

**Speech of the Secretary of the General People's Committee for
Agriculture, livestock & Marine Wealth**

In

**Third International Conference on Managing Shared Aquifer
Resources in Africa**

Tripoli 25-27/5/2008

In Name of God the Most Merciful

Mr. / _____

Mr. / _____

Messrs / Representatives of the participating Arab & African countries

Messrs / Guests

Ladies & Gentlemen ,,

I'm glad to welcome you all and I appreciate your care to attend the activities of the Third International Conference on Managing Shared Aquifer Resources in Africa, which we are glad to host it in the Great Jamahiriya during the period from 25 to 27/5/2008 and I express our most sincere wishes that this conference succeeds.

This Conference is held under certain international circumstances witnessing an increase in aridity and desertification intensity along with climatic changes and increase of water demand, which makes the aquifer management an issue that requires more attention. It is also held under circumstances witnessing a water crisis at local and international levels, with an increase in water demand, especially groundwater which is the main source of the water supply in many countries, among them is the Great Jamahiriya. Considering the importance and sensitivity of the shared aquifers, regarding their management and development, and in line with the policy of the Great Jamahiriya, whom since a long time took the initiative to set up a continuous consultation mechanism with the countries sharing aquifers with it, aiming to coordinate the exploitation forms and undertake joint studies to protect such aquifers from depletion and contamination. Among these projects is the study of Nubian Sandstone Aquifer System, taking the initiative to establish the Joint Commission between Libya, Egypt, Chad and Sudan, which Libya is honored to host its headquarters since its establishment in 1989, also studying the North Sahara Aquifer System between the Great Jamahiriya, Tunisia and Algeria, which was crowned by establishing a consultation mechanism and forming a coordination unit hosted by the Sahel and Sahara Observatory in its headquarters in neighboring Tunisia.

I'm also glad to praise the continuous cooperation with UNESCO in the various fields of Water, especially the shared ones and to declare the establishment of the Regional Centre for the Management of the Shared Aquifers in Africa and the

Arab region, in the Great Jamahiriya, which I had the honor to sign the agreement of its establishment with the Director-General of UNESCO in Tripoli on 27/12/2007, whose most important targets is the consolidation of joint studies, capacity building and exchange of information on shared aquifers, and strengthening their management for a sustainable development.

Ladies & gentlemen:

The water is the control element for sustainable development, therefore the balance between the demand on water and the available resources, deserves our attention, for the benefit of the present and future generations.

The increasing demand on water is a result of many factors, especially the demographic increase, as the international statistics indicate that the world population will increase by 50%, from 6.1 billion in the mid 2001 to 9.3 billions by 2050, leading to increasing the intensity of the food crisis.

In addition, the desertification phenomena is a result of long dry periods and lack of development in several regions of the world, starting from the African Continent, in addition to the mismanagement of natural resources and in particular the over-exploitation of aquifers.

These reasons together formed large pressure areas worldwide, especially the Sahara countries in Africa, leading to the emigration of thousands of people searching for survival and running away from the specter of poverty, hunger and death.

Comprehending such dangers and in application of the United Nations Agreement, Libya prepared a national work plan to combat desertification, which included several strategies and projects to combat desertification and rehabilitate affected lands.

Ladies & Gentlemen

Undoubtedly, you realize the extreme significance which the Alfatah Revolution and its leader Colonel Muammar Al-Quaddafi, give to the water issue and the huge investments provided to overcome the water shortage problem and combating desertification. Such efforts included the conveyance of potable water along thousands of kilometers of large diameter pipes, deep from the Sahara desert to the coastal cities and valleys, in the largest project of its kind, the Great Man

Made River, which came to multiply the production, to secure a certain level of food security, to fulfill the potable water needs of coastal towns, that until recently witnessed severe shortage, notwithstanding the establishment of many desalinization plants and well fields. This huge civil project will provide a transitory solution to the water shortage problem in the coastal areas of the North Jamahiriya, and as the Leader of the revolution noted, this solution is not final, but rather a final attempt to safeguard life in North Africa, therefore it is necessary to join efforts and intensify research to locate economically feasible alternatives for a sustainable and continuous supply of water

Ladies & gentlemen:

You might comprehend the urgent need in the Arab region and Africa to develop our water legislations, which is an extension of our great cultural heritage that paved the way for the birth of the most ancient legislations since thousands of years and which was contemporary to the birth and rise of the great civilizations in the Arab region and Africa.

The distinguished nature of the occurrence and distribution of surface and groundwater resources, either quantity or source, and the continuous decrease of the per capita share of it make the issue of sound management of such resources in a sustainable manner in quantity and quality, among the prior interests of the water institutions, therefore it is elementary that the international legislations attract a special interest to secure the rights of the countries and regions, and to achieve sustainable development under water shortage conditions.

Ladies & Gentlemen:

Water legislation, like other legislations related to human life, develops with time to cope with social, economic and political growth. In the Great Jamahiriya we issued the first modern water law since 1965 which was later replaced with the law no. (3) of 1982, which is among the modern laws dealing with all aspects of regulating the exploitation and management of water resources, and protecting it from depletion and contamination.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

In this pleasant occasion, I am glad to express my gratitude and acknowledgment to the UNESCO, to the Sahel & Sahara Observatory and to all International and Regional Organizations present in this Conference for their effective participation in the preparation stages. We also express our gratitude to the local external preparatory committees for their great effort to realize this event wishing you a comfortable stay and a successful conference.

Thank you