

# **3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Managing Shared Aquifer Resources in Africa**

Tripoli, Libya, 25-27 May 2008

## **Draft Programme**

### **Objectives and Scope of the Conference**

The Conference will provide a valuable input to the seventh phase of the UNESCO IHP and will contribute to the current debate on transboundary aquifers management. The outcomes of the conference could provide beneficial information for some of the related activities to be organized by international organizations during the next years.

Amongst these are the debate on transboundary aquifers in Africa that takes place at the Stockholm Water Week and the upcoming Seminar in August 2008, the 5th WWF sessions on Transboundary Waters and the UN World Water Day on 22 March 2009, the theme of which will be “Transboundary Waters”.

The conference will provide an overview about *what we know about transboundary aquifers in Africa (session 1)* and the activities initiated by the UNESCO ISARM Project in Africa. It will provide the opportunity to expand the existing network of experts and make proposals for new sub-regional activities.

The conference will serve as a platform to debate and evaluate the *Management of Transboundary Aquifers* up to the present (*session 2*). It will consider experiences related to the existing scientific knowledge, assessment methodologies, management constraints, data availability, monitoring systems, environmental impacts and criteria for non-renewable water resources.

Several international and regional organizations are evaluating the real possibility to achieve the management of surface and groundwater resources as following the indications provided by the IWRM approach. At the latest Stockholm Water Week one of the seminars discussed if and how groundwater can be considered as an integral part of transboundary river/lake basin management in Africa. Can existing institutions or river basins commissions jointly manage international river basins and transboundary aquifer resources under the present conditions? The question is still open. The conference will try to contribute to this debate.

*“Looking into the Future: What options do we have?”* will be the guiding question in *session 3*, evaluating options for the future of Transboundary Aquifer Management considering Institutional and Legal Aspects, Governance and Policy Guidance as well as Economic Aspects and Financial Instruments.

*Session 4* of the conference will provide information on the Global Environment Facility's International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network (*GEF – IW:LEARN*) and case studies conducted in this framework. The Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA)

methodology will be presented and possibilities how it could be adopted to groundwater resources will be discussed.

During a *Round Table Discussion* on the ***Role of the UNESCO Category 2 Regional Center on Shared Aquifer Resources Management in Africa*** the participants are invited to provide inputs and debate on the mission of the Center, future cooperation with existing institutions and a ***Plan of Action for Shared Aquifer Resources Management in Africa***. The results of the debate will be compiled by a drafting group and presented and discussed at the last plenary session of the conference.

The output of this conference will be compiled and sent as “***Message from Tripoli III***” to the 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum 2009 in Istanbul.

Translation will be provided English-French and French-English.