African Water Facility to help tackle food insecurity, flooding and droughts in Uganda and South Sudan.

The African Water Facility (AWF) announced on January 9, 2015 that it has offered a €1.97 million grant to the Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program (NELSAP) to increase water availability for multiple purposes in the Nyimur region of Uganda and South Sudan. The grant will support the improvement of irrigated agriculture and food production, fisheries, electricity generation and sanitation as well as the prevention of flooding and droughts in the region.

The AWF grant will help prepare the construction of a multipurpose dam and a reservoir on the Nyimur River through feasibility studies, engineering design studies and environmental and social impact assessments. The planned infrastructure investment will allow approximately 5,105 ha of land to be irrigated through a community irrigation scheme, and enable 350 kW of electricity to be produced from a small hydropower facility. The project will directly benefit approximately 12,000 people.

The AWF will also support the mobilization of funds from donors through project preparation and fundraising activities such as donors’ roundtables.

“The project will improve the livelihoods of surrounding communities by reducing the ravages of flooding and droughts, as well as foster food and energy security and in the long run help consolidate peace and security in this fragile region” said AWF coordinator Akissa Bahri.

The Nyimur River runs through both South Sudan and Northern Uganda, an area plagued by conflict from the late 1980’s until 2004. Although the guns have generally fallen silent, the region is still considered fragile. The unrest in the region resulted in very low levels of investment and development of basic services or infrastructure. Agricultural production declined drastically during the period of turmoil and the current level of food insecurity is significant: in low yield seasons, 33% of the population in the area is dependent on food aid.

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