

Joint press release by IWMI, PCRWR and WaterAid Pakistan

Media briefing organized to highlight the artificial groundwater recharge site in Kachnar Park, Islamabad

Islamabad, 24 June 2022: The International Water Management Institute (IWMI) Pakistan, Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) and WaterAid Pakistan organized a media briefing to highlight the artificial groundwater recharge site in Kachnar Park, Islamabad.

The artificial groundwater recharge site in Kachnar Park has been implemented by IWMI and PCRWR through the project “Demonstration of nature-based solutions for improving the resilience of groundwater aquifers in Islamabad”. The project, funded by WaterAid, has identified seven potential groundwater recharge sites in Islamabad.

Dr. Mohsin Hafeez, Country Representative – Pakistan and Regional Representative – Central Asia, IWMI, gave the welcome remarks and urged the media representatives to highlight water challenges in Islamabad, which have increased due to wastage of rainwater and horizontal expansion of the capital city, over-abstraction of groundwater resources, poor water supply, sanitation and hygiene issues, and unsustainable use.

IWMI Pakistan has developed the first state-of-the-art artificial groundwater recharge pilot site equipped with complete instrumentation to measure groundwater quality, groundwater level, rainfall, and the amount of rainfall injected into the aquifer. This project will provide evidence-based information on rainfall contribution towards groundwater replenishment in Islamabad. To overcome water scarcity challenges in Islamabad, IWMI Pakistan has recommended CDA to install rainwater harvesting tank at the household level.

Dr. Muhammad Ashraf, Chairman, PCRWR, highlighted the role of PCRWR in the project. Moreover, he added that the solution of water supply challenge is linked with rainwater harvesting for groundwater recharge, which needs to be upscaled to address groundwater depletion issues. He highlighted that the annual average rainfall in Islamabad is about 1.3 m whereas, groundwater depletion is about 1 m annually. It means that if we conserve the available rainwater potential efficiently through recharge, we could easily manage the demand and supply gap through groundwater.

Muhammad Yahya Akhunzada, Joint Secretary (Admin), Ministry of Water Resources, urged the media to sensitize public on rainwater harvesting for watering plants and conserving water resources at large.

Rana Shakeel Asghar, Member (Finance), Capital Development Authority (CDA), appreciated the efforts of IWMI, PCRWR, and WaterAid Pakistan in piloting the initiative and hoped that it will help to recharge groundwater. He said that keeping in view of the increasing water requirements of Islamabad, rainwater harvesting is important to recharge groundwater. For this purpose, 100 groundwater recharge sites are being constructed by CDA in collaboration with PCRWR, and CDA plans to further increase the number of groundwater recharge sites across Islamabad.



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Arif Jabbar Khan, Country Director Pakistan for WaterAid, said that Pakistan is faced with challenges related to drinking water, both in terms of quality and quantity of surface and groundwater. Piloting and testing sustainable models that can be replicated by the public and private sectors is a key objective of WaterAid. Besides piloting this groundwater recharge model, WaterAid has developed and tested community-owned and managed water treatment plants and rural and urban wastewater treatment systems etc. We will continue to support the people and government of Pakistan in meeting their WASH challenges through such efforts.

The event was followed by a Q&A session.

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