

Africa Holds Vast Underground Water Reserves

Contributed by Tom McGregor
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The notoriously dry continent of Africa is sitting on a vast reservoir of groundwater, according to scientists. The BBC News reports that, "they argue that the total volume of water in aquifers underground is 100 times the amount found on the surface. The team has produced the most detailed map yet of the scale and potential of this hidden resource."

Scientists writing for the journal Environmental Research Letters emphasized that large scale may not be the most effective method to increase water supplies. More than 300 million people all over Africa fail to obtain access to safe drinking water.

According to the BBC, "demand for water is set to grow markedly in coming decades due to population growth and the need for irrigation of crops. Freshwater rivers and lakes are subject to seasonal floods and droughts that can limit their availability for people and agriculture. At present only 5% of arable land is irrigated."

Apparently, scientists for the first time have been able to conduct a continent-wide analysis of the water, which is hidden under the surface in aquifers. The British Geological Survey and University College London (UCL) researchers have mapped out in detail the amount and potential yield of the groundwater resource across the continent.

To read the entire article from the BBC News, link here: Mcgregor@chinadaily.com.cn