

## Foreword

A source of life, a stimulus to exploration, a bone of contention, a magnet for tourism, a conundrum to research—whichever the view of the Nile, the World's longest river has always been a focus of attention. From the time of the first Egyptian civilization to the present, the river has invariably been of enormous importance and, at the same time, something of an enigma. Now, with the ever increasing demands for water and the changes in its regime, it is even more prominent in the actions of the nations sharing the basin and in the minds and activities of different communities that have concern for the river, local, national and international.

Against such a background, this volume provides a timely overview of the Nile system—the White Nile, the Blue Nile and the main Nile, together with the lakes they connect, Victoria, Albert and Tana for example. It discusses the areas they flow through, particularly the Sudd and the roles of the different dams and reservoirs, those at Aswan for instance. The authors draw on earlier works, some from the nineteenth century and on the vital records of rainfall, water level and flow that have been collected at various stations throughout the basin, in order to paint a detailed hydrological picture of the regime of the Nile and its surroundings. One of the authors has devoted much of his life to work on the Nile (literally in the Nile when he started his career). He is the author of many papers and reports on the different hydrological problems of the basin. The other has spent some of hers unravelling the secrets of the Sudd and researching other Nile water resources problems. John Sutcliffe and Yvonne Parks are to be commended highly for the arduous task they have performed of bringing together information on the Nile from a wide range of sources and compiling it to fashion *The Hydrology of the Nile*.

This is the first occasion when a monograph in the Series of Special Publications, the blue books which started in 1989, has been aimed at a hydrological feature, in this case a river basin. Previous titles have dealt with a range of topics which have not been geographically referenced in the same way. It would be appropriate if this volume could be followed by similar ones on some of the other rivers of global importance.

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