with a medley of cultural riches, heritages, traditions, customs and history, has a myriad of instruments that can be used to influence and win the hearts and minds of foreign nationals to help support Ethiopia's policies, values and demonstrations in regional, continental and global affairs. It ought to turn those elements into instruments of its cultural diplomacy to build people to people relations for the advancement of the national interest on the basis of win-win outcomes. Due to this, cultural exchange does have great values to enhancing trust and confidence between Ethiopia and Egypt on the use of the Nile water.

### **Citizen Exchange**

Citizen exchange is about state's attempt to manage the international environment by sending its citizens overseas and reciprocally accepting citizens from overseas for a period of study and/or acculturation.

In this regard, Ethiopia and Egypt could, therefore, cooperate in health and education. Egyptian Universities are internationally well known Universities and Ethiopian students could get train in Egypt and vice-versa (Tsfaye,

2016). Moreover, citizen exchange is central for building relationships with the international community and, as citizen contacts may transcend political difficulties, it is a useful form of diplomacy when relations between countries are problematic and official contacts have been frozen. Citizen diplomacy uses instruments such as academic grants and exchanges, visitor programs, twinning activities, 'business for public diplomacy' initiatives, and sports and cultural activities (Ingrind d'Hooghe, 2015). In this regard, Ethiopia and Egypt have citizen exchanges in terms of education, religions, traders and Diaspora citizens. As one of the respondents from ENTRO stated that

On the other hand, citizen diplomacy must implement frequently and in well structured form that depends on truth and facts. It must have targets and goals to be achieved by the exchanges; and it must include different parts of the society such as artistes, lawyers, journalists, parliament's traders, religious institutions, Academicians, farmers and students. These groups must be well organized and have the ability to convince the target publics (Interview, 2018).

For example, there are scholarship exchanges between Ethiopia and Egypt. There are Ethiopia students in Cairo and there are Egyptian students in Addis Ababa. These groups have important tasks for facilitating public diplomacy practices between Ethiopia and Egypt. The Ethiopia students can articulate the facts that existed in Ethiopia on the other hand the Egyptian students can give the facts about their country (Interview, 2018). According to MOFA of Ethiopia (2016), cultural exchanges are essentials to win the hurts and minds of Egyptian public. As one of the respondents from Egypt stated:

First, it is important for the citizens to be educated about the conflict and its source. It is even more important for the citizens to learn about the natural resources available in the Nile Basin countries to better understand the stakes of all the countries in the Nile. Additionally, building personal relationships between Nile Basin citizens creates a new space and paradigm through which our problems could be seen and revisited. This exploration comes with a new set of solutions (Email interview, 2018).

Here, People believe their own eyes and ears, and what they have observed will help change stereotype thinking... People-to-people or non-governmental exchanges are sometimes more effective than publicity programs" Therefore, people-to-people exchange plays an important role in not only bolstering mutual understanding but also in shaping a more positive view of foreign people towards others (Ingrind d'Hooghe, 2015).

## International Broadcasting

International broadcasting (IB) is about state's attempt to manage the international environment by using the technologies of radio, television and Internet to engage with foreign publics. International broadcasting by its nature requires a distinct set of resources and skills. While it is possible to see broadcasting as an extension of both advocacy and cultural diplomacy, the special ethical considerations associated with journalism have often set international broadcasters on their own path, and in any case provide a formidable centrifugal force toward some form of independence or autonomy (Nicholas, 2009).

In this regard, the media in both Ethiopia and Egypt play central role in realizing this new phase of relation in which the two people observe a hope of ray and relations. This should play great roles in creating awareness among the two peoples that water is life to Egypt which is exactly the same thing electricity to the life of the Ethiopians.

International broadcasting work as practiced by states can overlap with all the other PD functions including listening in the audience research functions, advocacy/information work in editorials or policy broadcasts, cultural diplomacy, exchanges and others broadcasters. As one of the respondents at Addis Ababa University outlined that:

In a democratic system, the media is controlled by the people and the government but in the autocratic government, the media is controlled by the government only. However, today is the age of globalization, democracy, and technology as well as most of the world countries engaged in democratization processes. Due to this public diplomacy become prominent tools of foreign policy for different countries in the world (Interview, 2018).

It is necessary to deal with media in both countries (Ethiopia and Egypt) in a responsible way as regards the developments taking place in their relations in order to enlighten the two people and highlight the positive aspects (Mostafa, 2015). For instance, one of the respondents from MFA stated that

Now a day in Ethiopia there is public diplomacy department and this department has linkage with Medias, concerned bodies through digital internet, face book, tweeter and others. And Ethiopia public diplomacy department has linkage with cites, universities, academics due to this public diplomacy highly accepted today than before (Interview, 2018).

According to ministry of foreign affair of Ethiopia (2016), Egypt has been working with Ethiopia through giving training and opportunity for students, workers and hospital professionals. In Egypt there one 2000-3000 diasporas and most of them are females that are working as house maker in today relation public diplomacy go to

vast consideration in the international affairs that supporting the regular relation of government officials.

In this regard the two countries can work together by analysis the various Facebook, Twitter, YouTube accounts existed in Medias to help to create healthy relation among the two countries. Therefore, the role of the public diplomacy through international broadcasting system is to exchange accurate, trustful, and factual information between Ethiopia and Egypt (Reporter, 2017).

## CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of this article is to understand how public diplomacy enhancing trusts in Ethio-Egyptian relations in referencing to the mutual utilization of the Nile water. Public diplomacy is regarded as one of the most salient political communication issues of our times and practitioners and scholars alike pay increasing attention to it. It is the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with another; communication between those whose job is communication, as diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the process of intercultural communications.

To this end, the researcher has employed pure qualitative methods and the data are mainly obtained from secondary sources and unstructured interviews from purposely selected key informants. The issue of the Nile water has often been a major sticking point in Ethio-Egyptian relationship and the major challenge is that the prevalent of suspicions and mistrusts between the two countries on mutual utilization of the Nile water. In this regard, currently the role of public diplomacy is a critical position in the realization of country's interests.

For clarity purposes, the article includes an overview of public diplomacy, the issue of Nile water, public diplomacy experiences in Ethio-Egyptian relations and related concepts of public diplomacy to understand how public diplomacy enhancing trusts in the two countries relations towards the Nile water.

Therefore, the conclusion is that the strapping implementation of public diplomacy tools such as listening (two ways communications), advocacy (honest advocating) cultural exchange (music, art and others), citizen exchange (diasporas), and international broadcasting system (television...etc.) are the main alternative solution tools that enhancing trusts in Ethio-Egyptian relations on the mutual utilization of the Nile water. Following this conclusion, the study suggests that Ethiopia and Egypt should be implemented public diplomacy tools vigilantly and continuously to enhancing trusts between the two countries relationships on the Nile water utilizations.

## ABBREVIATIONS

ENTRO	Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office
GERD	Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
IB	International Broadcasting
MFA	Ministry Foreign Affairs
TV	Television

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