

A UNESCO Regional Centre for Integrated River Basin Management in sub-Saharan Africa: NWRI Kaduna, Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In February 2006, in his Keynote Address at the International Conference on *Water Security and Hydrological Extremes: Towards Sustainable Development in Africa* and the first African Regional Consultative Meeting of the National Committees for UNESCO-IHP that took place in Abuja on 27 February 2006, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria urged UNESCO “not to leave Africa out of the initiative on establishing water-related centres worldwide as part of the implementation of a global water education and capacity-building agenda”. Resolution XVII-6 on “Establishment of the National Water Resources Institute in Kaduna, Nigeria, as a regional Water Centre under the auspices of UNESCO (category II)” was approved at the 17th session of the Inter-Governmental Council of UNESCO-IHP held in Paris, on 3–7 July 2006.

One National Stakeholders’ Workshop and two Regional Stakeholders’ Workshops were held in 2009, where national and regional stakeholders from the West African sub-region gave input to the proposal for the centre. The delegates suggested that eligibility should extend to member states outside the West African sub-region for countries in North and Central Africa that share river basins with West Africa. Some of the water problems confronting countries in West Africa and approaches towards solving them can be found in Ajayi (2004, 2006) and Global Water Partnership (2000).

UNESCO REGIONAL CENTRE FOR INTEGRATED RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT

“Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) is the process of coordinating conservation, management and development of water, land and related resources across sectors within a given river basin, in order to maximize the economic and social benefits derived from water resources in an equitable manner while preserving and, where necessary, restoring freshwater ecosystems” (Global Water Partnership, 2000).

The current effort by Nigeria and other countries in the West African sub-region to establish the UNESCO Regional Centre will further strengthen the ability and capability of the ECOWAS countries to tackle the myriad of water problems confronting the sub-region. The proposed Regional Centre will contribute significantly towards the objectives of RAP for IWRM in the West and Central Africa sub-region.

Finally, the proposal is currently being reviewed at the UNESCO-IHP Secretariat in Paris, as at May 2010. It is hoped that final UNESCO approval for the centre will come in due course.

REFERENCES

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