



Special Edition: World Water Day 2011



WORLD WATER DAY

- 2 U.S. Government, World Bank Sign MoU on Cooperation for World Water Day

FOCUS THIS WEEK

- 3 Egypt, Sudan Express Confusion Over Burundi Signing Nile Agreement
- 5 After Ganges, India Promises to Clean Up Other Rivers
- 7 Political, Financial Problems Aggravate Shortages in Gagauzia Autonomous Area

MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

- 8 Kenya's State Water Firms Face Corruption Charges
- 8 Zimbabwe, Botswana in Row Over Zambezi Water
- 9 Potable Water Delivered to Syria's Drought-Stricken Northeast
- 10 Rapid Urbanization Hinders Africa's Water and Sanitation Goals, Says UN
- 11 Kenya Mulls Household Water Treatment to Boost WASH Programs
- 11 Deforestation, Population

Blamed for Water Shortages in Sierra Leone

SOUTHERN & EASTERN ASIA

- 12 India's Federal Budget Raises Allocation for Rural Water in 2011-12
- 13 Toxic Hunan Could Become "Asian Rhine"
- 13 Two Reports Find Problems With Pakistan's Water Quality
- 14 Taiwan Dam Report Reignites Opposition
- 15 Sri Lanka to Establish Groundwater Monitoring Network
- 15 International Women's Day Marked With Calls for WASH Access

EASTERN EUROPE & FSU

- 16 Novorossiysk Governor Pledges to Solve Water Problems Within Two Years
- 17 Azerbaijan May Face Drinking Water Shortages in Coming Years
- 17 Kherson to Build Water Purification Facility

- 18 Krasnokamsk to Levy Investment Surcharge on Water, Wastewater Services
- 18 Moldovan Capital to Stop Using Chlorine
- 19 Kazakh Province Faces Drinking Water Shortages

LATIN AMERICA

- 20 New Law on Raw Water in Argentina Brought Before Provincial Chamber
- 20 Wikileaks Cable Reveals Further Controversy Over Uruguay River Use
- 21 WADA Helping Central American Sugar Mills Improve Water Practices
- 21 Mexico City Water Supply Guaranteed for 2011: Conagua
- 22 Local Press Reports From Azerbaijan, Brazil, China, Czech Republic, Haiti, Hungary, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Malaysia, Morocco, Nepal, Qatar, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Tajikistan and Trinidad & Tobago.
- 26 ABOUT OOSKANNEWS

WORLD WATER DAY

U.S. Government, World Bank Sign MoU on Cooperation for World Water Day

WASHINGTON, DC, United States (OOSKANews Correspondent) -- U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and World Bank President Robert Zoellick signed a memorandum of understanding on increased cooperation and collaboration on global water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) issues to mark World Water Day on March 22.

Clinton said experts from nearly two dozen U.S. government agencies were working on water issues, many in cooperation with the World Bank, "but we want to enhance that collaboration, and that will be created by the memorandum of understanding that we sign today."

Zoellick said the MoU "brings a wide range of expertise to the table" and will make "cooperation with government agencies much easier."

Under the MoU, the U.S. government and the bank will step up sharing of knowledge; increase cooperation at the country level; and strengthen national or regional efforts to address water and sanitation challenges.

In practical terms, government agencies and the World Bank Group will hold expert meetings, workshops and training sessions, and will exchange staff for purpose of education developing complementary strategic approaches.

Strengthening national or regional efforts will involve developing plans, strategies, analytical tools and methods, maintaining water infrastructure; investing in meteorological and hydrological information; encouraging public-private partnerships and development of innovative technologies; rehabilitating watersheds; and formulating common approaches to climate



Secretary of State Hillary Clinton addresses attendees at the U.S. government and World Bank signing ceremony for a MoU on water and sanitation cooperation.

change adaption.

The MoU contains no financial commitments from either party. Speaking with OOSKANews after the signing ceremony, U.S. Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs Maria Otero said both the bank and the government were "committed to providing resources to water, but acknowledged that "everything is going to be affected by budget cuts" in the U.S. Congress.

"That's something that we all recognize, that we are going to be operating in an environment that is resource-constrained. But we also recognize that this is an area of importance and one that will continue to receive support.

"Technical support, technical expertise, is part and parcel of helping countries address this issue, and of course we will do that to the extent possible. Like everyone else,

we will be trying to do more with less, and that will be one way to continue operating."

She said: "What this event does is really elevate the importance of water not only as an issue you need to finance, but as an issue that needs to become an increased priority for all countries as they look at how they use water and how they apply improved efficiencies and improved management to the way in which they are addressing water. And those things don't need additional money."

Otero emphasized the importance of water security as an issue of national security, observing that water "could become a source of tension among countries, so it's a very important statement on Secretary Clinton's [part] to be able for the second year in a row to elevate this issue with her presence and with her own commitment."

Article continued on page 3

FOCUS THIS WEEK

Egypt and Sudan Express Confusion Over Burundi Signing Nile Basin Agreement

CAIRO, Egypt (OOSKANews Correspondent) -- Burundi's decision on February 28 to become the sixth of the 10 Nile Basin countries to sign the Nile Basin Framework Agreement puts greater pressure on downstream countries Egypt and Sudan.

Burundi joined Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Ethiopia. The governments of these countries will pass this agreement on to their respective parliaments to ratify it.

Burundi's signing paves the way for the formation of a permanent body to regulate activities on the River Nile.

The reactions to Burundi's signing of the agreement in Egypt and Sudan are still unclear, given the recent

turbulent political developments in both countries.

Egyptian officials, who are still busy rearranging domestic affairs following the ousting of former President Hosni Mubarak and his regime, are still waiting for the new government appointed earlier this month to take action.

However, an initial reaction came from newly appointed Minister of Irrigation and Water Resources Hussein al Atfi.

"Egypt has started an urgent plan to protect Egypt's rights to the Nile water, enshrined in international agreements," said al Atfi.

According to al Atfi, the new plan is based on coordinating with all concerned governments and international organizations, especially on the African level, with the purpose of securing "Egypt's internationally recognized rights."

He argued that the Nile Basin Framework Agreement signed by six member countries "contravenes the agreed upon procedural rules, and it does not absolve the countries signatory to it of their commitment toward old agreements.

"The old agreements exist and are prevailing according to international law."

While stressing the "negative impact"

Article continued on page 4

Article continued from 2

Asked by OOSKANews about how the MoU would affect the United States' activities with regard to fostering cooperation over transboundarywater resources, Otero said, "There is no question that when countries are able to reach agreements on how they share their river basins, it is one way to be sure that then that situation doesn't turn into conflict or tension.

"Part of our effort is to help countries develop the regional mechanisms to advance the cooperation and collaboration between or among these countries. We have seen in some cases where that has played itself out and it really demonstrates that countries can collaborate, and so that, I think, is really the purpose that we would have.

"The United States does not play mediator, it does not play the role of 'solving' any of these issues. These are for the countries themselves to decide. But we can help bring forth regional mechanisms or systems that would enable them all to be able to reach agreement."

Representative from within State Department and the World Bank Group, as well as the private sector and NGO community, hailed the MoU as historically significant, but Clinton noted that although it is a step forward, "we have so much further to go together."

Jeff Seabright, Vice-President for Environment and Water

Resources at The Coca-Cola Company, who spoke at the signing ceremony at the World Bank headquarters in Washington, DC, said his company is "working to establish a truly water sustainable business" on a global level. Coca-Cola is "starting to understand water's links" with other socioeconomic issues like violence and economic losses to and education of women and girls, he added.

Steve Hollingworth, COO of NGO Care International, which has teamed up with Coca-Cola Company for WASH programs in eight countries in Africa, said a recent survey conducted by his organization found that women and girls feel more empowered and have a greater sense of dignity when they have access to improved water sources.

"We know that for hundred of millions of people today, water represents a deadly threat. And the risks that they face in finding water, hauling it, drinking it, cooking and bathing with it, add up to the defining challenge of their lives. There is nothing more urgent and important than that," Clinton said.

"So let's get about the business of working together -- creatively, collaboratively, and quickly -- to make a difference, to make our contribution to solving the water crisis and to bring greater health and stability to more of the world's people."

FOCUS THIS WEEK

Article continued from 3

of the framework agreement on cooperation among basin countries, al Atfi said continuation of dialogue with all of the Nile Basin countries was one of the pillars of Egypt's plan.

"We will go back to the negotiating table in order to reach a consensus formula that maintains the interests of all member states without posing harm to any side," he said.

Al Atfi said there "remains a chance for a consensus that appeals to all the peoples of the basin if dialogue is based on mutual interest."

"Egypt will continue lending a helping hand to all member states by providing technical support and training for [water and irrigation] cadres," he added.

The Egyptian Foreign Ministry, which played a significant role in negotiations in the past few months, stressed the importance of returning to the negotiating table.

"Egypt is not bound by this [framework] agreement since we are not signatory to it," said Mona Omar, assistant to foreign minister for African affairs.

Other official sources said Egypt would start an intensive movement aimed at convincing European donor countries and the World Bank not to recognize this agreement.

"The West now sympathizes with Egypt due to the current political situation in it. Egypt will capitalize on this trend to coax the basin countries into returning to the negotiating table," the source said.

The World Bank last year said it would not fund any controversial projects in the Nile Basin region unless a consensus was reached.

Al Atfi said he had consulted with his Sudanese counterpart, Kamal Ali, after Burundi signed on to the

agreement.

"We're coordinating with each other regarding the developments," he added.

The Egyptian-Sudanese consultation over developments continued this week when Sudanese President Omar al Bashir visited Egypt.

According to Sudanese Foreign Minister Ali Karti, Bashir agreed with the Egyptian Supreme Council of the Armed Forces on "coordinating between the two countries in order to boost cooperation with Nile Basin countries in a manner that maintains their interests in the Nile water."

Karti said an ad-hoc Egyptian-Sudanese committee would be appointed to coordinate Egyptian-Sudanese positions on the issue.

Sudanese international expert and member of the Sudanese negotiating delegation Ahmed al Mufti described Burundi's move as a significant development.

However, he said, "Burundi's signing does not mean that the agreement will be activated soon."

He called for an urgent meeting of the Nile Basin ministers of water in order to turn the Nile Basin Initiative into a commission.

He pointed out that "problems [of the Nile Basin] will not be solved by unilateral agreements. There should be a consensus agreement."

The pressures on downstream countries intensified when Ethiopian Water and Energy Minister Alemayehu Tegenu called upon both countries to sign the agreement

before May.

"We will wait for other countries to join us until May 2011 deadline as per the original agreement," Tegenu told Capital newspaper.

"DRC, Egypt and Sudan will soon join us in signing the deal," he added.

Kenyan Ambassador to Egypt David Arunga this month also urged Egypt to accede to the Entebbe agreement.

In a statement carried by the Middle

"The West now sympathizes with Egypt due to the current political situation in it. Egypt will capitalize on this trend to coax the basin countries into returning to the negotiating table."

East News Agency, Arunga said his country will defend the interests of Egypt and its people until it becomes party to the agreement.

"Kenya does not intend to harm Egyptian interests or people for whom Nile water is of utmost importance," he added, stressing that Burundi's endorsement is not a dangerous development for the North African nation.

Arunga said the Entebbe agreement aimed to establish projects that will benefit Nile Basin countries, but does not seek to redistribute water quotas.

The situation got more complicated last week as Ethiopia announced it would start work on a hydropower plant in its Nile basin within the next

Article continued on page 5

After Ganges, India Promises to Clean Up Other Rivers

NEW DELHI, India (OOSKANews Correspondent) -- India has allotted \$43.4 million USD for cleaning "many rivers and lakes of cultural and historical significance," other than the Ganges River, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee told the country's parliament while presenting the annual budget for the country for the fiscal year April 2011 to March 2012. The Indian economy is expected to grow by 9 percent during that time.

"A number of projects under the National Ganga River Basin Authority have been approved in 2010-11. This momentum will be further stepped up," Mukherjee said.

He did not name the rivers or lakes where the funds will be used.

The Indian government also recently unveiled a plan to carry out four projects worth \$109 million USD to clean up the Ganges.

The plan includes a \$61 million USD project in Moradabad, a \$9

million USD project in Kannauj, a \$31 million USD project in Allahabad and a \$10 million USD project in Garhmukteswar, all located in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh. The project will be funded by federal and state governments in a 70:30 ratio.

It will boost the capacity of water treatment plants along the Ganges River and will reduce pollution.

The government acknowledged that its earlier plan to clean up the Ganges failed to make any substantial progress, and says it is now working on a new plan to make the country's holiest river pristine by 2020 by not allowing any untreated municipal sewage or industrial waste to flow into the waterway.

India launched its first plan to clean up the river in 1985 with much fanfare and money. But it failed to sort out the problem.

The new plan launched in 2010, called the National Ganga River Basin Authority, is headed by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Meanwhile, the Indian Supreme Court on February 28 directed the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to file a report on the level of pollution in the Yamuna River within two weeks after examining water samples from the river.

The Yamuna River, considered one of India's most sacred, remains in a state of crisis. It has even been called "dead."

The Delhi government earlier this year unveiled a \$295 million USD drain interceptor plan before the Supreme Court, promising to clean the heavily polluted river by the year 2014.

The interceptor sewer will be laid along three major drains to curb pollution. The interceptor's infrastructure is designed to trap all pollutants.

After the tendering process for the drain interceptor system is completed, work should begin by June.

Funding is to be split between three organizations: the Jawaharlal Nehru Urban

Article continued on page 6

Article continued from 4

few weeks, according to Prime Minister Meles Zenawi.

The plant will be located 40 kilometers from the Sudanese border in Benishangul Gumuz region and generate 6,000 megawatts of power.

"We are planning to carry out a number of important projects, including a major project in the Nile basin," Zenawi said.

"It will be inaugurated in the next few weeks."

Egyptian and Sudanese observers stressed the need to focus on diplomatic efforts and seek multilateral

negotiations.

A number of experts have said that if an agreement cannot be reached, Egypt and Sudan will seek international arbitration or appeal to the United Nations in order to protect their share of Nile water.

Under the previous colonial Nile treaties signed in 1929 and 1959, Egypt and Sudan were given 86 percent of the Nile River water despite the fact that the other seven African countries contribute over 95 percent to the river water.

FOCUS THIS WEEK

Article continued from 5

Renewal Mission (35 percent), the government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi (15 percent), and the Delhi Jal Board (50 percent).

Hardly any freshwater enters the Yamuna. The river is choked by pollutants from Delhi and towns in the northern Indian state of Haryana, officials say.

Scores of villagers have pledged support for a new campaign to save the river from pollution and make its water drinkable. The campaign is said to be the biggest public initiative in the region against river pollution.

The thrust of the campaign is civic responsibility across many fronts: animal carcasses are not to be dumped in the river; washermen should not use chemicals to wash dirty clothes; and the river bank is not to be used as a toilet or a trash heap for polythene bags, which clog the river and harm marine life.

Dead animals will be dumped at designated sites. To discourage people from excreting in the river, public toilets will be built in each village.

In addition, dhobi ghats (washing areas) will be set up near a pond in each village to stop chemical-ridden washing water seeping into the river.

Villagers will have to ensure that idols, toys painted with harmful dyes and devotional materials are not dunked in the river. Separate bins will be supplied to collect such material.

The man leading the villagers' campaign is Mathura Chief Development Officer Ajay Shankar Pandey. During an earlier spell in Ghaziabad near

New Delhi, Pandey worked on purifying a polluted tributary of the Yamuna, the Hindon.

"We are confident that once the villagers lead and show the way, the city people will not remain idle spectators but will get involved," Pandey told the Indo-Asian News Service in January.

"We told the villagers not to wait for others for what they could do on their own. It is about saving a dying river, a holy river at that. A series of meetings and interactions with the village leaders and activists helped us draw up a plan of action. We are now putting that into practice," Pandey added.

A "super body" called the Yamuna Mitra Panchayat will oversee the people's clean-up operation. It will organize the campaign with several agencies, including the panchayat (local government) department at each block and the district headquarters and the departments of village development, irrigation, horticulture and fisheries.

Each village will have a committee with the pradhan (village chief) as chairman.

The committee will have three members -- two panchayat members and either the panchayat secretary or a water conservation activist.

The river is also being de-silted and rehabilitated as part of the Yamuna Action Plan-II (YAP-II), which is trapping wastewater flow from 13 major drains.

YAP-II is expected to be completed by June, when the new interceptor project begins. But YAP has attracted sharp criticism.

Local newspaper Vrindavan quoted an official as saying in November that a YAP barrage meant to supply pure drinking water was actually creating huge areas of stagnant water, which was full of sewage from the

"We are confident that once the villagers lead and show the way, the city people will not remain idle spectators but will get involved."

drains of every city from Delhi to Mathura.

Mosquitoes were breeding in the water and then spreading deadly dengue fever, the official said.

Another festering problem is occasional drought. Despite flooding toward the end of 2010, sometimes the Yamuna slows to a trickle. Other times, it peters out altogether.

"One wonders where all the water in the river has disappeared. They should have better storage facilities. The canal system and the community ponds should have been dredged and cleaned," green activist Ravi Singh told the Indo Asian News Service.

Others blame private pumps that lift river water without permission.

FOCUS THIS WEEK

Political, Financial Problems Aggravate Shortages in Moldova's Gagauzia Autonomous Area

LUMKAI, Moldova (OOSKANews Correspondent) -- Gagauzia, an autonomous territorial unit in southern Moldova, suffers from water shortages and efforts by local authorities to mitigate the situation are hampered by insufficient financing and unresolved political and financial problems with the Moldovan government in Chisinau.

"The situation with water supplies in Gagauzia is now difficult due to lack of rivers and lakes in our territory," Petr Zlatov, chief of the Industry, Building, Transport and Communication Department of Gagauzia's Executive Committee, told OOSKANews. "Water is only taken from underground sources and there is a current tendency for groundwater levels [to drop], which complicates the situation with water supplies."

The water resources of the autonomous region mainly consist of groundwater sources with a volume of 8 to 10 million cubic meters. Surface water sources are limited.

There are two large water storage reservoirs in Gagauzia's territory: Comrat, which has an area of 1.7 square kilometers, and Kongaz, which has an area of 4.9 square kilometers, according to Gagauzia and the Institute for Development and Social Initiatives, Viitorul.

Zlatov said, "Only 54.6 percent of the population of Gagauzia gets water from centralized water supply systems and 11 percent have access to the centralized sewerage system. The length of water supply networks is 667 kilometers, out of which 310 kilometers, or 46.5 percent, require major repairs."

Water supply networks in Comrat, the capital of the autonomous region, were built in the 1960s and 1970s,

and water losses in them currently are at 70 percent.

Gagauzia, with a population of 155,650, covers 1,832 square kilometers. The local economy is based on agriculture.

Water for centralized water supply systems is taken from artesian wells, and, according to the State Sanitary Inspection, Gossannadzor, 30 percent of the wells in the Comrat district do not meet chemical standards for drinking water.

In the Vulcanesti district, that figure is 45 percent and in the city of Ceadir-Lunga and villages of Besghioz and Gaidari it is 100 percent.

Water taken from open wells does not meet chemical and microbiological standards. In addition, a lot of wells dry up in summer and the population buys water that is trucked in and then stores it in small private reservoirs.

The quantity of hydrogen sulphide, ammonia, fluoride and various metals in the consumed water exceeds the maximum permissible concentration. The observable result of drinking such water is the yellow teeth seen in many of the Gagauz residents.

"Our task is to give people water," Gagauzia's Governor Mihail Formuzal said in an interview with OOSKANews. "Ninety percent of the population must have access to water."

A few years ago, the leadership of the autonomous region developed and approved a program for drinking water supply in Gagauzia, which is ongoing. The program stipulates allocation of \$3.4 million USD from the regional budget.

In its efforts to rehabilitate water supply and sewerage networks, Gagauzia is receiving help from Turkey, which has allocated funding

for construction of the water supply system in the city of Ceadir-Lunga.

The project has been completed and Turkey is now planning to give \$10 million USD for partial water supply in the city of Vulcanesti and the municipality of Comrat, but a final decision on the issue has not yet been made, Formuzal said.

Sewerage networks in the city of Ceadir-Lunga and water supply networks in four villages are to be built under the framework of a project financed by European financial institutions, for which the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development is providing a \$3.5 million USD credit and the European Investment Bank a grant of \$3.5 million USD. Another fund is providing a final grant of \$3.5 million USD.

Zlatov noted that some \$33 million USD to \$42 million USD were needed to solve the water supply problem in Gagauzia, and another \$33 million USD to \$42 million USD will be needed to solve the problem of sewerage networks. The autonomous region does not have sufficient funds to prepare projects, however, and so it is impossible to attract grants and credits from foreign partners.

The Moldovan leadership in Chisinau has shown little interest in solving water supply and sewerage problems in Gagauzia, officials from the regional administration said. The "Law on the special legal status of Gagauzia" passed by the Moldovan Parliament in 1994, is not being implemented as planned and funding allocated from the Moldovan national budget for water supply and sewerage systems in the autonomous region is very small.

MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

Kenya's State Water Firms Face Corruption Charges

NAIROBI, Kenya (OOSKANews Correspondent) -- Kenya's water sector is struggling to shake off a negative image acquired due to allegations of widespread graft, but new charges have surfaced of corruption in state-owned water firms.

Kenya's Water Resources Management Authority (WRMA) is in the process of suing two state firms over unpaid monthly dues that have so far cost taxpayers \$11.7 million USD.

The Kenya Electricity Generating Company (KenGen) and the National Irrigation Board (NIB) are facing legal action over what the WRMA says is the failure by the two companies to comply with legislation requiring them to pay a monthly fee for using the country's water bodies.

According to WRMA Chairman Francis Nyenze, failure by state firms to pay this fee is affecting the country's water sector and stalling operations nationwide. The WRMA oversees water allocation.

Legal notice 171, published in the Kenya Gazette of September 28, 2007, states that institutions that use large quantities of water must pay a fee of about \$0.006 USD per cubic meter for water they take from lakes, rivers or underground sources.

While KenGen consumes huge amounts of water from the Tana River to generate electricity, the NIB takes water from the same river to irrigate rice fields in the Mwea settlement.

"The charges were introduced to raise efficiency and support resource management, such as water catchment protection and monitoring of water quality and quantity," said Nyenze.

According to the authority's first performance report, some \$4.1 million USD can be raised from the monthly fee if it is paid on time.

"The demand for water resources has been on the increase due to rising population and industrial and irrigation needs, while availability continues to decline," said the report.

Also facing legal action are Kenya's flower-growing enterprises, which the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) has blacklisted for environmental pollution.

According to officials, NEMA is pushing for a natural process of treating water in large-scale farming, to reduce the strain on country's wetlands from this economic activity.

While studies have shown that recycled water can satisfy most water demands, as long as it is adequately treated to ensure water quality is achieved, the Fairtrade Foundation

says growing flowers consumes a lot of water, a precious resource that is unevenly distributed in Kenya.

Kenya Flower Council CEO Jane Ngige said minimum standards require certified farms to protect the nearby water supply, but most are allowed to go beyond this requirement to invest in rainwater harvesting or drilling of boreholes to give local communities access to water.

"Flower farms are now investing in the wetland system, which makes use of aquatic plants such as bullrushes, papyrus, water lilies, nail cabbage and calla lilies, to purify water," said Tim Hobbs, managing director of Tambuzi farm in the Rift Valley region of Kenya.

The aquatic plants sap nutrients from the water through a biological process, and by the time the water seeps through the last pond, it is pure enough to be recycled back to the farm, Hobbs said.

Zimbabwe, Botswana in Row Over Zambezi Water

HARARE, Zimbabwe (OOSKANews Correspondent) -- A dispute has erupted between Zimbabwe and Botswana after Harare snubbed Gaborone's proposal to draw water from the upper sections of the Zambezi River.

Zimbabwe has failed to make progress with plans to channel water from the Zambezi to its Matabeleland regions in the south of the country through the Matabeleland Zambezi Water Project, touted as the only solution to the region's perennial

water woes.

Botswana is faced with acute water shortages that have caused significant challenges for the government.

Gaborone has lost another bid to draw water from the Lesotho Highlands area after the Lesotho government indicated that Botswana's proposition could only be considered in 2030.

South Africa currently has an agreement to channel water from

Article continued on page 9

MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

Potable Water Delivered to Syria's Drought-Stricken Northeast

DAMASCUS, Syria (OOSKANews Correspondent) -- The International Committee of the Red Cross and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent are delivering and distributing potable water to people living in Syria's drought-stricken northeast governorates of Al-Hassakah, Deir Al-Zor and Al-Raqah.

"More than 21,000 people are receiving monthly deliveries of water," Syrian Arab Red Crescent President Dr. Abdelrahman al-Attar said in a statement.

Syria is entering its fifth year of drought conditions.

Over a million people have been affected, 800,000 of whom have had their livelihoods destroyed, according to the United Nations.

The drought has also led to food insecurity and has displaced populations.

Many people living in the

northeast region have left to live in the cities of Damascus, Aleppo or Homs.

"Providing clean drinking water to people living in the areas most affected helps them maintain their livelihoods and remain where they are," said Marianne Gasser, head of the ICRC delegation in Damascus.

"People in or near the remote village of Um Madf'a are now receiving water from a treatment unit installed by the ICRC and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent.

"Similar units set up in the villages of Mastur and Abu Hamdah are expected to be operating soon."

What water has been available out of boreholes is saline, requiring treatment before consumption.

Treatment units will be operated and maintained by the General

Commission for the Management and Development of Al-Badia.

There will also be underground rainwater collection reservoirs, improved livestock ponds, construction of irrigation wells and micro-dams and modernized irrigation techniques implemented to ensure adequate water quantities.

Other parts of Syria are also experiencing drought conditions.

Eastern Syria's water shortages are so severe that 85 percent of the region's livestock have died over the past five years.

Illegal wells to irrigate wheat and cotton crops have sprouted up and contributed to destruction of the water table.

The Syrian government has established a drought resistance division to collect data.

Article continued from 8

Lesotho's Highlands area to its Gauteng area, which covers Johannesburg and other cities and towns.

Samuel Sipepa Nkomo, the Zimbabwean minister responsible for water affairs, told parliamentarians this week that Botswana had proposed to draw water from the Zambezi River and that his ministry had objected to this proposal on the grounds that this would have affected the Victoria Falls.

"As a country, we have received an Environmental Impact Assessment. We have studied it and we advised that it will be inappropriate for Botswana to draw water from upper Zambezi because that would affect the falls at Victoria Falls," he was quoted as saying in local news reports.

Nkomo said his ministry had advised officials from Botswana that as an alternative, they could build up reservoirs and dams on the confluence of the Thsobe and Zambezi rivers.

Although government officials have played down the tensions that have resulted from this development, OOSKANews is reliably informed that government officials in Botswana feel hard done by Zimbabwe's objection to their plans.

The Zimbabwean government has been accused of putting forward a flimsy excuse to bar its regional neighbors from drawing water from the Zambezi River.

The government in Botswana in recent weeks has committed around \$56.3 million USD to treat Glen Valley wastewater into potable water that would be used for drinking and cooking by residents of Greater Gaborone by 2014.

Other projects to draw water from Letsibogo Dam and Ntimbale Dam are under way.

The project to draw water from the Zambezi would have been undertaken under the North South Water Carrier 2.

MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

Rapid Urbanization Hinders Africa's Water and Sanitation Goals, Says UN

NAIROBI, Kenya (OOSKANews Correspondent) -- Mass migration to cities in Africa is putting new stresses on critical social amenities including water and sanitation. This in turn is creating obstacles to realization of social and economic progress, according to a Rapid Response Assessment report launched by the United Nations Environment Program and UN-HABITAT ahead of World Water Day on March 22.

Africa has experienced more rapid urbanization over the last five decades than any other part of the world.

The United Nations Human Settlement Program (UN-HABITAT) says that currently 40 percent of Africa's population of 1 billion live in urban areas.

An estimated 60 percent of the population in cities lives in unplanned settlements where water supplies and sanitation are either inadequate or non-existent.

The urban population in Africa that lacks access to safe drinking water has grown from 30 million people in 1990 to 55 million in 2008.

Access to affordable sanitation also remains a challenge as the number of people without access to a safe mode of waste disposal doubled to an estimated 175 million people over the same period.

"These are stark realities and the sobering facts which need to be addressed as nations prepare for the landmark UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012," said UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner.

The 2012 conference, elsewhere dubbed Rio+20, prioritizes green economy initiatives such as managing

freshwater resources and wastewater to power sustainable development and poverty eradication.

Steiner said, "There is growing evidence from work on the green economy that a different path in terms of water and sanitation can begin to be realized. Indeed, public policies that redirect over a tenth of a percent of global GDP annually can assist in not only addressing sanitation challenges but conserve fresh water by reducing its demand by a fifth over the coming decades."

He acknowledged that greening of African cities requires an innovative approach to water management and effluent disposal.

UN-HABITAT Executive Director Joan Clos reiterated that "Africa is the fastest urbanizing continent on the planet and the demand for water and sanitation is outstripping supply in cities."

He called for improved urban planning to provide universal access to water and basic services to ensure cities are more resilient to climate change.

According to the report, health-related consequences of inadequate water and sanitation service provision thwart productivity of urban populations.

Three cities were singled out for mention in the report: Addis Ababa, Nairobi and Grahamstown.

Addis Ababa's population of 3.5 million people has to contend with inadequate freshwater availability as well as sanitation services. Rampant pollution of waterways in the Ethiopian capital, where only 5 percent of waste is collected and recycled, has intensified the challenge.

The report notes that 60 percent of the city's food is supplied by urban farmers who irrigate their crops using wastewater. As a result, city residents risk poisoning from bacteria, fungi and heavy metals, adds the report

In Nairobi, the growth of slums has limited access to safe water and sanitation; in Kibera, the largest slum in east and central Africa, residents receive a total of 20,000 cubic meters of water daily, and 40 percent of supply is unaccounted for.

With half of Kenya's population expected to be living in cities by 2015, the country is looking for solutions to water and sanitation challenges through policy and legislative incentives outlined in the Water Act of 2002, says the report.

Grahamstown, South Africa, is hailed in the report for "inspiring water initiatives such as the Blue Drop System, which is a regulatory tool used by South Africa's Department of Water Affairs to monitor the quality of drinking water."

Rainwater harvesting has boosted the city's capacity to provide adequate water services to its growing population.

The report recommends several interventions to address urban water and sanitation crises, pointing to public-private partnerships in urban water management and delivery of sanitation services.

Mainstreaming environmental initiatives into urban water management and market-based approaches to protection of watersheds and forests will boost water security for urban populations, it adds.

MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

Kenya Mulls Household Water Treatment to Boost WASH Programs

NAIROBI, Kenya (OOSKANews Correspondent) -- The Kenyan government is focusing on decentralized water treatment in households and smaller institutions as it explores new ways of promoting sanitation and hygiene nationally.

A sanitation policy that is being fine-tuned for enactment soon recognizes household water treatment as a viable avenue to assist local communities in tackling water-borne disease.

Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation Mark Bor said, "Water safety is an issue of major concern in Kenya as most people in the countryside obtain their drinking water from unprotected sources. This contributes to the spread and increase of diarrhea and other water-borne diseases in the country."

Kenya loses close to 30,000 lives annually through diarrheal disease, as more than 50 percent of the population access water from contaminated sources.

According to Bor, the paediatric death toll due to diarrheal illnesses exceeds that of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria combined.

Bor reiterated that efforts are being scaled up to reduce diarrhea incidents through promotion of environmental hygiene, hand-washing and provision of latrines in rural areas and informal settlements.

Bor suggested that treating water at household level had proved effective in preventing water-borne disease in emergency settings.

"Promoting household water treatment and safe storage helps vulnerable populations take charge of their own water security," he said.

Kepha Ombacho, chief public health officer in the ministry, said household water treatment and safe storage had been globally endorsed to reduce the burden of diarrheal disease.

"The ministry prioritized this intervention to improve water quality, boost health and accelerate the attainment of [Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 7] on water and sanitation," said Ombacho.

He cited the robust private public partnership initiative that has promoted household water treatment options for low-income populations through use of chlorine, solar disinfection and filtration.

Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Water and Irrigation David Stower, noted that his ministry and affiliated utilities spend over \$35 million USD annually to treat over 300 million cubic meters of water.

Bulk water treatment, however, has huge financial implications and is laden with inefficiencies.

Stower said the ministry has encouraged active participation of the private sector and civil society in providing low-cost water treatment chemicals and technologies.

"The ability to carry out water treatment is a key requirement that a licensed service provider must adhere to as outlined in the service charter.

"We are aware that treating raw water is incurring a huge wage bill for utilities and therefore we are encouraging them to decentralize this activity."

The permanent secretary said service providers are issued guidelines on cost-effective methods of treating water without compromising its quality.

Deforestation, Population Blamed for Water Shortages in Sierra Leone

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone (OOSKANews Correspondent) -- The Sierra Leone Water Company (SALWACO) is blaming deforestation of areas around dams and water catchments for scarcity in the country's capital city.

"These water catchment areas were once reserved places where no one great or small was allowed to cut down trees or vegetation to construct houses," said SALWACO Secretary Francis Ganda.

He also cited those who damage water pipes as major contributors to

the water shortage in Freetown and its immediate surroundings.

The Sierra Leone Guma Valley Dam was only intended to serve at most 400 people in Freetown, but during the country's civil war, over 2 million people settled in the city, he noted.

Authorities are now working on plans and policies to construct smaller dams across the country to resolve water scarcity and augment water supply in the western area and other places.

These include the Orogu Dam Project and the White Water Dam

Article continued on page 12

SOUTHERN & EASTERN ASIA

India's Federal Budget Raises Allocation for Rural Water in 2011-12

NEW DELHI, India (OOSKANews Correspondent) -- India's federal budget for the 2011-12 financial year has raised the allocation for rural drinking water programs.

The budget allocation for the national rural drinking program has gone up to \$2 billion USD for 2011-12, compared to \$1.9 billion USD during 2010-11.

In percentage terms this increase is merely 4 percent, but the federal government has said the Bharat Nirman Program plans to cover approximately 55,000 uncovered habitations and provide safe drinking water to approximately 216,000 villages affected by poor water quality by 2012.

In addition to coverage, sustainability of water resources and appropriate quality for drinking water supply continues to be difficult in rural areas.

The overall allocation for the Ministry of Rural Development has been put at \$198.9 billion USD for the 2011-12 fiscal year. Of this amount, the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation

will receive \$2.4 billion USD for water and sanitation programs. The federal budget has allocated \$355.7 million USD for the sanitation program.

The National Rural Drinking Water Program (NRDWP) is a flagship program of the federal government and a component of the Bharat Nirman Program, which aims to ensure provision of safe and adequate drinking water supply to all rural areas and households.

The NRDWP, which was formerly known as the Accelerated Rural Water Supply Program (ARWSP), is a federally-sponsored program to provide financial assistance to states and federal territories for coverage of rural habitations with safe drinking water provision, sustainability measures for drinking water sources and systems and operation and maintenance of existing rural water supply schemes.

The focus on rural drinking water in the budget is in line with Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee's overall increased focus on the rural sector.

The federal government's flagship Bharat Nirman Program has received a budget allocation of \$12.5 billion USD, an increase of \$2.2 billion USD from the current year.

The Bharat Nirman package includes six programs, among them the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Program and the NRDWP.

However, experts say that although the federal government's intent is clear, the amount of money allocated is far less than required.

Last year, a parliamentary panel criticized the federal government's efforts to provide drinking water to rural areas as inadequate.

Even though over 84 percent of households in rural areas are covered by rural water supply, 16 percent have no access to safe drinking water.

Also, just 12 percent of rural families have individual household tap connections and only 16 percent of the population gets drinking water from public taps, the panel report said.

Article continued from 11

Project, as well as smaller dams around the country. The government's plans also include constructing "spring box" systems in a number of communities to capture and store water for later use.

Ganda said the government had created a task force headed by Vice President Alhaji Sidiq Sahr Samuel Sumana to protect the country's dwindling water resources from misuse, pollution and depletion.

This means the high-population density areas such as Freetown, Bo, Kenema, Makeni and Kono will be seriously policed to ensure preservation of water resources.

Ganda also noted that water tariffs in Sierra Leone are

the lowest among countries in the sub-region, and water companies are not collecting enough money to meet their expenses.

"The situation is made worse by those who do not even want to pay this very low tariff in Sierra Leone," Ganda said.

He said appropriate, sustainable procedures would be developed to assess water resources at all levels, with comprehensive collection of data on quantity, quality, character, location, pattern of use and response of the water resources to use and user demand, pollution and water quality degradation.

SOUTHERN & EASTERN ASIA

Toxic Hunan Could Become “Asian Rhine”

BEIJING, China (OOSKANews Correspondent) -- Leading government figures in Central China's Hunan province have announced their determination to tackle the heavy metal contamination harming the environment and causing mounting sickness.

At the yearly National People's Congress session, Hunan province Party Secretary Zhou Qiang declared that Xiangjiang River heavy metal pollution will be curbed in the course of the 12th Five-Year Plan (2011-2015), which contains a purification roadmap for China's most toxic river.

Over 40 million people live near the Xiangjiang River. Local business accounts for 70 percent of the provincial GDP.

According to government officials, further growth will not come at the expense of the environment or public health.

According to Zhou, the first step in cleaning up the Xiangjiang is to stop new pollution from entering it. Dealing with the river's heavy metal levels will come next.

Predicting that Hunan's "Mother River" will slowly recover, Zhou voiced hope that it will blossom into the "Eastern Rhine."

Meanwhile, if any children near the Xiangjiang are found to have excessive lead in their bloodstream, the state will guarantee them free treatment, said Hunan governor Xu Shousheng.

Xu also vowed to do everything possible to enable people to "breathe fresh air, drink clear water and eat safe food."

At a televised conference in February this year, Environmental Protection Minister Zhou Shengxian said that

the national plan for 2015 has set an emission-reduction target of 15 percent from 2007 levels for five heavy metals in vital tainted areas. The metals are lead, mercury, chromium, cadmium and arsenic.

In 2010, over 200 children in Hunan's Chenzhou city suffered lead poisoning thanks to local mining industry pollution. In 2009 over 1,350 children in another Hunan town, Wenping, were diagnosed with high

lead levels in their blood, caused by local smelting plant pollution.

Called "the home of non-ferrous metals," Hunan has long been dogged by reports of lead poisoning and "cadmium rice."

Blood poisoning cases triggered by contamination are cropping up across China. Trouble spots include Shaanxi, Anhui, Guangdong, Sichuan, Fujian and Yunnan provinces.

Two Reports Find Problems With Pakistan's Water Quality

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (OOSKANews Correspondent) -- Two reports independently done by Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) and the World Health Organization (WHO) found significant deficiencies in water quality in Pakistan.

A nationwide survey conducted by PCRWR revealed that the majority of the population is receiving unsafe drinking water.

According to data released by PCRWR, 72 percent of all water samples collected from around the country were found to be unsafe for drinking. The problem is compounded by the fact that the majority of water supply systems do not have a facility to treat the unsafe water.

"Only 20 percent of water supply schemes have the availability of a water treatment facility," the survey said.

In these samples, the survey found 83 percent bacteriological contamination at the water source and 86 percent bacteriological contamination at the user end.

Previous surveys on quality of drinking water in Pakistan, conducted over the last few years, have shown a continuous upward trend in water pollution, resulting in increased health problems for residents. The PCRWR survey has endorsed these findings.

In addition to bacteriological contamination, deteriorating water quality in Pakistan, is due to the presence of arsenic, nitrates and fluoride in water resources, according to PCRWR survey. These factors are the main causes of unsafe drinking water in Pakistan, it says.

On PCRWR's scale, Pakistan's water quality ranks 80th among 122 nations worldwide. The survey also painted a gloomy picture of drinking water-

Article continued on page 14

SOUTHERN & EASTERN ASIA

Taiwan Dam Report Reignites Opposition

TAIPEI (OOSKANews Correspondent) – Recent reports that work on the Hushan Reservoir construction project in western Taiwan's Yunlin County is past the halfway point and set for a 2014 finish has rekindled anger over the project.

Local residents and eco-activists complain that the developing dam was designed to pipe water to the local petrochemical industry. Worse, according to critics, government officials pursuing its construction have ignored the local area's many fault zones and a swathe of adverse environmental impacts.

Lee Ken-cheng, secretary-general of Kaohsiung-based Citizens of the Earth, who leads the anti-Hushan campaign, told Taiwan Today that the government originally judged Hushan Reservoir less environmentally friendly than a rival plan. Hushan apparently only got off the drawing board because

the site for the other preferred proposal was ruled out by the 7.3-magnitude 1999 central Taiwan earthquake.

"The reality is that Hushan should never have been built," Lee said. According to him, the project was only ever given a conditional approval by the Environmental Protection Agency in 2007. Then, the developer altered the project three times, "attesting to the Alice-in-Wonderland nature of this project," he said.

The final stage of the Hushan project involves building a channel to link the reservoir with Jhoushuei River, Taiwan's longest water course, which runs between Yunlin and Nantou counties. However, typhoons and downpours have thwarted that step. Instead, the Water Resources Agency now proposes carving a 4,160-meter underground tunnel through mountains.

Meanwhile, more dams also likely

to spark controversy may be in the pipeline.

Water Resources Agency Director-General Yang Wei-fuu's claim that Hushan will be Taiwan's last "leaks like a sieve," according to Lee.

The dam is designed to funnel water to a plant run by petrochemical giant Formosa Plastics Group, he added. On completion, the reservoir, designed for joint operation with the Jiji Diversion Weir on the Chuoshui River, will have a supply capacity of 694,000 tons of water per day. "A little math pokes holes in government claims that the reservoir is for domestic use," Lee said.

Taiwan's Water Resources Agency (WRA) said the reservoir partly targets local residents who now rely heavily on groundwater. The Hushan reservoir project will help prevent land subsidence resulting from groundwater extraction, the WRA says.

Article continued from 13

related infrastructure in the country.

According to the PCRWR, 33 percent of water supply programs in Pakistan are non-functional due to insufficient funds. The data released by the organization showed that out of 12,000 water supply projects completed by 2010, only 8,200 have been completed. The projects were part of an ambitious larger project called the Provision of Safe Drinking Water.

Some of the water supply projects were shut down or are partially functional due to lack of repair or maintenance problems.

The PCRWR survey followed a WHO report that found poliovirus present in water sources in the majority of the country. The Express Tribune quoted the WHO report as saying poliovirus had been found in Warsak Dam in Peshawar, as well as in water samples in Rawalpindi,

Multan, Karachi and Quetta. Lahore was the only city where poliovirus was not detected in water sources.

According to the WHO, Pakistan leads the world in polio infections and is the only polio-endemic country in the world where cases of the disease detected annually are on the rise.

Unsafe drinking water is straining Pakistan's already fragile health infrastructure. The National Conservation Strategy study says almost 40 percent of total deaths in Pakistan are due to water-borne disease, whereas the WHO report says 32 percent of hospital beds in Pakistan are occupied by patients suffering from water-borne diseases.

According to the latest estimates, Pakistan spends \$354 million USD annually to treat patients suffering from water-borne diseases.

SOUTHERN & EASTERN ASIA

Sri Lanka to Establish Groundwater Monitoring Network

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (OOSKANews Correspondent) – The Sri Lankan government plans to set up a Groundwater Monitoring Network under the Water Resources Board, a senior cabinet minister revealed

Water Resources Management Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva said there is a need for such a network to disseminate vital information on the water sector.

The proposed groundwater monitoring network will provide critical information on the hydro-geological and hydro-chemical status of groundwater resources in the country.

“When implementing this network, special reference will be given to a number of selected pilot areas.

“The quality of groundwater of these pilot areas has already been found to be adversely affected due to natural [events] and human activities,” the minister said.

He added that project will be carried out through a dam safety and water resources planning project.

It will support development of remedial actions and proper management strategies to mitigate the impact on the country’s water resources, he said.

Increasing, uncontrolled abstraction of groundwater has caused a deterioration of groundwater quality due to seawater intrusion.

Application of large quantities of inorganic fertilizer has resulted in high concentrations of nitrogen compounds in water.

A rapid decline in water levels is also being experienced in areas

where there are a large number of agro-wells.

“Groundwater should be conserved in terms of quantity and quality as a reliable source for drinking water in urban and rural areas.

“A significant portion of ground

water is being extracted for irrigated agriculture as well,” the minister observed.

Around the world, groundwater resources are under the pressures due to increasing human activity and climate change.

International Women’s Day Marked With Calls for WASH Access

WASHINGTON, DC, United States (OOSKANews Correspondent) – Throughout the world, women and girls are disproportionately affected by the lack of access to clean water and sanitation services, as a number of groups noted in events to mark the 100th International Women’s Day on March 8.

The Washington, DC-based WASH Advocacy Initiative called on “U.S. policymakers, corporate and philanthropic leaders, and civic and faith communities to make the investments and create the policies necessary to end the global water and sanitation crisis, one that disproportionately affects the health, education, productivity and livelihoods of billions of women and girls around the world.”

One reason for this is that women and girls have the primary responsibility of fetching water for their families, which on a global average requires walking 6 kilometers a day to and from a water source.

This equates to a lot time that could be better used for furthering education or professional and

economic pursuits.

“Women’s time poverty and income poverty often reinforce each other with negative impacts,” according to the World Bank.

With regard to water, there is currently no other alternative; if a woman does not fetch the water, her family will go thirsty.

Another significant issue is access to sanitation facilities, especially for girls who would like to attend school.

There is a significantly higher drop-out rate for girls who have reached puberty and do not attend schools with proper sanitation facilities compared to girls with proper sanitation services at school.

Africa is a good example of this problem, with a ratio of girls to boys who attend secondary schooling at 79:100.

The ratio gets even worse for tertiary education, according to the World Bank.

“One extra year of secondary school raises a girl’s lifetime wages by 15 to 25 percent,” noted Emily Drew, a researcher and writer for the U.S.

Article continued on page 16

EASTERN EUROPE & FSU

Novorossiysk Governor Pledges to Solve Water Problems Within Two Years

NOVOROSSIYSK, Russia (OOSKANews Correspondent) -- The governor of Novorossiysk has declared that within two years the city will have solved its water problems that currently see around one-third of the population without access to clean running water.

Novorossiysk is a city of about 230,000 people in the southern Russian region of Krasnodar.

The local economy has recently been given a boost by construction of a new naval base in the city to provide an alternative for the Russian Black Sea Fleet, which is currently based in Sevastopol, Ukraine.

The governor of the city, Alexander Tkachev, made his remarks at an open meeting of the Novorossiysk

City Duma.

The speech celebrated much of what the modern city has to offer the region and the country, but Tkachev said that it reflected badly on Novorossiysk that it could not provide water to all its inhabitants.

In previous years, tanker trucks have been used to transport water into the city as the pipe systems have degraded.

However, even that has now stopped, leaving one third of local residents with no conventional water supply and forcing them to buy bottled water.

This is the situation Tkachev intends to change; within two years, all the inhabitants of the city should have a

reliable and safe supply of water to their homes "around the clock."

Novorossiysk is currently one of the driving economic forces of its region, with growth in 2010 reaching 1.5 times the national average and unemployment of just 0.3 percent.

However, the rate of construction of new homes and growth of median income in the city are both areas that Tkachev wants to improve.

This is the backdrop to his promises with regard to solving the city's water problems.

There are some concerns that, as with so many promises from politicians, the claims of Tkachev would either be quietly forgotten or evolve into a less ambitious and cheaper alternative.

Article continued from 15

Chamber of Commerce's Business Civic Leadership Center (BCLC).

Women and girls are also often the victims of assault, especially at night, when trying to find adequate sanitation facilities.

This has been a major problem in Haiti, after the massive earthquake of January 12, 2010 forced millions of people to live in tent cities.

Women have found it safer to relieve themselves on the edge of camp, rather than traveling to the provided facilities

All of this adds up to the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

"The road to achieving the MDGs...can only be built on a gender inclusive agenda, unleashing the productive power of women," according to the World Bank.

"That agenda should advance women's education and access to information, protect women's rights, improve women's access to agricultural inputs and security over their land, promote female entrepreneurship and increase the participation of women in government and public life."

Although water and sanitation access targets are included in MDG 7, it is clear that all of the MDGs would be improved with an improvement to water and sanitation access.

"Access to safe water, basic sanitation and hygiene is the foundation for providing sustainable health, education, poverty alleviation, environment and security for families and communities around the world," the WASH Advocacy Initiative said.

World Bank President Robert Zoellick said, "It goes beyond a matter of fairness or decency.

"It makes no economic sense to lose out on the energy, creativity and dynamism of half of the world's population."

"On International Women's Day, there must be a clarion call to action to provide WASH to women and their families across the world and a global commitment to tackle today's most grave and most solvable global health challenge," Kathy Baczko, Director of Global Partnerships at the WASH Advocacy Initiative said.

"Women in the United States and around the world need to mobilize their voices, votes and financial resources for WASH on behalf of women and families in need," she said.

EASTERN EUROPE & FSU

Azerbaijan May Face Drinking Water Shortages in Coming Years

BAKU, Azerbaijan (OOSKANews Correspondent) -- Azerbaijan may face an acute shortage of drinking water in the coming years, according to recent statements by experts at the country's Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources.

Today, the Kura River accounts for up to 70 percent of the country's water supply.

The river's environmental condition leaves much to be desired.

According to recent monitoring of the river by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, its waters contain high concentration of phenols and copper compounds and are practically unusable as drinking water.

As a result, most of the largest cities in Azerbaijan, including the country's capital, Baku, are experiencing water shortages.

According to Telman Zeynalov, one of Azerbaijan's leading ecologists and head of the Center for Environmental Prediction (CEP) Azerbaijan, most of the country's water bodies are heavily polluted, which can result in problems with drinking water supplies.

Even water supplied for the needs of the capital do not meet quality standards, he added.

The Azerbaijani government is considering implementing a set of measures aimed at addressing these problems.

One of these is the long-awaited launch of the Oguz-Gabala-Baku water pipeline, which is one of

the largest and most expensive projects in Azerbaijan's water industry in recent years.

The launch of the pipeline should help to solve the current problem with shortages of clean drinking water in Baku.

At the same time, the government plans to accelerate efforts to implement a program to reconstruct regional water and sewerage systems in more than 40 small cities across the country.

The cost of the project is estimated at more than \$600 million USD.

Most of the funds are to be

provided by the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and other such lending institutions.

And President Ilham Aliyev has raised the possibility of an ambitious desalination project on the Caspian Sea.

He said that by 2012, construction of the Samur-Absheron water canal and Takhtakorpu reservoir are expected to be completed as well.

These along with the Caspian project should partially resolve the current problem of water shortages in the country, he said.

Kherson to Build Water Purification Facility

KHERSON, Ukraine (OOSKANews Correspondent) -- Kherson, an administrative center in Kherson Oblast in southern Ukraine, is preparing to initiate a project to design and construct a water purification station.

The station will help clean up the Dnepr River, one of the biggest rivers in Eastern Europe.

The project is part of a program aimed at supplying Kherson with quality, round-the-clock potable water supply.

The facility is expected to clean up the Dnepr's water.

It also will remove iron from the water, fully preparing water for

consumption.

The station will be able to process 80,000 cubic meters of water daily.

Kherson Mayor Vladimir Saldo expected the new facility to contribute to lower potable water prices in Kherson region.

The project will cost a total of \$29 million USD.

Kherson Municipality and Kherson Vodokanal (water utility) will allocate \$6.5 million USD.

Kherson Oblast and other investment programs will contribute the remaining \$22.5 million USD.

EASTERN EUROPE & FSU

Krasnokamsk to Levy Investment Surcharge on Water, Wastewater Services

KRASNOKAMSK, Russia (OOSKANews Correspondent) -- The city of Krasnokamsk in the Perm region last week decided to levy an investment surcharge on water and wastewater services to allow it to reconstruct its water infrastructure after years of neglect and degradation.

Krasnokamsk is a city of 53,000 inhabitants in the Perm region of Siberia.

Originally based around Soviet paper factories, the city now serves primarily as a satellite town for residents commuting the 10 kilometers to Perm itself.

The remaining industry in the city presents an important challenge for new wastewater treatment plants, as it is made up of food and meat processing plants that produce large amounts of unpleasant waste.

Minister of Urban Development and Infrastructure Development of Perm region Alex Khrapo initially made the announcement on his blog.

The large-scale project is still in the planning phase, with funding negotiations ongoing with Moscow.

It is currently believed that the investment surcharge on the local residents will raise 25 percent of the total project funding, with the remaining 75 percent coming from government funds.

According to Khrapo, regional authorities are currently considering the design documentation for the new water infrastructure in Krasnokamsk.

This has had to be redrawn after the first draft failed to meet the required safety and technical standards.

Experts are currently deciding where to put the city's new sewage treatment facilities and what source to use for the city's drinking water.

Previously, the river running

through the city was used as the source, but its susceptibility to pollution means planners are now considering drilling wells down to underground reservoirs.

Once the funding is in place and the designs have been finalized, it is believed that construction on the project will begin in spring 2012 and take at least three years to complete.

Moldovan Capital to Stop Using Chlorine

CHISINAU, Moldova (OOSKANews Correspondent) -- Chlorine will be removed from piped water in the Moldovan capital, Chisinau, within a year, Mayor Dorin Chirtoaca said during the signing of an agreement between the water utility, Apa-Canal Chisinau, and Romanian water company RAJA Constanta, on March 12.

The mayor noted that chlorine is no longer being used at the drinking water treatment plant in Vadul lui Voda, a commune in the municipality of Chisinau, where it was replaced with a different disinfectant.

"We must do this at the drinking water treatment plant in Chisinau, too, to [stop using] chlorine," he said.

The agreement was signed by Constantin Becciev, head of Apa-Canal Chisinau, and his counterpart from RAJA Constanta, Felix Stroe. It provides for cooperation, an exchange

of water treatment technology, training for staff and cutting energy-related costs through modernization of equipment.

At the ceremony, Chirtoaca suggested that the money that would be saved on electricity would allow equipment to be purchased in installments.

"We must do this at the drinking water treatment plant in Chisinau, too, to (stop using) chlorine."

Stroe said there is a plan in Chisinau to replace chlorine treatment with ultraviolet radiation, which, unlike chlorine, does not alter the taste and smell of water and is safe for

Article continued on page 19

EASTERN EUROPE & FSU

Kazakh Province Faces Drinking Water Shortages

ASTANA, Kazakhstan
(OOSKANews Correspondent)
-- Shortages of drinking water could become a problem for Kazakhstan's Atyrau province, a major oil producing region where drinking water has often been used for industrial needs.

Currently, it is hardly sufficient for domestic consumption.

Industries in the province drew on drinking water for its needs, with the approval of authorities, but these actions have been prohibited since January 1, 2011.

The capacity of the local water utility, Atyrau Su Arnasy, allows 26 to 27 million cubic meters of water for the city of Atyrau every year, which is barely sufficient for the people of the province's administrative center, with a population of 154,000 people, located on the Caspian Sea at the delta of the Ural River.

Businesses can bring in industrial water via trucks, install a pump for taking water from the Ural River if they obtain permission or lay a pipe for industrial water, according to Head of the Ural-Caspian Basin Water Inspection Bisen Kuanov during a meeting with business representatives.

Meanwhile, the business representatives asked for an extension of the memorandum that would allow them to use drinking water.

Scientists warn that the Ural, which arises in the southern Ural Mountains in Russia and runs 2,428 kilometers through Russia and Kazakhstan to empty into the Caspian Sea, may become another Emba River, which stopped reaching the sea in 1939.

The water level in the Ural has fallen twice in recent years; its depth is only 1-1.5 meters in

some places.

Last year, environmentalists discovered more than 160 dumps on the banks of the river.

The bottom of the river has not been cleared for about 20 years, and it is no longer navigable.

Atyrau province has two sources of freshwater -- the Ural and Kigach rivers.

The latter, a branch of the Volga River, flows through Atyrau and Russia's Astrakhan province and empties into the Caspian Sea.

The Ural-Caspian Basin covers some 415,000 square kilometers within Kazakhstan and is considered to be extremely water-deficient.

Experts said water users and members of the public were not included in the process of discussion and decision-making for problems related to water resources.

Article continued from 18

the human body. In Constanta, this technology has already proven effective, he said.

He said UV installations were set up at a cost of \$706,500 USD in Constanta, a municipality with a population of around 380,000.

Located on the Byk, a tributary of the Dniester, Chisinau has a population of 740,000 people and consumes 215,000 cubic meters of water per day, supplied by Apa-Canal Chisinau.

The city is the country's main industrial and commercial center and its biggest transportation hub.

The 384,800 cubic meters of water per day that Apa-Canal Chisinau can deliver from the Dniester River, combined with the 150,000 cubic meters of artesian

well water, would be enough to supply more than 3 million people with safe drinking water.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development allocated \$30 million USD to Apa-Canal Chisinau in 1997.

The EU Neighborhood Initiative and German development bank KfW and the European Investment Bank are considering further support for the utility through a new large-scale phased investment program aimed at improving water supply and sewage collection and treatment.

Apa-Canal Chisinau is fully owned by the Chisinau Municipal Council.

New Law Project on Raw Water in Argentina Brought Before Provincial Chamber of Senators

ROSARIO, Argentina (OOSKANews Correspondent) -- The Provincial Chamber of Senators will try to provide partial approval for a law aimed at regulating the illegal transfer of raw water abroad.

Legislator Aldo Ballestena told reporters the situation is worrisome, as complaints about illegal water transfer continue to increase.

The complaints from people who claimed they had seen boats take water directly from the Parana are what initially led the Water Observatory of the National University of Rosario (UNR) to ask the Santa Fe state government to investigate the alleged loading of water from the Parana River by cereal companies.

Cargo boats tend to need ballast to navigate. For economical and engineering reasons, cargo ships use water as ballast. Cargo ships that use water as ballast will fill special compartments designed specifically for that purpose with water.

"In this sense we are aware that they also need drinking water for the entire crew," said Ballestena. He recalled that the National University of Rosario again requested intervention from state authorities over the alleged illegal sale of raw water to cargo ships, which were paying \$8 USD per liter.

The proposed law seeks a general ban on exporting raw water, drinking water or water in any form from the province.

The draft project also considers exceptions to the case, which are inscribed in treaties Argentina has signed, such as the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) or the Union of South American Nations

(UNASUR).

Cases of humanitarian or emergency need are also considered in the draft proposal. The law nevertheless has to be approved by the executive branch.

The new water legislation proposes penalizing violators with graduated fees and impositions.

They would be managed by the Authority of Application.

Furthermore, creation of a Fund for Protection of the Environment has been proposed. The fund would be financed using resources coming from raw water exports and application fees and fines.

Ballestena said that to the best of his knowledge the problem was being seen in the south end of the province where the Parana and Uruguay River converge.

Wikileaks Cable Reveals Further Controversy Over Uruguay River Use

MONTEVIDEO, Uruguay (OOSKANews Correspondent) -- A cable released by Wikileaks earlier this month revealed further controversy over an Uruguayan paper mill on the Uruguay River on the Argentine-Uruguayan border.

The cable, published in the Buenos Aires Herald, includes statements by former Uruguayan Industry Minister Jorge Lepra during a meeting with U.S. Embassy Chargé d'Affaires James Nealon in 2006.

According to the Wikileaks document, which includes Nealon's report to Washington following his meeting with Lepra, the Uruguayan official Minister referred to government of the late Argentine leader Nestor Kirchner as "fascist" and described the policies of Kirchner's political group as the worst aspects of Peronismo.

Lepra specifically cited instances during Kirchner's administration when protesters cut off the international bridge at Gualeguaychu

on the Uruguay River. The protesters opposed the Botnia paper mill project on the river in Uruguay. The opponents on the Argentinian side claim this and other paper mills pollute the shared water body.

Former President of Uruguay Julio Maria Sanguinetti minimized the statements contained in the Wikileaks document, saying, "They are just the impressions of one or the other, an ensemble of gossip."

Last month Uruguayan President José Mujica said it was necessary to limit development of the paper industry in Uruguay.

These statements came three weeks after Uruguay closed a deal with Swedish-Chilean partnership Montes del Plata for construction of another paper mill, with a total investment of \$1.9 billion USD, the largest private investment in the history of the country.

The new paper mill will be located

Article continued on page 21

WADA Helping Central American Sugar Mills Improve Water Practices

WASHINGTON, DC, United States (OOSKANews Correspondent) -- The Water and Development Alliance (WADA), a joint partnership between the Coca-Cola Company and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is working with sugar cane farmers and mills in El Salvador and Guatemala to move to more sustainable water practices.

"The guiding principle was to assist sugar growers in the area, both the sugar farms and the mills, to become compliant with the CAFTA-DR (environmental standards ... and to improve their production efficiency. Any time you can minimize industrial energy as well as water use, while maintaining or increasing productivity, that's a big win," James Dyett, Global Environment & Technology Foundation (GETF) president, was quoted as saying by america.gov, a news service of the U.S. State Department.

GETF is the contractor for the program, and works directly with the sugar mills to increase environmental sustainability on behalf of WADA.

Dyett added that the program is expected to be taken to other nations under CAFTA-DR.

Denise Knight, Director of Sustainable Agriculture for the Coca-Cola Company, told OOSKANews that Coca-Cola, through its global partnership with international environment NGO WWF, is already working with suppliers in Honduras and Belize.

The company is also looking at other agricultural outputs. "In addition to our work on sugarcane, through our partnership with WWF we are working on oranges and corn," Knight said.

The long-term goal of the program is to encourage sugar refineries to comply with the voluntary standards of Bonsucro: Better Sugar Cane Initiative, which was established in 2010 to lessen the impact of the industry on the environment.

"Long-term, we are working with

suppliers to meet certification requirements of the Bonsucro production standard," Knight told OOSKANews via e-mail.

Bonsucro aims "to improve the social, environmental and economic sustainability of sugarcane by promoting the use of a global metric standard, with the aim of continuously improving sugarcane production and downstream processing in order to contribute to a more sustainable future," said Knight.

Mexico City Water Supply Guaranteed for 2011: Conagua

MEXICO CITY, Mexico (OOSKANews Correspondent) -- Water supply for Mexico City is guaranteed for 2011 due to high levels of rainfall during 2010, according to General Coordinator of Institutional Care, Communication and Water Culture for the National Water Commission (Conagua) Heidi Storsberg.

Storsberg said the city is losing 15 cubic meters of water a second, however, and that on a national level is 35-40 percent of potable water lost in secondary networks.

"There are utilities that are much

more efficient, and in the past years have invested a large quantity of resources to modernize their systems, but in general and on average we can say that losses are 35 percent," she said.

She also announced that 200 public works of art on water issues will be displayed around Mexico City's Metropolitan area, with the goal of raising awareness about the subject.

These will be taken on the road to other large Mexican cities, and are expected to reach an audience of 25 million people.

Article continued from 20

200 kilometers south of Fray Bentos at the mouth of the Rio de la Plata, where the volume of water is at its peak level.

Uruguay and Argentina share Rio de la Plata and the Uruguay River, which form an integral part of the Basin del Plata watershed that provides water to the vast region.

LOCAL PRESS REPORTS

AZERBAIJAN PRESS

Parliamentary Committee Recommends Amendments to Water Supply Law

BAKU | Source: Azerbaijan Business Center

The Parliamentary Committee for Natural Resources, Energy & Environment has recommended amendments to the Laws on Electric Power Industry, on Gas Supply and on Water Supply & Wastewater. The proposed amendments would be discussed at the plenary session of Milli Majlis. The amendments deal with establishment of requirements for consumers of all three public utilities, according to Parliament Vice Speaker and Committee Chairman Valeh Alasgarov.

BRAZIL PRESS

Population Growth, Agriculture Threaten Water Supply

BRASILIA | Source: The Guardian (United Kingdom)

Brazil's water supply could be threatened by the country's increasing population and agricultural growth, which opens up an opportunity for nanotechnology and clean-tech businesses. Clean-tech investors could look to technologies to mitigate the long-term effects of agriculture on the water supply. Nanotechnology that allows controlled release and filtration of fertilizers, new composites for engineering applications, waste processing and improved food packaging could also help farmers with resource management.

CHINA PRESS

China Allocated \$7.6 Million USD for Infrastructure Repair in Yingjiang County

BEIJING | Source: Xinhua (China)

The Chinese Ministry of Finance has allocated \$7.6 million USD for emergency infrastructure emergency repair in Yingjiang County, in southwestern Yunnan province, which was hit by an earthquake earlier this month. The funds will be used for repairs to roads and the water supply system, the ministry said.

ADB Provides Loan for Wuhan Wastewater and Stormwater Project

MANILA | Source: Asia Pulse

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is providing China with a loan toward the cost of the Wuhan Wastewater and Stormwater Management Project. Part of the loan will be used for payments under the contract for Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Equipment for Huangpulu Wastewater Treatment Plant. Instrimpex International Tendering Company (CNIITC), which is authorized to act on behalf of Wuhan Urban Drainage Development Co., Ltd., is inviting sealed bids for sup-

ply of sewage sludge processing equipment, electrical equipment and materials, meter and auto-control engineering, testing equipment, maintenance equipment, transporting equipment and related services.

CZECH REPUBLIC PRESS

80 Percent of Czech Citizens Welcome Tap Water in Restaurants

PRAGUE | Source: Prague Daily Monitor (Czech Republic)

Four-fifths of people in the Czech Republic would welcome it if restaurants offered tap water, according to a survey by Synovate firm. Currently, few Czech restaurants offer tap water. About three-quarters of the Czech Republic's inhabitants regularly buy bottled water. Just over half said they would be willing to pay for tap water in restaurants, although they were not willing to pay as much as for bottled water. "We know that tap water is one of the most strictly controlled food items. Tap water in this country has a very good quality, including the sensory one," said Vaclava Kunova.

HAITI PRESS

Cholera Epidemic Could Affect Twice as Many People as Previously Believed

PORT-AU-PRINCE | Source: BBC News

Haiti's cholera epidemic could affect twice as many people as predicted, according to a report in British medical journal The Lancet. Rather than affecting 400,000 people, it could affect nearly 800,000, according to researchers at the University of California, San Francisco. Using data from Haiti's Health Ministry, the researchers concluded that the toll could reach 779,000, with 11,100 fatalities by the end of November 2011. They say their calculations are more complex than those used in UN estimates, and include factors such as which water supplies have been contaminated and how much immunity the population has to the disease. "The epidemic is not likely to be short-term," said researcher Dr. Sanjay Basu. "It is going to be larger than predicted in terms of sheer numbers and will last far longer than the initial projections." However, they added that clean water, vaccination and expanded access to antibiotics could save lives.

60,000 Residents Benefit From Saint Marc Water Project

SAINT MARC | Source: Haiti Libre

A water project that was launched in 2009 is benefiting about 60,000 people in Saint Marc, and 120,000 are expected to benefit by 2015. The project aims to provide drinking water coverage for the next 25 years for Saint Marc and surrounding areas. Previously, the water net-

LOCAL PRESS REPORTS

work only provided people in the city center with water for three days per week, two hours per day. The project involved construction of two structures in the town of Gilbert (Haut Saint-Marc), 12 kilometers of pipe, two reservoirs (a 1,700 cubic meter one to Pivertetu and a 160 cubic meter one to La Garenne) and installation of 3,500 new branches and 26 water kiosks. The network currently has 3,890 connections with meters and 2,750 without. Work is also under way to rehabilitate the old system and regulating packaged water subscribers.

HUNGARY PRESS

Roma Given Option to Work in Water, Sewage Sector

BUDAPEST | Source: MTI (Hungary)

Some 2,500 Roma (gypsies) will have the opportunity to work in the water and sewage sector in northern and eastern Hungary under a new agreement between the head of the National Roma Self-Government (ORO) and a national water management official. The project is to take place in Szabolcs-Szatmar-Bereg, Jasz-Nagykun-Szolnok, Hajdu-Bihar and Borsod-Abauj-Zemplen counties. The employees will guard facilities and maintain canals.

IRAQ PRESS

UN, Iraq Sign Agreement on Development Plans

UNITED NATIONS | Source: BNO News

Three UN agencies -- the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN Development Program (UNDP) and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) signed an agreement with Iraq to support development programs in the country. "These signings ensure the UN support in many critical areas of the Government of Iraq's National Development Plan, including the attainment of its Millennium Development Goal targets by 2015 to improve the well-being of the Iraqi population," said Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Iraq Christine McNab. The agencies have agreed to support the Iraqi government's development agenda over the next four years at an estimated cost of \$600 million USD. The goal is to help create a public sector in Iraq that delivers high-quality and equitable services, especially in education, water and sanitation, and health services.

JAPAN PRESS

Quake Disrupts Supply in Japan

TOKYO | Source: Water World

The earthquake that hit Japan's east coast earlier this month has caused major to its water supply, leaving 1.4 million households without running water. There has been some improvement in electricity and water service provision, according to the World Health Organization, which

says 13 prefectures are still without water. The prefectures most affected by water shortages include: Miyagi, Fukushima, Yamagata, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Chiba, Akita and Aomori. The Japan Water Works Association was gathering information on water supply conditions last week, and could release the information through the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. Over 250,000 bottles of water have been distributed as part of the national emergency committee. Beer tankers are being used to transport water, and 5,000 mobile latrines have been deployed. Water supply in some parts of Tokyo has also stopped.

Aqua-Chem Makes Land-Based Purification Systems Available to Japan

KNOXVILLE | Source: Knoxville News Sentinel (United States)

Water purification equipment manufacturer Aqua-Chem Inc., working through the U.S. State Department, will make two land-based purification systems available to the Japanese government to help victims of the recent earthquake and tsunami. Eight mobile Aqua-Chem water purification units purchased by the U.S. military are already aboard Navy ships and will be used in the relief effort, according to Aqua-Chem CEO David Gensterblum. "We also offered up to the Japanese government through the State Department that we have a couple of other pieces that could be deployed as rapidly..." including two large, land-based water purification units, one of which can process 1.2 million gallons a day, said Gensterblum.

JORDAN PRESS

Environment Ministry Investigates Hazardous Waste Dumping

AMMAN | Source: Jordan Times

The Ministry of Environment is investigating alleged violations at the Jordan Bromine Company. The company reportedly dumped hazardous chemical waste in a landfill in Ghor Mazraa in the Jordan Valley, a ministry official said. Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME) President Munqeth Mehyar said, "The company is not only dumping hazardous waste in domestic waste landfills, but also using huge amounts of potable water in its industrial processes." FoEME is gathering evidence and plans to file a lawsuit against the company on behalf of the local community for disposal of hazardous waste and use of drinking water.

MALAYSIA PRESS

Prime Minister Calls for Integrated Water Resource Governance

PEKAN | Source: Bernama (Malaysia)

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Tun Razak called for more integrated water resource governance at the

LOCAL PRESS REPORTS

federal and state levels to ensure that the national water requirement is sufficient and meets water quality standards. The government said, "A study is being taken in the near future to seek a mandate to formulate a bill on the national water resource policy and the state's overall water resource institution to ensure a more integrated and effective water resource management," he said. Najib said challenges and issues pertaining to water could be divided into three categories: excessive water leading to floods, water shortages leading to drought and water quality caused by weather changes and global warming. "I wish to remind the relevant ministries and departments to give serious attention and to observe what is happening in the world and country as a major challenge to be tackled, so that the impact from the weather changes can be detected much earlier and that we are able to provide an action plan so that the situation will be under control no matter what happens," he said. To this end, Najib said the government was allocating \$687.5 million USD for the first two years of the 10th Malaysia Plan for flood alleviation programs in several areas in the country. It was also seeking alternative water sources such as groundwater, retention ponds, rainwater and recycled water. "We have also taken measures to restructure the water supply industry, through a central water management so that the water supply operator could give special emphasis on water supply services to the people," he said.

MOROCCO PRESS

World Bank Approves \$352 Million USD in Development Policy Loans

WASHINGTON, DC | Source: MAP (Morocco)

The World Bank has approved two development policy loans totaling \$352 million USD for Morocco. The first loan, worth \$205 million USD, will support implementation of Morocco's Green Plan, including water management and planning of irrigation infrastructure. The \$136.7 million USD second loan will enhance effectiveness of urban traffic in Morocco's big cities.

NEPAL PRESS

Finland, UNICEF to Upgrade Nepal's Water and Sanitation Program

KATHMANDU | Source: Himalayan Times (Nepal)

The government of Finland and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have signed a \$13.9 million USD grant agreement to upgrade Nepal's water and sanitation program. The agreement was signed by Kari Lepänen, acting charge d'affaires of the Finnish Embassy and Gillian Mellsop, UNICEF Nepal representative. The funds will be used in the formulation of a national water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) program, according to a statement issued by UNICEF. "It will also support other existing programs in the education and health sectors to promote sanitation and hygiene in the country," the state-

ment said.

QATAR PRESS

Kahramaa Building Solar-Powered Desal Plant

DOHA | Source: The Peninsula (Qatar)

The Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation (Kahramaa) is building the first solar-powered water desalination plant in Qatar, according to company Chairman Essa bin Hilal Al Kuwari. Speaking at the Qatar Alternative Energy Investors Summit, Kuwari said, "Qatar has been a leader in the non-renewable energy race for the past few decades. However, the country now is setting its sights on leading a new race -- a race to become the world's leading exporter of renewable energy." He added: "Solar and wind energy are currently the top contenders for investment and development and hence give impetus to our projects on the most conducive technology, economically viable and practical solutions."

SIERRA LEONE PRESS

Guma Valley Water Company Spends \$200,000 USD Per Year on Treatment Chemicals

FREETOWN | Source: Concord Times (Sierra Leone)

The Guma Valley Water Company (GVWC) spends about \$200,000 USD annually on water treatment chemicals to serve households in Freetown municipality. GVWC project manager George Saquee said the company spends some \$227,000 USD on effective operations to supply water to the city. "When the Guma hydro is not in working order, it costs the company about [\$1.9 million USD] weekly to repair the dam." "Guma has been supplying the city of Freetown a total of 16.5 million gallons of water per day, but with the rapid migration of people into the city, we are now obliged to supply 27 million gallons of water daily to meet the current demand," he said.

SLOVENIA PRESS

Amnesty International Calls for Access to Water, Sanitation for Roma

LJUBLJANA | Source: Amnesty International

International human rights organization Amnesty International called on Slovenian authorities to protect Roma (gypsy) communities from discrimination. The agency had just released a report that found Roman in Slovenia are being denied access to adequate housing, water and sanitation. Some families have less water available to them than the minimum necessary for people suffering through a humanitarian emergency, Amnesty International said. "Continuing discrimination against the Romani people condemns many of them to live in housing without basic public services. Their whole existence -- from

LOCAL PRESS REPORTS

their health to the education of their children and their chances of finding work -- is affected," said Amnesty International's Europe and Central Asia Program Director Nicola Duckworth. "The Slovenian government must act to end the discrimination Roma suffer and ensure their human rights are upheld and their basic needs are met," she said. Almost 100 percent of the Slovenian population has access to safe drinking water, while many Roma communities struggle to collect small amounts of water. Average water use per person per day is 150 liters, rising to 300 liters per day in urban centers. Roma families were only able to collect 10-20 liters for each member of the household to use for drinking, bathing and cooking, and the water came from far away sources and sometimes polluted streams.

TAJIKISTAN PRESS

UN Seminar Tackles Water Cooperation

DUSHANBE | Source: UN News Center/Central Asia Newswire

A two-day seminar on international water cooperation, organized by the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), was held in Tajikistan last week in order to promote dialogue and strengthen cooperation among Central Asian countries over use of water and energy resources. The seminar looked at the role of international law, including the UN Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, in boosting regional cooperation on water resources management. Tajikistan's plans to develop new hydropower stations are one of the key points of regional debate on water resources. The seminar followed from a trip to Central Asia last April by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who was attempting to calm rising tensions

among nations in the region over water resources.

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO PRESS

Agriculture a Top Polluter of Rivers, Watersheds

PORT OF SPAIN | Source: Trinidad & Tobago Newsday

Agriculture is one of the main polluters of rivers and watersheds in Trinidad & Tobago, CEO of the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) Ganga Singh told a workshop on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). Singh said 16 WASA employees had collected data and analysis on the nation's watersheds for a two-week period starting in mid-February. The 16 employees collected data from Aripo, Arima, Guanapo, Mausica, Tacarigua, St Joseph, San Juan, Santa Cruz Arouca, Cumuto, Talparo, Tumpuna, Couva, Guaracara and Caparo. "The results of that field assessment pointed to several pollution sources," Singh said. "The major source of pollution was agriculture. Farm waste has been estimated to produce 55 percent of the total waste load." Quarrying was also a key source of pollution, he added. "The number of quarries increased when quarrying was removed from the list of activities requiring certificates of environmental clearance. It has a negative impact on WASA and its ability to provide water because of the sediment runoff and in many occasions treatment plants have been forced to shut down because of high concentration suspended matter." He said pollution from quarries was identified in pollution of Mausica, Arima, Aripo, Guanapo and Arouca in the Northern Range watershed.

- OOSKANews is the world leader in water news, knowledge and insight. Water is the world's most critical strategic resource, and a \$470 billion industry.
- "OOSKA" is a phonetic spelling of the Scottish Gaelic "uisge" which means "water"!
- OOSKANews is a specialist publisher of international water sector and water-related news and intelligence, producing six subscription-based weekly email newsletters as described lower on this page.
- OOSKANews customers (subscribers) are senior strategic decision-makers in the "world of water" in both private and public sectors internationally.
- OOSKANews, Inc. was founded in May 2006, and is headquartered in Warrenton, Virginia, USA.
- OOSKANews deploys more than 150 water news correspondents in more than 60 countries across five continents. These reporters (local and international journalists; water experts; academics; economists) are responsible to OOSKANews for gathering and investigating the most current water sector news and intelligence. Around 200 original news stories every month cover:
 - Strategic Issues, Policy and Government
 - Finance and Funding
 - Supply, Environment and Waste
- Content produced by OOSKANews Correspondents is unique, original and proprietary to OOSKANews, Inc. The OOSKANews Archive amounts to more than 15,000 published news stories.
- OOSKANews supplies an amount of international water sector news to Bloomberg, LP under a content sharing agreement.
- OOSKANews offers international water sector research and consultancy services through a strategic partnership with Ergo (www.ergo.net), a global primary research and consultancy firm.
- To request a "trial subscription" to an OOSKANews publication, or for further information about OOSKANews, Inc., email info@ooskanews.com or phone +1 540 428 3440



Weekly Water Report, Middle East and Africa

Countries covered: Algeria, Angola, Bahrain, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt,

Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Ivory Coast, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Qatar, Reunion, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Syria, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Zambia, Zanzibar, Zimbabwe



Weekly Water Report, Southern and Eastern Asia

Countries covered: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, China, East Timor, India, Indonesia, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar,

Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam



Weekly Water Report, Eastern Europe and Former Soviet Union

Countries covered: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic,

Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan



Weekly Water Report, Latin America and the Caribbean

Countries covered: Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Cayman Islands, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica,

Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, French Guiana, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Martinique, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, Turks & Caicos Islands, Uruguay, Venezuela, and the Virgin Islands.



OOSKANews Water Weekly

This weekly email newsletter gathers and presents our current news of particular interest to senior corporate decision-makers in:

The Water Industry: Infrastructure; engineering and construction; science and technology leaders;

supply chain (pumps, valves, testing equipment and services, water and wastewater treatment, filtration, pipes, meters / detectors, tanks, automation services, desalination).

Water Users: agriculture; food / beverage companies; high-water-use manufacturers.

Financial: commercial and investment banks; mutual funds; hedge funds; asset managers; insurance companies; pension funds; venture capital firms.

Services: international law firms; international accountancies.

The regions covered in this publication are the Middle East; Africa; Southern, Eastern and Central Asia; Eastern Europe; the Former Soviet Union States; Latin America and the Caribbean.



International Water and Development Weekly

This weekly email newsletter gathers and presents our current news of particular interest to (eg) governments; development banks; international

organizations; development and aid agencies; humanitarian and environmental organizations; public sector institutions; think-tanks; academic institutions and the not-for-profit sector. The regions covered in this publication are Africa; Southern, Eastern and Central Asia; Eastern Europe; the Former Soviet Union States; the Middle East; Latin America and the Caribbean.