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Water Reserves Found in Drought-Stricken Kenya: UNESCO

By David Malingha Doya - Sep 11, 2013

Underground water reserves discovered in drought-prone northern [Kenya](#) are big enough that they may relieve scarcity issues in the region, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization said.

The Lotikipi Basin aquifer in a semi-barren region west of Lake Turkana where about 700,000 people live “on its own could potentially increase Kenya’s strategic water reserves,” UNESCO said on its website. Smaller Lodwar aquifer could provide life-sustaining water supplies for residents of the capital of Turkana county, said UNESCO, which conducted the groundwater mapping project with the Kenyan government and [Japan](#)’s support.

The Lotikipi reserve is estimated to extend 100 kilometers (62 miles) by 66 kilometers and may hold as much as 200 billion cubic meters of water that could be pumped from wells and boreholes for agricultural and other needs, ITV News said on its website. The Turkana region is where [Tullow Oil Plc \(TLW\)](#) and partner Africa Oil Corp. in 2012 announced they’d found crude deposits.

Lake Turkana in Kenya’s Rift Valley is about 290 kilometers long and termed the world’s largest permanent desert lake.

The technology used in the groundwater mapping involved satellite data, seismic information and remote sensing, with the findings then confirmed by drilling conducted by UNESCO.

The discovery is important as about 41 percent of Kenya’s 41 million people don’t have access to safe, clean water while 28 million lack adequate sanitation, according to UNESCO. The country in 2011 experienced its worst drought in six decades, causing famine in the northern, eastern and coastal regions.

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