GEF Project
Regional Consultation for Asia and the Pacific Region

3–5 December 2012
Institute of Hydrogeology and Environmental Geology (IHEG),
Shijiazhuang, China

The Regional Consultation of the new project on Groundwater Governance: A Global Framework for Action will involve the Asia and Pacific Region and will be held in Shijiazhuang from 3 to 5 December 2012. This project is the result of the fruitful cooperation among the UNESCO International Hydrological Programme (IHP), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Association of Hydrogeologists (IAH) and the World Bank.

The overall project objective is to increase awareness of the importance of a sound management of groundwater resources in preventing and reversing the global water crisis.

As a final result, the project will develop a global "Framework of Action" (FA), consisting of a set of effective governance tools: guidelines for policies, legislation, regulations and customary practices. The FA will foster the evaluation of groundwater as a key natural resource, and of the social, economic and ecological opportunities that sustainable groundwater management could provide through an interdisciplinary dialogue.

The project has a primary local approach, as it is locally that a number of decisions are taken. A fundamental component of the project process consists of establishing a series of five Regional Consultations, organized by UNESCO-IHP. The objectives of these regional consultations are: 1) the compilation of first-hand knowledge provided by direct local sources – groundwater experts, resource managers and
actors in different areas – about the main features of the region; 2) the discussion about the different subjects that derive from the specific characteristics, challenges and priorities of the region based on case studies elaborated by national experts; 3) to build partnerships amongst cross-sectorial collaborating project agencies, stakeholders, decision-makers and specialists. It is interesting to emphasize that the exchange among regions would be mutually beneficial. The results of the regional consultations will contribute towards the preparation of a “Global Groundwater Governance Diagnostic”, which will serve as a technical basis for the different stages of the process.

The Regional Consultations will be held in the following regions: Latin America and Caribbean, Africa, Arab States, Asia and Europe. The consultations started in Latin America and Caribbean and the first was held in Uruguay from 18 to 20 April 2012. The second was in Kenya from 29 to 31 May 2012 and the third in Jordan, 8-10 October 2012. The fourth will take place in China in December 2012 and the fifth Regional Consultation for the European region, which will also include the participation of private sector institutions, will be hosted by the Netherlands in March 2013.

The regional consultation for Asia and the Pacific Region will be a 3-day event that will include both plenary and technical working sessions dealing with thematic aspects of groundwater governance. It will tackle in particular the governance challenges considering how institutions can be equipped to face risks and uncertainties due to climate change and other issues, such as population growth, that can have impacts on the hydrogeological cycle.

The participation of high level regional governmental and institutional representatives is expected during the opening session and will be followed by a press conference.

Please note that only invited participants are allowed to attend.

For more information:
- Ms Marina Rubio, UNESCO International Hydrological Programme, Division of Water Sciences, UNESCO HQ, Paris; email: m.rubio@unesco.org.
- Ms Wang Bing, UNESCO Office in Beijing, email: b.wang@unesco.org

Project website: www.groundwatergovernance.org