



## **International Hydrological Programme**

17<sup>th</sup> session of the Intergovernmental Council  
(Paris, 3 – 7 July 2006)

# **OVERVIEW OF NEWLY-ESTABLISHED CATEGORY II WATER-RELATED CENTRES**

Item 8.3 of the provisional agenda

### **SUMMARY**

This document reports on the status of various initiatives to establish international or regional water centres under the auspices of UNESCO that received the support of the 14<sup>th</sup> through 16<sup>th</sup> sessions of the Intergovernmental Council of the IHP. Five water-related category II centres have been approved by the governing bodies of UNESCO and are in the process of initiating their activities.

The Council may wish to take note of the progress achieved on establishing category II centres and advise on the appropriate follow-up

## **BACKGROUND**

1. The demand for the establishment and operation of water-related centres under the auspices of UNESCO has increased dramatically over the past several years due to the increased importance of water issues at local, regional and global scale and the recognition that IHP is an effective and proven framework in which to establish international or regional centres. The IHP network of centres now includes one category I centre (UNESCO-IHE) and twelve centres under the auspices of UNESCO (category II). This network of centres is proving to be an excellent delivery mechanism for IHP activities, in particular since water and associated ecosystems has become a principal priority for UNESCO. This document reports on the five newly established category II centres under the auspices of UNESCO.

## **NEWLY ESTABLISHED CATEGORY II CENTRES**

2. The governing bodies of UNESCO approved the establishment of five water-related category II centres that had been welcomed by resolutions of the IHP Intergovernmental Council:

- The Regional Centre for Arid and semi-Arid Regions of Latin America and the Caribbean (La Serena, Chile) under the auspices of UNESCO (Resolution XIV-5);
- The Regional Centre on Urban Water Management (Santafé de Bogotá D.C., Colombia) under the auspices of UNESCO (Resolution XV-11)
- The European Regional Centre for Ecohydrology (ERCE) in Warsaw (Poland) under the auspices of UNESCO (Resolution XV-12);
- The International Centre for Water hazard and Risk management (ICHARM) in Tsukuba, Japan under the auspices of UNESCO (Resolution XVI-4)
- The International IHP-HELP Centre for Water Law, Policy and Science in Dundee, UK, under the auspices of UNESCO (Resolution XVI-5).

### **Regional Centre for Arid and Semi-Arid Regions of Latin America and the Caribbean – CAZALAC (La Serena, Chile)**

3. The General Conference, at its 33<sup>rd</sup> session, approved the establishment of CAZALAC and authorized the Director-General to sign the agreement between UNESCO and the Government of Chile establishing CAZALAC under the auspices of UNESCO. The agreement was signed by the Director-General of UNESCO and the Ambassador of Chile to UNESCO on 2 February 2006.

4. This regional centre has actually been functioning since January 2003 within the framework of a UNESCO extrabudgetary project employing Flemish funds in addition to local sources. It has held international training courses and started significant activities such as the mapping of arid and semi-arid zones of Latin America and the Caribbean. It is expected that the Flemish funding will be extended for three more years and that Flanders will also provide scientific assistance. CAZALAC already has continental presence on the occasion of its formal constitution as a centre under the auspices of UNESCO.

### **Regional Centre on Urban Water Management for Latin America and the Caribbean (Cali, Colombia)**

5. The General Conference, at its 33<sup>rd</sup> session, welcomed the proposal by the Government of Colombia to establish the centre and invited the Executive Board at its 174th session to analyze the completed feasibility study carried out by the IHP Secretariat and to decide on its behalf on the granting of category 2 status to the centre. In April 2006, the Executive Board approved the establishment of the centre and authorized the Director-

General to sign the agreement between UNESCO and the Government of Colombia establishing the centre.

6. The centre will function as a regional centre for urban water management for Latin America and the Caribbean much in the same way the regional centre for urban water management in Tehran, Iran does for Asia. 80 % of the population in Central and South America currently live in urban areas, thus the sustainable management of water in cities and large settlements represents a major challenge in the region that the centre will greatly contribute towards. It will be housed at the Universidad del Valle in Cali, Colombia.

#### **European Regional Centre for Ecohydrology (Lodz, Poland)**

7. The General Conference, at its 33<sup>rd</sup> session, approved the establishment of the centre and authorized the Director-General to sign the agreement between UNESCO and the Government of Poland establishing the centre. The agreement was signed by the Director-General of UNESCO and the Minister of Science and Education of Poland on 8 March 2006. The centre was officially launched on 31 May 2006 in Lodz, Poland.

8. Ecohydrology, the new approach in environmental sciences that promotes the integration of hydrology and ecology for the sustainable management of water resources, is a concept developed and defined within the framework of the strategic plans for the fifth and phases of the IHP (IHP-V: 1996-2001). From 2002 until now it has continued to be developed vigorously in cooperation with MAB. The new centre will greatly contribute to IHP's programme in ecohydrology, which will be maintained and expanded during the seventh phase of IHP (2008-2013).

#### **International Centre for Water Hazard and Risk Management – ICHARM (Tsukuba, Japan)**

9. The General Conference, at its 33<sup>rd</sup> session, approved the establishment of the centre and authorized the Director-General to sign the agreements between UNESCO and the Government of Japan and between UNESCO and the Public Works Research Institute (PWRI) establishing the centre. The agreements were signed by the Director-General of UNESCO, the Ambassador of Japan to UNESCO and the Director of PWRI on 3 March 2006. The centre was formally launched in Tsukuba, Japan on 6 March 2006.

10. ICHARM, hosted by PWRI, in Tsukuba, Japan will work at the forefront of the water hazard and risk management field. The centre will act as the global facility responsible for the International Flood Initiative, and is actively undertaking the activities leading to the recruitment of its core staff.

#### **International IHP-HELP Centre for Water Law, Policy and Science (Dundee, UK)**

11. The General Conference, at its 33<sup>rd</sup> session, approved the establishment of the centre and authorized the Director-General to sign the agreement between UNESCO and the Government of the United Kingdom establishing the centre. The agreement was signed by the Deputy Director-General of UNESCO, and the Foreign Secretary of the Government of the United Kingdom on 15 December 2005. An additional agreement between UNESCO and the University of Dundee, where the centre is located, will be signed regarding the operational details for the centre. The official launch of the centre will take place in November 2006 in Brussels with the participation of the European Union.

12. Once water users, at the local, regional or international level, have agreed on a policy regarding the management of its fresh water, one of the most important tools to ensure

implementation of this policy is a solid and responsive legal framework. Within this context, it is most important that water lawyers, water scientists and water users are effectively engaged. The IHP-HELP Centre will provide an opportunity to ensure this relationship is effective and develop legal frameworks in line with stakeholders' needs and requirements. The centre will contribute to HELP as well as other IHP initiatives such as PC-CP and ISARM.

## **UPDATE ON OTHER PROPOSALS FOR CATEGORY II CENTRES WELCOMED BY THE IHP COUNCIL**

### **Regional Centre for the Management of Shared Groundwater Resources (Tripoli, Libya) (Resolution XV-10)**

13. The Libyan Government has expressed its desire to UNESCO to have the proposal for the centre reviewed by the UNESCO Executive Board at its 175<sup>th</sup> session in September 2006 and has thus asked the IHP Secretariat to prepare a feasibility study for the proposed centre. However, the IHP Secretariat has not yet received a detailed proposal for the centre from the Libyan authorities.

### **Regional Centre on Drought in Sub-Saharan Africa (Resolution XV-13)**

14. Namibia expressed interest in hosting the Regional Centre on Drought. A feasibility study for the establishment of the centre commissioned by UNESCO determined that there was a need for the centre. Several individuals and government officials interested in the centre are working on advancing the initiative. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Namibia has recently re-emphasized its desire to host the centre however it has doubts about its current capacity to support the centre financially and is trying to secure the necessary funding for the centre from other sources.

### **Regional Centre on Ecohydrology (Cibinong, Indonesia) (Resolution XVI-3)**

15. The UNESCO Regional Hydrologist based in Jakarta is in the process of carrying out a feasibility study for the centre in coordination with the Indonesian authorities, in anticipation of presenting the centre to UNESCO's governing bodies for their approval. It is anticipated that the centre will conduct scientific research, undertake professional training and capacity building and create information networks for ecohydrology and other related fields in Southeast Asia.