



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

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Subject: **2013 United Nations International Year of Water Cooperation**

Sir/Madam,

In December 2010, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2013 as the United Nations International Year of Water Cooperation. In reflection of this declaration, the 2013 World Water Day, which will take place on 22 March 2013, also will be dedicated to water cooperation. Therefore, UN-Water has called upon UNESCO to lead the 2013 United Nations International Year on Water Cooperation, in particular because of the Organization's unique multidisciplinary approach which blends the natural and social sciences, education, culture and communication. Given the intrinsic nature of water as a transversal and universal element, the United Nations International Year on Water Cooperation naturally would embrace and touch upon all these aspects.

The objective of this International Year is to raise awareness, both on the potential for increased cooperation, and on the challenges facing water management in light of the increase in demand for water access, allocation and services. The Year will highlight the history of successful water cooperation initiatives, as well as identify burning issues on water education, water diplomacy, transboundary water management, financing cooperation, national/international legal frameworks, and the linkages with the Millennium Development Goals. It also will provide an opportunity to capitalize on the momentum created at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), and to support the formulation of new objectives that will contribute towards developing water resources that are truly sustainable.

Celebrations throughout the Year will include featured events at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, as well as many other events organized by various stakeholders around the world. Such events will seek to promote actions at all levels in relevant areas including education, culture, gender, the sciences, conflict prevention and resolution, as well as ethics, among others. To this end, the Organization's programme sectors have been invited to contribute actively towards the implementation of programmes for both the International Year and World Water Day 2013.

In order to build up a critical mass of interest in and visibility of the 2013 International Year of Water Cooperation, UNESCO's role in it was featured in a side event at the 6th World Water Forum (Marseille, 12-17 March 2012). The Year also will be presented during relevant upcoming internal and international events, including the 20th session of the Council of the International Hydrological Programme (4-7 June 2012), the Rio+20 Summit (Rio de Janeiro, 20-22 June 2012) and the World Water Week in Stockholm (26-31 August 2012).

Ms Alice Aureli, Chief of Section of Groundwater Systems in the Division of Water Sciences of the UNESCO Natural Sciences Sector (tel.: +33 1 45 68 39 95; fax: +33 1 45 68 58 11; e-mail: a.aureli@unesco.org), and Ms Lena Salame, Programme Specialist in the same Division (tel.: +33 1 45 68 41 80; fax: +33 1 45 68 58 11; e-mail: l.salame@unecso.org), will act as focal points for this process and stand ready to respond to any queries you might have in this regard.

I wish to encourage UNESCO's Member States to take full advantage of this opportunity, and to assist the Organization in ensuring that this particular United Nations Year is a successful and memorable 365-day event.

Accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Irina Bokova  
Director-General

cc: National Commissions for UNESCO  
Permanent Delegations to UNESCO