



## PRESS RELEASE

# UNESCO Launches International Conference on Flood Management Systems

**ISLAMABAD, 28 JUNE 2013** – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Islamabad with Pakistan Water Partnership (PWP) launched a two-day International Conference titled ‘Regulation of Hydraulic Structures for Flood Management’, today in Planning Commission of Pakistan, Islamabad. The conference is continuation of the technical dialogue under the UNESCO’s Flagship Project ‘Strategic Strengthening of Flood Warning and Management Capacity of Pakistan’. The conference is aimed at assessing the need for revisions of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of major reservoirs especially the Tarbela dam. As an outcome of two days, the conference will draw recommendations by reviewing problems in present SOPs, its elucidation and solution for better management of water resources in the country especially in flood scenarios.

Minister of Planning and Development, Mr. Ahsan Iqbal stressed on the coordinated effort of institutions to deal with hazards. He said, “We intend to work holistically on the comprehensive flood management plan, including plan of early warning flood systems, review of the gaps, capacitating institutions, coordination, management and community responses”. The Minister also emphasized on need to address larger issues of water in Pakistan including scarcity, pollution, ground water sedimentation and per capita availability.

Dr. Shahbaz Khan, Deputy Director UNESCO Asia Region, highlighted the technical and scientific efforts of UNESCO. He shared with participants that as an important milestone of the project, “Integrated Flood Analysis System” (IFAS) has been developed by ICHARM and already been deployed in Federal Flood Division for flood forecasting, information management and dissemination.

International Center for Water Hazard and Risk Management (ICARM) is UNESCO’s category II institute in Japan, and along with Japanese Aerospace Agency (JAXA) as international partner, IFAS modeling has been customized for Pakistan. IFAS is hydrological modeling software is used to calculate the river discharge with the help of satellite rainfall data (GSMaP) provided by JAXA and/or ground rainfall data. It uses the Digital Elevation Model (DEM) and land cover/ use data

in addition to precipitation data to calculate Run-off.

Dr. Kozue Kay Nagata, Representative UNESCO Pakistan thanked the international cooperation to work with UNESCO, since 2010 on disaster response plans and its early warning flood management system. Resonating the sentiments expressed by Dr. Nagata, Mr. Timo Pakkala, Resident Coordinator, United Nations Pakistan said, "The exceptional intensity and prolonged period of the 2010 and 2011 rains and 2010 floods clearly highlighted limited existing policy environment through this project we are hopeful that the country would benefit from the technical resource UNESCO has bought in the country".

UNESCO initiated this project with the funding of Government of Japan. Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) and Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Council (SUPARCO) are the national partners of this project. In this regard several trainings have been conducted in which more than 500 mid career managers were trained. Professionals of PMD and SUPARCO were sent over to ICHARM, Japan for MS Degrees.

Mr. Akira Kono, Charge d'Affaires ad interim of Japan to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, showed his confidence on UNESCO and government in Pakistan. He said, " The collaboration of government of Pakistan and Japan, through UNESCO and JICA partnership is of high priority in our program area. This partnership is to strengthen capacities of nation wide stakeholders for flood forecasting, with highest technical resource to deal with hazards".

Also present at the event, Mr. Mitsoyoshi Kawasaki, Chief Representative of JICA Pakistan said, "We have developed a comprehensive hazard management plan with the Government of Pakistan, and it is a highest priority area for us to work in Pakistan". He further added that the outcomes of the conference would provide knowledge for the scalability of this project in future.

A wide cadre of international experts, water scientists and experts from United Nations Agencies participated in the conference. A need to assess the state of the art in countermeasures against flood disasters in Asia and the Pacific region is of paramount importance. Socio-economic impacts of floods are severe enough and require affected countries to continuously seek for more effective countermeasures against flood disasters in order to minimize losses incurred. IFAS and similar platforms are the solution for better estimation of floods for minimum human loss.

UNESCO with its 35 center of excellence world over has 160 countries as part of its Global Hydrological Program, of which Pakistan is a member. The conference will conclude tomorrow.