

KRAKOW DECLARATION

XXXVIII Congress of the International Association of Hydrogeologists (IAH) – September 2010

Final Draft

We, 600 Scientists gathered for the XXXVIII Congress of the International Association of Hydrogeologists (IAH), having deliberated for 5 days on over 300 scientific studies on water quality from all over the world, agree and view with concern that the global deterioration in water quality, the degradation of lands, and the consequent impact on human health as well as on human and environmental security should be a world wide concern and will require increased global efforts to assess the current situation and identify appropriate measures.

Considering the above, we make the ***Krakow Declaration on the Protection of Groundwater Quality*** which calls the attention of Governments, UN Agencies and other Multi- and Bilateral Agencies, and seeks to ensure that their policies on water resources management on national and regional levels should recognize

- the important role of groundwater in water quality management,
- that maintaining good water quality in aquifers is the fastest way for achieving the MDGs, by providing cost effective, safe drinking water supplies to more than half of the world's population,
- that there is intrinsic water chemistry of some aquifers, that can affect human health, if not properly identified and addressed,
- that poorly planned land based activities can cause difficult to reverse deterioration of groundwater quality, and that land management policies have to be developed to minimise risks to long term water quality.

This recognition would

- prevent groundwater contamination and groundwater quality deterioration in a less cost-intensive manner than later high cost remediation,
- allow pro active measures to be taken that will maintain quality and natural functions of aquifers,
- allow incorporation of the principles of ecohydrology as a promising approach for increasing the resilience of groundwater dependent ecosystems in the face of increasing climate variability.

In relation to the above,

We call upon UN Member States to take note of, and strive to, implement the UN General Assembly Resolution on the Law of Transboundary Aquifers (A/Res/63/124) and the provisions made therein, in particular those regarding groundwater quality

We call upon donor agencies, such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), other multilateral agencies, such as the World Bank and bilateral cooperation agencies, to give more attention and increased financial support to sound management of groundwater quality.

We strongly support the mandate of UNESCO and its International Hydrological Programme (IHP) to facilitate Member States in setting up sustainable groundwater management strategies with particular attention to groundwater quality, and call upon the newly approved UNESCO-IHP Section on Groundwater Resources Management to take a lead on this, through UNESCO's global network of water related centres.

We request Poland, as host country of the IAH Congress, and its IHP National Committee, to support efforts to set up world wide campaigns on promoting groundwater quality sustainability.