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**Sahel and Sahara Observatory**



**The General Water Authority,  
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya**



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CALL FOR PAPERS

## Managing Shared Aquifer Resources in Africa

Co-organized by  
**The General Water Authority  
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya**

**UNESCO-IHP**  
and **Sahel and Sahara Observatory**

**Tripoli 25– 27 May 2008**

**THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

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## Background

In Tripoli in 1999 and 2002 the General Water Authority of Libya and UNESCO, in coordination with the Observatoire du Sahara et du Sahel (OSS), convened two major conferences devoted to the identification of shared aquifer resources in Africa. The first marked a milestone in the discussion of the emerging concept of regional aquifers. It provided a general understanding of non renewable groundwater resources and was also instrumental in launching the UNESCO International Shared Aquifer Resources Management Initiative (ISARM). The second conference focussed more specifically on the features of African aquifers shared by one or more states. The results of these two conferences not only provided some very sound scientific data but also created networks of experts who, over the last five years, have continued to work on the issue of national sustainable development and the sound management of shared water resources.

Subsequent to this the Government of Libya decided to establish the Regional Centre for the Management of Shared Groundwater Resources. The centre will operate under the auspices of UNESCO and aims to strengthen capacity on groundwater resources management in the region. As a direct outcome of the Tripoli Conferences, several projects were identified which Member States, with support from international agencies, have already started to implement. Indeed several of these projects are now moving into their second phase. These actions have also provided a good platform for cooperation and coordination among regional and national agencies. For example the UNESCO International Hydrological Programme (IHP) and the OSS have jointly undertaken the assessment and study of several shared aquifer systems in the OSS region.

A third Tripoli Conference, which will again focus on the needs of Africa, is now being proposed for 25-27 May 2008. The conference will jointly be convened by UNESCO and the Government of Libya, in cooperation with the OSS and with the participation of various African partners. The OSS will act as the Conference Secretariat.

## Purpose & Scope

The purpose of this conference is to take the ISARM initiative in Africa one stage further. This will include providing support for the sub regional ISARM expert networks which have been developing sub regional actions in the South African Development Community (SADC) and West Africa, drawing on suggestions made in the ISARM Framework Document (2000). The 3rd Tripoli Conference will also aim to establish other sub regional working groups. The preliminary inventory of the shared aquifer resources, setting out the scientific basis for subsequent actions through case studies that came about as a result of the 2nd Tripoli Conference will be further extended. These on-going case studies are developing a good, detailed understanding of their specific situations (e.g. non recharging aquifers, coastal aquifer systems and those linked to lakes and rivers). However there is also a need to take a wider view within the context of the sub regions of Africa. Support for this idea is expected to come from the Regional Centre currently being established in Libya. The conference will therefore consider the formulation of inputs and recommendations for the Regional Centre in order to develop a plan of action supporting both the current as well as the new African Expert Groups. Finally, the scope of the Conference will also include the establishment of a Plan of Action for Shared Aquifer systems resources management in Africa as a whole, taking into consideration the requirements of the region. This will provide support to both the African Union and the African Ministerial Council on Water.

**The scope of the Conference** will be achieved through a series of scientific and technical presentations, focussed discussions, poster sessions, and plenary sessions.

It is suggested that the **Plan of Action** be drawn up by a special drafting group, based on the results of debates taking place during the Conference. The Plan of Action will then be presented to the Conference plenary and adopted during the final session.

This Conference will be a contribution towards the implementation of the UNESCO IHP VII programme and to the 5th World Water Forum that will be held in March 2009.

## Scientific Committee

S. Adelaana (IAH)	Merla (GEF)	D. Pennequin (BRGM)
P. Aggarwal (IAEA-WRP)	J. Fried (Irvine –USA)	S. Puri (UNESCO)
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	G.E. Oteze (Nigeria)	W. Zhou (China)
		D. Zimmer (WWC)

## Conference topics

- Update of the inventory of African transboundary aquifers: situation in the different sub-regions
- Progress made on the new projects: SASS, SAI, Gulf of Guinea, West Africa, Nubian Sandstone Aquifer, etc.
- Transboundary aquifer and climate change
- Integrated Water Resources Management applied to transboundary aquifers (monitoring, modelling, remote sensing)
- Financial instruments (bilateral and multilateral)
- Institutional and legal aspects
- Governance
- Policy guidance for sound and sustainable development of shared aquifers.

The conference will serve as a preparatory event for the activities to be organised in Africa for the World Water Day on 22 March 2009, the theme of which will be "Transboundary Waters".

## Technical session

- Recommendations for the programme and activities of the Regional Centre for Shared Aquifer Resources Management (RCSARM) under the auspices of UNESCO, established in Tripoli, Libya.
- Other technical sessions could be organised.

## Schedule

10th December 2007	Call for papers
15th March 2008	Deadline for submission of papers
25th April 2008	Programme and second announcement
December 2008	Publication of the proceedings
March 2009	Participation at the 5th WWF

## Contact

To get involved or for more information, please contact the conference Co-chairs.

**Papers should be sent to the Conference Secretariat with copy to the co-chairs of the Conference.**

## Conference co-chairs

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