

## PREFACE

The UNESCO International Hydrological Programme (IHP) is an evolving programme, ready to adapt to the needs of an ever changing society. In order to respond promptly and with appropriate actions, the programme is implemented in six year phases, so as to identify new emerging problems, alert decision makers, raise public awareness and provide the necessary resources.

Today, integrated water resources management poses not only scientific, but also technical, socio-economic, cultural and ethical challenges. IHP is a multidisciplinary programme at the forefront of research and development; and to this end is a prominent agent in meeting the United Nations Millennium Goals.

Since the seventies IHP has focused in particular on hydrogeology and studies related to groundwater resources.

The aim of the *'Workshop on Mediterranean Coastal Aquifers Strategies'*, organised in Chia-Laguna (Sardinia) 23-24 September 2006, was to contribute to a better understanding of the crucial role played by groundwater resources in the support of both ecosystems and mankind. Particular emphasis was placed on the current challenges on groundwater issues such as the conjunctive use of surface water and groundwater, the artificial recharge and the wellhead protection areas for groundwater catchments.

As a result of the significant contribution made by the Workshop to the dissemination of groundwater knowledge, UNESCO-IHP has encouraged the preparation of this publication on the Proceedings of the 1st SWIM-SWICA. The book represents a splendid example of learning material and a valuable educational tool on groundwater.

We would like to express our deep thanks to all the authors whose valuable contributions appear here.

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