

International Water and Development Weekly

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WATER NEWS FROM THE DEVELOPING WORLD. EVERY WEEK.



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FOCUS THIS WEEK

Payments for Watershed Protection an Emerging Market Niche, Says Report

NAIROBI, Kenya (OOSKANews)

Innovative financing programs to restore water-related ecosystems are bolstering efforts by governments, businesses and non-state actors to find lasting solutions to global water scarcity, according to a recent report by international NGO Forest Trends.

The report, “State of Watershed Payments. An Emerging Market Place,” launched late last month, describes the potential of market mechanisms to conserve fragile freshwater ecosystems, leveraging competing demands from a wide array of users.

Research carried out by Ecosystem Marketplace, an affiliate of Forest Trends, indicated that there are an estimated 300 payments

for watershed services and water quality trading programs globally.

The total transaction value of active programs is estimated at \$9.3 billion USD.

Payment for watershed services and water quality trading are the leading financing instruments that have given water users incentives to adopt practices that protect watersheds.

The report said “a growing constituency” has called for “valuing water-related ecosystems services in the context of overall ecosystem health.

“That expanded lens would incorporate watershed services with other ecosystem services such as biodiversity or carbon offsetting,” it said.

The report urged “governments, the private sector [and] NGOs to embrace market-based mechanisms to keep water clean and shield it from effects of climate change.”

OOSKANews

OOSKANews, Inc is the market leading news provider on the water sector in the developing world.

Founded in 2006, the company deploys more than 150 freelance writers in more than 40 countries – local and national business journalists; experts in water and the environment; academics and economists.

OOSKANews publishes seven email newsletters every week delivering news on all aspects of the water sector in Southern, Central and Eastern Asia; the Middle East; Africa; Eastern Europe; the Former Soviet Union States; Latin America, and the Caribbean.

Around 200 original stories every month cover funding and finance developments; business opportunities; water supply issues; wastewater and the environment; local, national and international water policy. Each newsletter further carries a “Local Press Reports” section, summarizing how local media in developing countries are reporting local water issues.

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OOSKANews



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This partnership harnesses OOSKANews’ water sector and developing world expertise and contacts to Ergo’s proprietary network of over 7,000 global experts and 60 in-country teams, all deeply embedded in their sectors ranging from finance to infrastructure to telecommunications to mining and beyond.

The OOSKANews –Ergo partnership provides custom water-sector-related studies including: geopolitical analyses; economic risk assessments; market landscaping; opportunity mapping; country sector studies; deep dive research; scenario mapping; competitive intelligence; market entry strategies; partner and management due diligence; and negotiation intelligence.

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The report argued that “water scarcity drives not just price, but perceived value, hence the need to explore innovative avenues that promote sustainable use of shrinking resources to meet varying needs.”

Consequently, governments in countries including China, the United States, Brazil and Australia are investing billions of dollars in programs that reward communities for protecting water resources.

Mexico, Costa Rica and Ecuador are also using government revenue to pay for watershed conservation.

China and the United States have the biggest government-funded watershed conservation programs in the heavily polluted Mekong and Mississippi river basins.

The report said Latin America is an emerging leader in experimenting with government payment for watershed services.

The region has the highest number of active payments for watershed programs -- 101 -- which contribute \$31 million USD to watershed conservation measures.

Several countries in Latin America have established a trust fund to channel money coming from both the public and private sources towards water resources conservation.

Africa, despite experiencing severe water resources depletion, lags behind in the scope of investments that seek to reverse this challenge.

Out of 20 payments for watershed conservation programs in Africa, only 10 are active.

However, the report noted that “in most cases, watershed management activities in Africa are part of national ecosystem conservation programs that include investment in watershed service enhancement and rehabilitation.”

It highlighted successful programs such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) projects at Table Mountain in South Africa.

In Kenya, the Green Water Credit Program, funded by the government and donors, has created a viable mechanism to pay rural farmers to protect watersheds, the report noted.

Private sector payment for watershed services is gaining momentum at local, national and regional levels.

Coca-Cola, Nestle and SAB Miller are among the corporations that have financed innovative programs to compensate communities adjacent to their operations for conserving water resources.

The report identified cases in France, Ecuador and Tanzania where a set of private sector-driven projects have supported efforts by the government and local communities to reclaim waterways.

It stressed the need for governments to create legal and policy structures that support water quality trading regimes popular with the private sector.

These regimes are aimed at curbing pollution of waterways by chemicals and microbial agents and work similarly to carbon trading.

The report suggested that the market for water quality trading is likely to be smaller both in geographic scope and in dollars when compared to carbon trading.

However, it reiterated that large watersheds such as the Mississippi, the Rhine, the Mekong, the Nile and the Amazon are viable for water quality trading.

Protection of freshwater ecosystems is both an ecological and an economic imperative, said Kim Kasten, head of the Fresh Water Division at the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).

Kasten pointed to a compelling body of research that illustrated the potential benefits countries, communities and even businesses would accrue from adopting unsustainable management practices for available water resources.

He noted that conservation of freshwater ecosystems is climbing to the top of the corporate agenda, as businesses regard it as a strategic issue that can either undermine or boost growth.

“Businesses that fail to make sustainable management of water resources as part of their business risk [are] out of step with market dynamics,” Kasten said.

Iraq: Violence, Death and Water

BAGHDAD, Iraq (OOSKANews)

Working for Iraq’s irrigation department, located in Abu Ghraib city, has become a treacherous and sometimes deadly occupation.

Three employees in recent months have been killed in this city only 32 kilometers west of Baghdad, merely because they participated in supervision of water distribution.

The latest and perhaps most senseless killing occurred last month, when 40-year-old Faisal Hassan and his wife and two children were killed by two gunmen who broke into the family home. The gunmen had one motive only -- that Hassan worked for the local irrigation department.

Green Prophet quoted Mohammed Khudhair, a police investigator, as saying: "All these employees had nothing to do with politics or anti-militant activities, but instead were victims of the nature of their work, which has become a risky one."

Conflicts among tribes and clans throughout the farmlands of Iraq have put the weakened and increasingly ineffectual national government at a disadvantage.

This lack of official oversight, combined with water supply shortages, leads to all-out clashes among tribes over access to water resources.

Water analyst Jaafar Moahmmmed Ali was quoted as saying: "Today, we don't have a fully functioning government, as it is totally preoccupied by the security situation and political wrangling, so we don't have a strong role to deter any possible widespread conflict. Besides, we have an acute shortage of water nationwide and a very bad economic situation that makes it very hard for farmers to do other work."

Green Prophet quoted tribal Sheikh Ali Ismael Al-Zubaidi as saying an upstream tribe has had "tough negotiations" over water allocations with his own Diwaniya governorate.

"Government officials can't control the regulation of irrigation and stop those who violate their regulations, either because of corruption or because they fear for their lives. So we have to solve this issue ourselves."

Despite a willingness to negotiate, Zubaidi said, "We will act swiftly to secure the water we need for our land even if we have to take up weapons."

The perpetual presence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers has given Iraq an area of superior agricultural fecundity. However, the marshlands alongside the rivers are now drastically reduced.

During the late 1970s and into the 1980s, dam construction upstream in Iraq, Turkey and Iran curtailed supply of fresh water to the point where farmers have suffered huge losses and the once-prolific reeds and papyrus have shrunk catastrophically.

Further devastation occurred during Saddam Hussein's drainage operations in the early 2000s, when the marshlands were reduced to 10 percent of the original area.

More recently, the two rivers have seen the water levels fall far below average, with new dams being built in Turkey and Syria.

Over long years of internal conflict, the agricultural center has borne a large share of the troubles attached to insecurity, underinvestment and unfettered timber cutting.

Without trees, the soil's salinity has risen; deserts now exist where trees and flora once flourished.

Unfortunately, resistance from farmers, who refuse to take the view that short-term regulation will lead to long-term stability, have thwarted efforts by the government in instituting procedures to regulate water use.

"The farmers didn't adhere to the water distribution regulations. We advise them to follow the regulations this year because we cannot guarantee the amount of water we'll have," IRIN quoted Mahdi al-Qaisi, undersecretary at the Ministry of Agriculture, as saying.

In Basra, where Iraq's Shat al-Arab waterway -- formed from the proximity of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers -- has elevated levels of salinity, farmers are leaving their farms out of necessity. They no longer are viable agriculturally.

Amer Salman, head of Basra Agriculture

Directorate said, "Salinity levels started to increase more than a year ago in the Shat al-Arab waterway due to low water levels in the Tigris and Euphrates and the changing course of the al-Karoon and al-Karkha rivers coming from Iran. This has led to a fall in the fresh water flow rate, allowing salty Gulf water to pour in.

"The salinity level has made it impossible to use the water for drinking and irrigation, animals and agriculture. This is a real and serious catastrophe and it will probably affect the down-town area of Basra soon."

Calling the situation an "environmental crisis," Jabbar Amin, head of Basra Provincial Council, has declared the affected areas "disaster areas with no-life due to the displacement of humans and damage to agriculture."

Water Shortages Affect Millions in Manila

MANILA, Philippines (OOSKAnews)

Water supply shortages have hit at least 2.8 million people or almost one-fourth of residents in the Philippine capital and surrounding areas, as the water level in the sole dam supplying water to Metro Manila fell to its lowest in more than two dozen years last week.

The lack of water is largely confined to the western half of Metro Manila, which is served by Maynilad Water Services Inc.

There, 600,000 people, or a tenth of the company's customer base of 6 million, do not have water at all or are getting it for less than six hours a day.

Up to 46 percent of Maynilad customers are experiencing varying levels of interruptions in water supply.

In contrast, Manila Water Co.'s 5 million

customers in the eastern half continue to enjoy water service, though at a lower pressure.

The big difference is explained by Manila Water's much lower non-revenue water level of only 13 percent compared to Maynilad's 53 percent.

Though both companies suffered almost 30 percent cuts in their raw water supply, Manila Water enjoys a buffer from losing minimal volumes to leaks.

The three-week old government of new President Benigno Aquino III, who assumed office only on June 30, is scrambling to craft a strategy to deal with the water shortage, which is beginning to create unrest and lawlessness in some severely affected areas.

On July 21, residents in a Manila suburb busted a water main that was being repaired and helped themselves to the free water, prompting calls for soldiers and policemen to escort leak repair teams.

The government has deployed dozens of fire trucks to help bring water to elevated communities where the water pressure is too weak, and has eased the release of construction permits to allow the private water companies to repair leaks or install new pipes under public roads.

But it has not issued orders to curb demand such as prohibiting the watering of golf courses and gardens, car washing or changing water on swimming pools.

Aquino and his spokesman insisted there is no water crisis, even though the capital's water supply had been severely cut because of the low water levels at the dam.

That contradicts Aquino's public works secretary, Rogelio Singson, who described the shortage as a "crisis" and called for tougher measures. Until Aquino recruited him to the Cabinet at the beginning of July, Singson was the president of Maynilad.

Singson had outlined plans to develop

several small-scale water projects that could be completed in a few years rather than one, big project such as the 1,900 million liter per day dam in Laiban, in Rizal province west of Manila.

He said the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), the government water agency in the capital, was firming up a list of projects from proposals submitted by private companies.

The Philippines has just been through a severe drought arising from El Nino weather pattern, but the onset of the rainy season has not bought enough rainfall to the watershed around the Angat Dam in Bulacan province, about 60 kilometers northeast of Manila.

In February, water authorities and companies were bracing for a prolonged drought that they predicted would cause water levels at the Angat Dam, which supplies 97 percent of Metro Manila's needs, to fall from 201.4 meters above sea level in the middle of January, to the year's low of 158 meters by June.

With the end of El Nino and the coming of the rains, they expected water levels to rise to 168.2 meters by the end of July and begin a steady climb to almost 200 meters by the end of the year.

The rains have come, including a couple of typhoons so far in July, but the water level in Angat Dam continued to drop and reached 157.56 meters on July 18, lower than the previous low of 158.15 meters in September 1998, when the country was in the midst of another El Nino weather phenomenon.

Weather forecasters said not enough rain was falling over the watershed of the Angat Dam, though the dam level has since climbed a bit to 158.6 meters on July 21 after the government did some cloud-seeding to induce rains.

Metropolitan Manila and surrounding areas are now getting just over 2,900 million liters per day compared to the normal allocation of 4,000 million liters per day.

But the impact of the shortage has been less severe in Manila Water's eastern zone because the shortfalls were offset by big reductions in water losses, exclusive use of a huge reservoir and other mitigating measures.

A spokesman for Manila Water said the company was reaping the fruits of an early and aggressive investment to cut water losses.

Maynilad, which defaulted on its debts in 2003 and was acquired by new owners in early 2007, began a serious program to cut non-revenue water only three years ago when water losses peaked at 69 percent.

Also, Maynilad says the water mains in its area are older, some of them dating back more than a century.

Investigation Launched Over Alleged Corruption in Dam Projects in Romania

BUCHAREST, Romania (OOSKAnews)

Romanian Minister of Environment and Forests Laszlo Borbely ordered an investigation into allegations by Secretary of State for Parliament Liaison Valentin Iliescu that millions of dollars meant to be used to build and reinforce dams have been "stolen" by officials in federal and local administrations.

Iliescu referred to funds the government allocated after damaging floods in 2008, when hundreds of homes were destroyed in eastern Romania.

The secretary of state said the funds distributed to build and rehabilitate dams were stolen, and as a consequence, he said, the heavy rain in the last two months has again caused floods that have seriously affected

communities in that region.

“If the dams were built as planned in 2008 we could have prevented the floods this year,” said Iliescu.

“I have already sent the Ministry’s Control Department to the National Administration on Romanian Waters to verify these accusations. We hope to have a complete report in the next few weeks when we will know exactly how this money has been spent. Until then I will not express any opinion on this subject,” said Borbely.

He said he would persuade the government to approve a \$129 million USD program to build and reinforce dams that were destroyed or partially affected by the floods this summer.

“We wish to make a plan in which we prioritize the projects that should start and complete first,” said Borbely.

Iliescu’s allegations were based on conclusions of a report drawn up by the Court of Accounts, the Romanian institution that has jurisdiction over verifying the accounting of all state institutions.

“I do not understand why the Court of Accounts wishes to keep silent this report that shows how the funds to reconstruct and build new dams to protect infrastructure and the population have been spent. It is a devastating report that underlines that the money has been stolen, has been misplaced and divided [up] instead among communities that not only have not been affected by the 2008 floods but which do not even have a river flowing close by,” Iliescu said.

According to local press agency Mediafax, the Court of Accounts’ report on the floods in 2008 shows irregularities in the way negotiations between local authorities and construction firms took place, with regard to the estimated value of damages.

The document ultimately indicates possible violations of the law.

The Court of Accounts’ probe into spending on flood control infrastructure took place between March 11 and April 9, 2010, and the report was completed shortly after.

The report found that, based on a proposal by the National Administration on Romanian Waters, the leadership of the Ministry of Environment awarded projects to build and rehabilitate dams to a small number of construction companies without public tender.

In addition, it found that negotiations between state officials and construction companies over the value of the projects took place before feasibility studies were carried out.

“All these findings highly question the correctness of spending the money and of the evaluation process of how much money should be allotted for these works aimed to counteract the effects of the floods and to protect the population in the future,” according to the Court of Accounts report.

Immediately after the 2008 floods, the first report of the damages created on Tisa River in Sapanta village, Maramures county, showed that 38 meters of riverbank were destroyed, with repair work estimated at \$153,000 USD.

Later on, a second report, which formed the basis of the government’s funding allocation, said that 1,200 meters of the Tisa River’s bank were affected, with estimated repair costs of \$3.5 million USD.

In a similar example, the initial cost estimation for building a dam on the Jijia River, in Iasi county, was \$264,000 USD, but later on, in the final report, state officials asked for and have spent \$5.3 million USD.

The Court of Accounts did not formulate a complete estimate of the total amount of state funds that were overspent or misused.

A total of 22 people have died in the floods this year, and almost 7,000 people have been evacuated.

Three thousand homes have been flooded and another 200 have been completely destroyed, according to the most recent report made public by the Ministry of Interior and Administration.

The ministry has mobilized 7,000 forces to help the victims.

The floods have also seriously affected 13,000 hectares of agricultural land, seven national roads, 19 county roads, 21 communal roads and 28 small bridges. In total, 109 large communities in 18 of Romania’s 41 counties have suffered effects of the floods.

According to Iliescu, if state funds had been properly spent on infrastructure against floods after 2008, the devastation caused by heavy rains this year could have been prevented.

MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

Mugabe Calls on Parliament to Craft Water Development Policies

HARARE, Zimbabwe (OOSKANews)

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe has tasked the country's parliament with "channel[ing] resources toward rehabilitation and upgrading of urban and rural water supplies" and systems.

Officially opening the third session of the country's 7th parliament this month, Mugabe -- who heads Zimbabwe's coalition government that also includes Morgan Tsvangirai as Prime Minister -- said the parliament was being asked to "accord immediate attention" to the country's major urban centers, as well as some rural areas.

The country's water sector has been dogged over the years by acute shortages of clean water and sanitation services along with limited supplies of water purification chemicals.

Mugabe also called on the legislature to channel resources towards "the completion of ongoing dam and allied projects construction."

Water and sanitation experts welcomed Mugabe's move, saying it demonstrates a shift toward increased focus on the sector.

"At last the water situation in the country has been recognized at the highest level and this should pave the way towards enhanced development of this sector," said a development officer with a local non-governmental organization in Harare.

This comes amid revelations from Harare Mayor Muchadeyi Masunda that Harare's water banks are running low.

Masunda said the city would soon commission the Kunzvi and Mazowe dams to supplement existing water sources that supply Harare and surrounding cities and towns.

However, he warned that the water supply situation in the capital would remain critical even if the two new dams were to be commissioned.

"Even if Kunzvi Dam is to be commissioned today, it will not give us enough (water) for the city," he said.

Masunda said demand for water for Harare remains high relative to current supplies pumped from Lake Chivero and other minor dams. Current demand for water was 1,300 million liters per day, while the council could only supply around 640 million liters per day. As a result, some parts of the Harare go for days without water supplies.

Harare has started a water pipe replacement program in and around the capital. Under the program, the city is replacing old, metal water pipe with plastic.

The government allocated \$17 million USD in funding for the project.

"Our wish is to cover the whole city if funds permit and the program is ongoing," said council spokesperson Leslie Gwindi.

In his 2010 Mid-Term Fiscal Policy Review Statement this month, Finance Minister Tendai Biti called on local authorities in the country to contribute to restoration of water and sanitation infrastructure and services.

South African Water Supply Project Under Way

POLOKWANE, South Africa (OOSKANews)

South African water supply project, the Mokola and Crocodile Rivers Water Augmentation Project (MCWAP), is "well under way and progressing," according to mining company Exxaro's business growth general manager, Ernst Venter.

The project in the Waterberg region in Limpopo, will provide freshwater for Exxaro's coal-mining activities, for petrochemicals group Sasoi's large-scale coal-to-liquids fuel activity and for electricity utility Eskom to develop more power stations, Creamer Media's Mining Weekly reported.

It includes several phases, with the first producing between 14.6 million cubic meters to 29.4 million cubic meters per year from Mokolo Dam to the Groote-geluk mine, the Lephalele municipality and Eskom's Matimba and Medupi power stations. It is expected to be completed by April 2013.

The second, third and fourth phases will bring water from Thabazimbi's Crocodile River, the Gauteng North Bosshkop weir and the Vaal River catchment to the Steenbokpan area of the Waterberg region.

Phase 2 should be completed by 2016, while the third and fourth phases will be completed between 2017-2018. In total, the project is expected to supply 168 million cubic meters of water a year.

The project is being managed by the Department of Water Affairs

and the Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority. However, Exxaro operates and maintains several water supply systems in the region, including the infrastructure from Mokolo Dam to Lephallale, Grootegeluk and Matimba power station.

It also has a potable water supply agreement with Lephallale municipality.

“Working in consultation with the local communities and authorities, Exxaro ensures that it manages the ecobiosphere in the Waterberg in a responsible manner. We have had numerous interactions and public participation processes,” Mining Weekly quoted Venter as saying.

He added, “We are certain that the whole community in the Waterberg area will gain owing to these developments. Exxaro will also ensure that it makes sound investment decisions related to Grootegeluk and, in the process, the town and secondary industries in this area will grow substantially.

Egypt Starts National Water-Saving Program

CAIRO, Egypt (OOSKANews)

Egypt’s Executive Agency for Drinking Water and Sanitary Sewers (EADWSS) announced the start of a national program aimed at conserving drinking water.

“The first phase of the program will consist of fixing water meters at drinking water treatment plants,” Mohamed El-Alfi, director of the EADWSS, said earlier this month.

The program will also include revision of household water meters, since a number of buildings do not have meters for each apartment.

“This phase will also include replacement of

damaged meters with new ones,” Alfi said.

Many of the country’s artesian treatment plants and desalination plants do not have water meters to gauge the amount of water output, according to agency officials.

In an attempt to curb the amount of drinking water wasted in the country, the government also revealed a plan to increase drinking water prices by 10 percent.

The increase will be applied to those who consume more than 10 cubic meters per month.

Water prices for the category of consumers who use more than 10 cubic meters per month are still cheap. The cost of a cubic meter is about quarter of an Egyptian pound (about \$0.04 USD).

The cost of producing a cubic meter of drinking water ranges from \$0.18 USD to \$0.20 USD.

According to officials at the Holding Company for Drinking Water and Sanitary Sewers, there is an increase in the cost of drinking water production and in operation and maintenance of treatment plants, as well as an increase in salaries of employees at water companies.

Company officials said continued drinking water subsidies would negatively affect funding for a general plan for sanitary sewers projects nationwide.

Meanwhile, the company prepared a paper aimed at raising public awareness about the importance of rationalizing drinking water consumption.

Awareness departments will be established at every affiliated water company nationwide.

The departments will issue leaflets to be distributed among water users to show them the best ways to decrease water use.

The amount of water wasted in Egypt is es-

timated at 20 percent of total drinking water production (around 28 million cubic meters per day).

A huge amount of the waste is blamed on the poor conditions of water pipelines, as well as poor maintenance of mains.

Irrational use in households is another reason for the increase in the amount of drinking water wasted.

Liberian Border Town Gets Water Supply

MONROVIA, Liberia (OOSKANews)

The water supply system has now been restored in the border town of Sanniquelle, the main town in Nimba County where the country’s 14-year civil war started in December 1989, the Liberian government said.

The town, which has a population of over 24,000, according to Liberia’s Census Report of 2008, has not piped water supply since the civil war started.

“With assistance and technical support from our partners at the Liberia Water and Sewage Corporation (LWSC), we have opened the first valve of piped water supply in Sanniquelle, Nimba County,” Jesefu Keita, spokesman for the Liberian Ministry of Public Works, told OOSKANews on July 20.

This is the third rural town to receive safe drinking water since 2008.

Piped water supply to Zwedru is the second post-war rural water supply program after the LWSC successfully connected the commercial city of Kakata, Margibi county, 35 kilometers north of Monrovia, in July 2008.

The LWSC rehabilitated five water pumps in Kakata at the cost of \$175,000 USD and the water treatment station in the town has the

capacity to pump 110,000 gallons daily.

Liberia's infrastructure was severely damaged by the country's civil war that ran from 1989-2003 and significantly undermined the delivery of water and sanitation services.

Monrovia's water supply fell from 18 million gallons daily to just 1 million gallons.

Since 2008, the Liberian government has said it aims to extend piped water supply in seven urban towns of the country's 15 counties in the hinterlands.

The government will provide piped water systems to Robertsport, [southwestern region], Voinjama [northern region], Greenville [southeastern region], Buchanan [southern region], Kakata [central region] and Zwedru [eastern region] with other cities to follow.

Thousands of refugees who fled those areas as a result of the war are returning, and access to safe drinking water for them is a priority for the government.

Chinese Firm Delays Botswana Dam Project

GABORONE, Botswana (OOSKANews)

Sinohydro Corporation, China's leading dam builder, will delay by five months completion of the \$300 million USD Dikgatlong Dam, in Botswana.

Construction of the dam, which will have a capacity of 400 million cubic meters, started two years ago and was initially set for completion by October 31, 2011.

However, the date was pushed back to February 2012 after several months' delay due to seasonal floods and labor disputes between the contractor and locals and the government.

"The construction is underway on the \$300 million USD Dikgatlong Dam and it is expected to be completed in 2012," said Jeffares & Green the project's South Africa-based consulting engineers.

Botswana authorities expected to increase the annual yield from the water storage facility, located on the confluence of the Shashe and Tati rivers, by 170 million cubic meters, making it the fourth-largest dam in the country after Gaborone, Bokaa and Letshibogo.

According to contract details from Sinohydro, the dam, which was listed as a top infrastructure undertaking by the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning in the 2010/2011 fiscal year, will bring raw water to the existing national north-south carrier pipeline that transports water from the Letsibogo Dam near Selebi Phikwe to Gaborone.

Last month, Finance Minister Kenneth Matambo offered assurances that construction of Dikgatlong Dam, along with two others, is being fast-tracked to ensure completion and to enable Botswana alleviate the current water shortages.

"Three major dams, namely, Dikgatlong, Thune and Lotsane, with capacities of 400 million cubic meters, 90 million cubic meters and 40 million cubic meters, respectively, are being constructed in order to alleviate water shortage for domestic and industrial consumption," said Matambo.

"Construction of Lotsane Dam is expected to be completed in October 2011, while Dikgatlong Dam is expected to be completed in February 2012. Tender evaluation for Thune Dam was done in 2009 and its construction is expected to be completed in March 2013."

Unexpected heavy rains with accompanying floods pushed back progress on the project by several months last year, with Botswana's leaders warning of stagnation in the country's economic development on account of diminishing water resources.

"Of principal concern is our failure to recog-

nize and accept that there is a finite supply of water," local media quoted Samson Moyo, a member of parliament for Tati East, as saying of the country's water crisis.

"The consensus is that the growing water scarcity and misuse of freshwater pose serious threats to sustainable development."

Kenya's Dam Clean-Up Making Progress, Says Ngilu

NAIROBI, Kenya (OOSKANews)

Government efforts to clean up toxic waste from major Kenyan dams are making progress in Nairobi and Coast Province.

Five dams are already undergoing extensive repair work in different parts of the country, Water Minister Charity Ngilu confirmed in an interview.

"The water capacity in Kenya, especially in urban areas, will be greatly improved," Ngilu said. "We hope to complete this clean up exercise in several months to come. We have already launched a cutting-edge technology that is currently being used in Netherlands.

"The technology involves cleaning heavily polluted water to clean drinking water. The use of a mobile purification churn can purify up to 60,000 liters of water each day and several units are already being used to supply the Kibera slums with water," she said.

She added that unsafe drinking water, especially in slum areas, contributed to 80 percent of waterborne diseases such as cholera, diarrhea and dysentery.

"The mobile purification churn costs as much as \$75,000 USD," she said. "There was a time when people used to dream of

drinking water from the once heavily polluted Nairobi Dam; it is now a reality and people are already using it for domestic purposes such as drinking,” said Netherlands-based Multi-Purpose Industries CEO Bart-Jan Rozeboom.

The company was contracted by the Kenyan government for the dam clean-up project.

City and town governments in different parts of the country are partnering with the company and purchasing its machines for use in water purification. The total cost of the project, being funded mostly by the Dutch government, is estimated at more than \$50 million USD for all the major dams in Nairobi and the Coast area.

Dutch Ambassador to Kenya Laetitia van den Assum said her government had set aside the \$50 million USD to improve access to clean, safe water in the country. “We are happy that the proposed constitution recognizes access to clean water as a fundamental right of every Kenyan,” she added.

She said the company’s purification unit would eliminate the need for Kibera residents to boil water and would cut incidences of water-borne disease. Nairobi Dam will undergo more changes compared to other major dams in the country because it has the most damage, according to the government.

Ngilu urged hotels and hospitals to use the Dutch technology to guarantee a supply of clean water.

Nairobi Dam, covering more than 350,000 square meters, can hold up to 100,000 cubic meters of water. The dam was commissioned in 1953 as reservoir for potable and emergency water supply. In recent years, it has been reduced to marshlands.

There are four other major Kenyan dams near the coast that are undergoing similar changes, Ngilu confirmed.

A total of almost 800,000 cubic meters of water is being purified in different parts of the country.

SOUTHERN & EASTERN ASIA

U.S. to Spend \$187 Million USD on Lower Mekong Initiative

WASHINGTON, DC, United States (OOSKANews)

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton agreed on July 22 to spend approximately \$187 million USD on projects in the four Lower Mekong River basin nations of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam.

The projects will focus on environment, with \$22 million USD; public health, with \$147 million USD; and education, with \$18 million USD.

Clinton was quoted at America.gov as saying, “Managing this resource and defending it against threats like climate change and infectious disease is a transnational challenge.

“Regional cooperation is essential to meeting that challenge, to preserving the ecological diversity and fertility of the Mekong region. We expect to continue similar levels of funding for the next two years.”

There are four environmental projects including a three-year program to develop strategies to address the effects of climate change

on water resources, food security and livelihoods.

The United States allocated \$3 million USD for the program’s first year, and anticipates spending the same for the other two years.

Another environmental program is the “sister-river” partnership between the Mekong River Commission and the Mississippi River Commission. The commissions signed a memorandum of understanding at the second U.S.-Lower Mekong Ministerial Meeting held in Hanoi on July 22.

“This MoU will allow the commissions to conduct expert exchanges, share expertise and best practices in areas of climate change adaptation, flood and drought management, hydropower impact assessments, water resource management, and food security,” according to a joint press release by the United States, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam.

The other two environmental programs include further development of a forecast modeling tool to analyze the effects of climate change on the basin and a regional university two-year research program into persistent organic pollutants.

The Lower Mekong Initiative was established last year by the Foreign Ministers of the Lower Mekong countries and the U.S. Secretary of State.

It is a “vehicle for addressing regional challenges, particularly in the areas of environment, health, education, and infrastructure,” the joint press release said.

ADB Lends Indonesia \$35 Million USD for Sanitation Improvement Project

MANILA, Philippines (OOSKANews)

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on July 20 announced it was extending a \$35 million USD loan to Indonesia for sanitation improvement works.

The loan will finance the Metropolitan Sanitation Management and Health Project, which will extend and repair sanitation services in Medan, capital city of North Sumatra province, and Yogyakarta, capital city of Yogyakarta province.

It will provide financing for the construction of 280 communal sanitation facilities in poor areas of both cities, two wastewater treatment systems in Medan, as well as expanding the cities’ systems to add 28,000 new household connections.

The project will also mobilize community involvement, particularly from women, in planning, operating and maintaining the facilities.

“A gender action plan in the project design will ensure women fully participate in the decision-making process for the development of facilities, and that they benefit equally with men from improved communal services,” said Rudolf Frauendorfer in ADB’s Southeast Asia Department.

Indonesia’s sanitation networks have improved but are not on par with many of its neighboring countries, the ADB said. Also, the financial crisis in the region in 1997-1998 caused many sanitation projects to be put on hold, resulting in system disrepair. Therefore, many poor people living in informal settlements suffer greatly due to lack of sanitation services and polluted water.

“This project will sharply reduce pollution of surface and shallow groundwater in the two cities, resulting in improved health and quality of life particularly for women, children and the elderly who suffer the most from unclean environments,” Frauendorfer said.

The ADB will also supply a \$500,000 USD grant from its Techni-

cal Assistance Special Fund to be used in the strengthening of local government capacity and management capabilities. An additional \$1 million USD grant is coming from the Australian government and will be administered by ADB.

The \$35 million USD loan has a 25-year term, with a five-year grace period and an interest rate determined by Libor.

The Indonesian government will provide \$14.2 million USD, with regional governments contributing \$13.5 million USD and provincial governments some \$500,000 USD. This brings total project financing to approximately \$63.2 million USD.

The project has an expected completion date of December 2014, and the Ministry of Public Works is the executing agency.

South Korea’s Four Rivers Project Draws Environmentalists’ Ire

SEOUL, South Korea (OOSKANews)

South Korean environmentalists stepped up opposition to the country’s massive Four Rivers project, saying it would endanger wild animals and plant life, as well as contaminate drinking water sources used by a majority of the country’s population.

The release of plans for the \$17.7 billion USD water supply management system, which were finalized early this month by the Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs and the ministries of environment, culture, sports and tourism and food, agriculture, forestry and fisheries, highlighted public divisions over the water project, which is expected to be implemented in 2012.

Opposition leaders in the country are keen to mobilize perceived public discontent in recent elections over the massive project.

Dong-A Ilbo news portal quoted Democratic Party leader Chung Sye-kyun as saying, “The people showed a yellow card to the four-river project in the June 2 local elections. We must show a red card in the upcoming by-elections.”

First announced as part of a “Green New Deal” in January 2009, the final plan was unveiled by the government earlier this month and aims to improve four major rivers -- the Han, Nakdong, Geum, and the Yeongsan -- with a view to providing 1.3 billion tons of water resources in preparation for water shortages and abnormal drought.

The goal of the project is to provide “clean water sources to...next

generations,” according to a July 12 government press release. The statement went on to deny environmentalists’ claims that the project would be an ecological disaster, saying it had identified areas needing pollution control.

Once the project is completed: “...Korea will have secured extra reservoir space that can contain 1.3 billion cubic meters of water. More water will mean less water pollution, even during the dry season,” the statement said.

Projects like dredging up mud from the river bottom can also have the same effect of eliminating pollutants. The government has selected 34 out of 66 regions close to the rivers that need intense pollution control. The government also has plans to pursue over 1,300 kinds of pollution-reduction projects and install a total phosphorus (TP) facility on some 250 wastewater systems.”

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Goa Orders Paint Company to Suspend Operations Over Pollution

VANCOUVER, BC, Canada (OOSKANews)

A manufacturing unit of India’s second largest decorative paint company, Berger Paints, has come under scrutiny by the Goa state government for alleged groundwater pollution.

The state’s pollution control board last week ordered suspension of the operations of the manufacturing unit at the Pilerne industrial estate in Goa for polluting groundwater resources.

The Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB) directed the management of Berger Becker Coatings Private Limited to “manage, handle and dispose off all the hazardous waste stored at the unit;” until then,

operations will remain suspended.

The move followed a hearing conducted by the GSPCB after residents of Saipem village filed a complaint under the Water and Air Pollution Act, saying that chemicals being discharged by the company were contaminating the groundwater.

The suspension order for Berger Paints unit was issued by the GSPCB chairman Simon de Souza after conducting a hearing on the issue.

This is one of the several cases in which the state government has come down hard on alleged polluters of water resources. The GSPCB earlier also issued closure notices to several industrial units for alleged pollution.

With groundwater in India already depleting at an alarming rate, a number of state governments have decided to get tough against polluting industrial and commercial units.

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India remains the largest user of groundwater in the world, with an estimated use of 230 cubic kilometers of groundwater every year, more than one-fourth of the world’s total.

The use of groundwater has been steadily increasing over the past few decades and in some areas the water table has fallen to dangerous levels due to digging of wells. Pollution is adding to the problem.

The state’s pollution control board also directed the manufacturing unit to clear the solvent, which was being discharged in the stormwater drains, and report the action taken to the board within seven days. Paint manufacturing remains a water-intensive activity in India.

Berger Becker Industries manufactures industrial paint, industrial color powders, whitewash colors and paint pigments.

The GSPCB order also directed the district collector to seal the unit’s premises and disconnect its water and electricity supply in case of inaction.

The issue has also been discussed in the State Assembly last week, with Environment Minister Aleixo Sequeira stating before lawmakers that the authorities will take strict action against the manufacturing unit in accordance with law after the hearing as part of official procedure.

Over-exploitation and pollution of groundwater is rampant across India.

A World Bank report released in April this year had warned that 60 percent of all aquifers in the country could run dry or will be in a critical condition in 20 years.

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Three Gorges Dam Withstands Flood

BEIJING, China (OOSKANews)

China’s massive Three Gorges Dam has withstood the biggest flood in its short history, with Chinese media lauding its ability to manage previously deadly water surges.

State television carried live pictures as flows through its sluices reached 70,000 cubic meters per second, with huge plumes providing a dramatic backdrop to reports.

But while the immediate threat of widespread flooding was held back, lower and middle stretches of the Yangtse River and tributaries remain at danger levels, with no end in sight to the heavy rainfall.

The flood level of the giant reservoir could also rise again to new record highs of around 159 meters after falling slightly over the weekend.

State news agency Xinhua said after the peak flow was reached, the dam had offered a “buffer” for the worst flood in decades, blocking 40 percent of upstream water.

Referring to 1998, when more than 4,000

North Korea Releases Water to Ease Pressure Following Floods

SEOUL, South Korea (OOSKANews)

South Korean authorities have been informed by their northern counterparts of the republic's intent to release water from its border dams following heavy flooding.

Seoul's unification ministry, which handles communications with the north, passed on the information to other government agencies including K-Water, the agency tasked with South Korea's water management, control of water supply and flood control.

The rains have dangerously flooded the dams on the North Korean side, and North Korean officials appear to have made the decision to release water to the south to ease pressure on the region's water supplies.

Water reportedly is expected to be released from major rivers on the north's side of the border to prevent dangerous flooding.

The notification on July 22 was the second time in a week that the North Korean authorities have notified the south of their water

discharge plans, the first occurring earlier in the week when an estimated 1,000 tons of water per second was released from one of its border dams.

"Discharges of water from dams north of Imjin River are expected to begin at 6 a.m.," news agency Yonhap quoted the North Korean notice as saying.

The incident has occurred amid ongoing tensions between Seoul and Pyongyang, with the south warning of heightened water disputes.

In September last year, North Korea released 40 million tons of water into the Imjin River into South Korean territory from its Hwanggam Dam without any prior warning, killing six South Korean campers.

The incident heightened cross border water tensions, causing yet more division with the South. Seoul warned Pyongyang following the incident that it must send a warning before doing so, a warning it appears to have heeded this time.

The secretive republic is thought to rely on its main rivers running from the mountain ranges, though its border dams have been inundated in the past week by torrential rains from the summer wet season.

EASTERN EUROPE & FSU

Hradec-Kralov Wastewater Plant Project Proceeds Without EU Support

PRAGUE, Czech Republic (OOSKANews)

Hradec-Kralove, a city located in the northern part of the Czech Republic, is carrying out a \$7 million USD project to reconstruct a municipal wastewater treatment plant even though the city has not received any funding under the European Environment Operational program, which offers financial support for water management projects.

The city applied for European Union co-funding for the project four years ago, but it was not approved. The municipality and a local water management company had to meet strict criteria to

receive support, including making changes to the company's activities that both the administration of the municipality and the management staff of the company thought would lead to inefficiency of operations at the local water management company.

As a result, they decided to carry out the project using funds from the municipal budget and from water company Vodovody a Kanalizace Hradec-Kralove (VaK).

Frantisek Barak, the head of VaK, told Vodarenstvi.cz earlier this month that carrying out the project without European co-funding was much cheaper.

"European projects have their own rules," Barak said. "You are often forced to include things you don't need in projects; it's a rather typical situation. It could be requirements to connect additional agglomerations to the networks [or] to carry out reconstruction in parallel when it is more efficient to do it later."

According to Barak, EU-funded projects put a lot of additional obligations on administering companies, including frequent audits, excessive data collection requirements, various legal services, etc. All of these cost money and make work more expensive, he said.

The reconstruction project for the Hradec-Kralove wastewater treatment plant was launched in late 2008.

The national Ministry for Agriculture allocated some \$2.5 million USD in grants for the project, and \$3.1 million USD worth of credit was offered -- the national budget refunds the interest on it. The rest of the funds were contributed by shareholders in the water management company.

Barak said the project is being carried out 30 to 40 percent more cheaply than European-funded projects.

A significant portion of the EU funding for water management projects is being used for unnecessary things and in inappropriate ways because funds are treated as "free money," he said.

The management staff of VaK plan to raise water and wastewater tariffs in the future, based on the inflation rate.

UN Assists Ukraine With Water Supply Renovation Projects

KIEV, Ukraine (OOSKANews)

On July 20, officials of the UN Development Program (UNDP) signed a cooperation agreement with the government of Odessa on implementing the second stage of a program to renovate water supply and infrastructure in the region for 2011-2013.

The program supports renovation projects initiated by local communities, as the UN is pursuing a policy of encouraging the communities to organize themselves and develop small civil initiatives aimed at improving the social and economic development in their districts, Revisor newspaper reported.

According to the newspaper, the first stage of the program was implemented in the Odessa region in spring 2008, with funding from the European Commission within the framework of the European Union's Technical Assistance to CIS Countries and partial funding from the UN Development Program in Ukraine.

The program's investments in infrastructure in the Odessa region

from 2008-2010 amounted to \$1.03 million USD, which allowed implementation of several projects to improve water supply management, Eho newspaper reported.

Since 2008, the UNDP implemented 15 small water supply renovation projects in Ukraine's Nikolaev region via local communities within the framework of the same program, according to Business News of Nikolaev.

The newspaper quoted Manager of the UNDP in Ukraine Jay Singh Sakh as saying that the program scope in the Nikolaev region will be expanded in 2011, with 65 percent of expenses funded by the program, 30 percent by the state budget of Ukraine and the remaining 5 percent by local communities.

Turkmenistan to Complete Water Reservoir This Fall

ASHGABAT, Turkmenistan (OOSKANews)

A project to build a new water reservoir with a capacity of 632,000 cubic meters near the Turkmen capital, will be completed this fall. The reservoir will supply drip irrigation to nearby agricultural land and reduce consequences of possible mudflows.

Constructed near the Bagir village, the reservoir of the same name will accumulate and refine torrent water. It will be 600 meters long and 277 meters wide and have an average depth of 3.8 meters.

The Bagir reservoir will supplement the network of small reservoirs in the area, including Archabil Lake, an artificial water body spreading across 5 hectares near Ashgabat and holding 300,000 cubic meters of drainage water.

However, ecologists said runoff collected by Archabil is the reason for toxic fumes in the surrounding area.

The Golden Age Lake, also known as Altyn Asyr or Turkmen Lake, in northwestern Turkmenistan has provoked even more controversy over its influence on the environmental situation in the region.

That artificial reservoir, officially opened by Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov last year, spreads across 3,460 square kilometers in the Karashor depression of the Karakum Desert, not far from the border with Uzbekistan.

It collects 130 to 150 billion cubic meters of drainage water from fields in the Turkmen provinces of Lebap, Mary, Dashoguz, and Ahal through the Trans-Turkmen Collector canal and the Dashoguz Collector. Turkmen Lake holds 132 billion cubic meters of water.

Turkmen authorities said Turkmen Lake will help to improve water quality in the Amu Darya River and reduce water logging and land degradation, while critics have warned that the volume of the river will decrease, ultimately reducing the volume of the shrunken Aral Sea.

The largest river in Central Asia, the Amu Darya runs 2,400 kilometers from the junction of the Vakhsh and Panj rivers to the inland Aral Sea.

The roughly 68.1 billion cubic meters of water in the Amu Darya are used by five countries -- Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan -- with the Turkmen share at around 21 billion cubic meters.

Although Altyn Asyr improves the quality of the Amu Darya's water, it may decrease its volume, said Usman Buranov, technical director of the Tashkent-based Agency for Implementation of the Aral Sea Basin Projects.

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EC to Provide \$650 Million USD to Serbia for Danube Strategy

BELGRADE, Serbia (OOSKANews)

The European Commission (EC) on July 21 decided to renew Serbia's Danube-

Tisa-Danube river system and Belgrade wastewater processing strategy within its own Danube Strategy draft, according to Serbian Deputy Prime Minister Božidar Đelić.

Being accepted into the EC's Danube Strategy means Serbia will be able to draw several billion dollars from the EU for Danube-related projects during the EU's next large budget cycle of 2014-2020.

The projects now being included in the draft strategy, as well as several others, will receive nearly \$650 million USD from the European Union as soon as 2013, said Đelić.

The EC is currently holding individual talks with all 14 Danube nations -- Germany, Austria, the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Romania, Bulgaria, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, of which only eight are EU members.

Bulgarian Regional Development Minister Rosen Plevneliev was quoted by the Sofia News Agency as saying, "Each country will receive a leading role in one of the priorities of the Danube Strategy. Bulgaria wishes to be a leader, especially in the sphere of tourism."

Cooperation among states is stressed as being essential to reach development goals and combat possible effects of climate change.

Giorgos Kremlis, a spokesman for the EC's Environment Directorate-General, said, "Especially in regard to floods, it is easy for problems from one country to leak into the neighbor country. Primarily, measures must be taken against the illegal dumping grounds on the Danube River valley.

"During flooding, the waste could contaminate the entire river valley and Black Sea.

"The consequences could be catastrophic."

The final EU strategy is planned for adoption in December, while implementation has been set for the middle of 2011.

Belgrade will host an international conference on the Danube this September. European Commissioner for Regional Policy Johannes Hahn and European Investment Bank President Philippe Maystadt will open the conference.

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Kyrgyzstan Moves Uranium Tailings to Protect Water

BISHKEK, Kyrgyzstan (OOSKANews)

A project to move uranium mine tailings in the Mailuu-Suu River Valley to another location, which had been delayed because of the change of power in the country and other factors, has now been launched in Kyrgyzstan.

The Kyrgyz Ministry of Extreme Situations said tailing sites No. 3 and No. 18 will be taken to No. 6 tailing site in Mailuu-Suu, a town in the Jalal-Abad province of central-western Kyrgyzstan.

Under the framework of a project carried out by the World Bank in Kyrgyzstan, the two radioactive tailings in the area of a former uranium plant in the Mailuu-Suu River Valley were supposed to have been moved to a safer place in 2009.

The start of the operation was postponed until early April 2010, but the project that has already absorbed \$242,300 USD started

in May.

A total of 23 tailings and 13 waste rock dumps in the area of the former uranium plant are under threat of earthquakes, floods and landslides -- a strong earthquake or a landslide can cause the contents of the storage area to spill into the river, triggering a catastrophe.

Former Kyrgyz Prime Minister Igor Chudinov said a few years ago that in the event of a natural disaster, tailings and waste rock could threaten the whole of Central Asia with radioactive contamination.

The Mailuu-Suu is a tributary of the Naryn River, feeding the Syr Darya that flows some 2,000 kilometers through Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan to the Aral Sea, and if the radioactive substances are washed downstream to the densely populated Fergana Valley and the Syr Darya River basin, millions of people in the region would be endangered.

“We do not want a dirty object to be opened in a clean place, so it was decided to move them (the tailings) to an existing tailing deposit,” Deputy Director of the Department for Monitoring and Forecasting Extreme Situations Anarkul Aytaliev said in 2008, adding that the ministry chose tailing No. 6 because it is located far from the Mailuu-Suu River and faces no threat of landslides.

In 2004, the World Bank started a disaster hazard project in Kyrgyzstan to “minimize the exposure of humans, livestock, and riverine flora and fauna to radionuclides associated with abandoned uranium mine tailings and waste rock dumps in the Mailuu-Suu area,” the bank said in a statement.

Out of the total project cost of \$11.76 million USD, \$6.9 million USD is allocated by the bank’s International Development Association, \$1.95 million USD by the Japanese Ministry of Finance, \$1 million USD by the Global Environment Facility and \$1.91 million USD by the Kyrgyz government.

Ukraine to Establish National Water Supply Tariff Regulator

KIEV, Ukraine (OOSKANews)

The Ukrainian legislature, the Supreme Rada, adopted a new law on forming a national commission for regulating the market for communal services, which came into force on July 22.

The new law stipulates that the national regulator of the utility sector will start operations in 2011, RBC business news agency reports.

According to RBC, the law establishes the commission as the state supervisory body overseeing operations of the nation’s natural monopolies such as water supply utilities.

The commission is entrusted with providing transparency and openness in these monopolies’ operations, as well as detailing pricing and tariff policy in these markets.

The utility tariffs will be developed by regulating tariffs and encouraging competition in the utility markets, RBC reported.

In addition, the new regulator will issue licenses to water supply, transportation and sewerage companies and impose penalties on housing and communal services sector companies that violate laws and regulations.

RBC quoted the president of All-Ukraine Association of Private Investors in the Housing and Communal Services Sergey Bulbas as saying that establishing the national regulator for utility tariffs is the main task needed to improve the utility sector in Ukraine, as current tariffs set by the local legislatures are unprofitable.

Meanwhile, the Ukrainian press reported that tariffs for water supply currently vary

greatly in different regions, depending on the policy of the regional authorities.

For example, water supply tariffs in the Kiev region are 700 percent higher than the water supply tariffs in Crimea autonomous republic of Ukraine, RealNest agency reported.

Water Levels Decrease in Eastern European Rivers

CHISINAU, Moldova (OOSKANews)

The water levels in the Prut and Dniester rivers fell by 0.1 to 0.3 meters every day on the average after recent flooding, Director of the Moldovan State Hydro-Meteorological Service Ilie Boian said in mid-July.

Scientists warned that floods can worsen water quality in those Eastern European rivers that run partly through Moldova.

“About 10 serious floods have been registered in Moldova for the last 70 years,” Boian told the country’s working group on extreme situations on July 16.

“This year’s flood is one of the most long-lasting and serious.”

He emphasized that 70 to 80 percent of the annual precipitation rate fell in the first six months of 2010 in most of Moldova’s territory, while in the north of the country 90 to 115 percent of the annual precipitation rate fell.

“Such an amount of precipitation was registered in Moldova for the first time in the last 100 years,” he said.

Floods hit Moldova this summer, destroying at least 500 houses and social and cultural facilities; thousands of hectares of farmland were affected and many roads and bridges were damaged. One man died in the flooding and another was reported missing.

According to Ludmila Cunicean, head of the surface water monitoring center, water quality in rivers has not posed a danger up until now, but “with the increase in temperature, the level of pollution in rivers may increase as water washes out everything -- cattle, domestic structures, garbage.”

“Biogenic contamination may reach the critical level,” she noted.

“That is why it is necessary to use the population to clean garbage from the water.”

Moldova’s total renewable water resources come to 11.7 billion cubic meters, and total freshwater withdrawal is at 2.31 billion cu-

bic meters per year, according to U.S. Central Intelligence Agency statistics.

Fifty-eight percent of water consumed in the country is used for industrial consumption, 33 percent for agriculture and 10 percent for domestic consumption, the CIA said.

The Dniester River has its source in Ukraine and runs about 1,360 kilometers through Moldova and Ukraine to the Black Sea.

The 953-kilometer-long Prut, flows from the Carpathian Mountains in southeast Ukraine, forming the border between Romania and Moldova, and then joins the Danube River in Ukraine.

Both rivers are used for drinking water supply; the Dniester is the main source of drinking water in Moldova and a significant part of Ukraine, particularly Odessa, a city of 1 million people on the Black Sea.

L A T I N A M E R I C A

Uncertainty Over Collection of Fines in Tabasco

MEXICO CITY, Mexico (OOSKANews)

The Mexican National Water Authority (Conagua) has not announced whether it has collected fines from 10 companies that failed to deliver dredging and flood protection works in Tabasco state.

According to Tabasco Hoy newspaper, 11 projects worth a total of \$6.7 million USD, paid in advance, were due to be completed during February and March of 2009.

An internal investigation found that they had not been carried out in time, and two of Conagua’s management staff were removed from office for fraud.

The amount of the fines varies from 10-15 percent of the total cost of the projects, and is about \$770,000 USD total, including interest and other costs, according to Agua.org.mx.

Federal Deputy Adán Augusto said the lack of work led to flood damage. He warned of a civil lawsuit to punish the guilty parties,

according to Tabasco Hoy.

He also accused Conagua head José Luis Luegue Tamargo of protecting those involved.

A report of Tabasco’s public accounts in 2008 by government auditor ASF, released last March, found irregularities of more than \$36.4 million USD in various projects for Tabasco’s Integral Hydrological Plan (PHIT), the newspaper reported.

Luegue recently admitted that Conagua only carried out 50 percent of budgeted flood protection work in the first half of the year, which is the country’s dry season, according to La Jornada newspaper.

Biodegradable Antiscalant to Help Allay Environmental Concerns

GEORGE TOWN, Cayman Islands (OOSKANews)

With Caribbean nations relying more and more on seawater reverse osmosis plants as a source for domestic water, and

with governments tightening environmental standards, a biodegradable anti-scalant made of polycarboxylic acid (PCA) could be a solution for the region.

Suresh Patel, a senior scientist at the research and development laboratories of Manchester, UK-based BWA Water Additives said that the biodegradable products will be the ones to survive in the market.

Accumulation of salts during the desalination process is referred to as membrane scaling. It occurs when feed water is converted to brine. The accumulation of salts can affect the operation of seawater RO plants.

According to Robin Kluck, senior technical adviser for GE Power and Water, strategies must be developed for maintaining production efficiency by minimizing deposits in operating desalination plants.

To avoid scaling difficulties, it is essential to restrict the fractional recovery of purified water below a threshold at which there is a risk of scale precipitation.

The effective solubility limits of scaling salts and hence the allowable water recovery are usually extended by antiscalant treatment.

Antiscalants currently on the market generally contain phosphates and nitrogen, Patel said.

“Our objective was to produce a phosphorous- and nitrogen-free biodegradable anti-scalant for seawater RO plants,” he said.

When tested in an external laboratory the antiscalant, which is still experimental, fared well under Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) test guideline, scoring 306 on the aerobic biodegradation of seawater.

The product’s biodegradability was tested for 28 days; the antiscalant has not shown evidence of accumulating in aquatic organisms, which other antiscalants have been doing over time.

In another test, done in natural seawater in Penrhy Point, North Wales, the PCA performed well in the dissolved oxygen test. Lack of oxygen in water is a signal of severe pollution.

The testing also found that the PCA had good scale control properties with high recovery and controlled formation of calcium carbonate, calcium sulphate and barium sulphate crystals compared to traditional antiscalants.

According to Patel, PCA could be a good choice of antiscalant for Seawater RO plants where environmental concerns are an issue.

“The RO pilot plant tests shows that the PCA can control calcium carbonate and magnesium hydroxide scales under sea water operating conditions,” he said.

Recent studies by coral expert Dr Andy Bruckner noted that sites that had 60-80 percent living corals now have between 5-15 percent living corals due to pollutants from human activities in the Cayman Islands.

“Natural stresses are being compounded by human disturbances; my research has focused on understanding the role of these natural stressors in reef decline and what we can do to minimize their impact,” he said.

Chile Will Not Change Water Code

BOGOTA, Chile (OOSKANews)

The General Water Directorate (DGA) of Chile’s Public Works Ministry has decided against modifying the nation’s water code to make water a public good.

In January, then-President Michelle Bachelet oversaw an urgent government submission to congress of a constitutional reform declar-

ing water a national resource for public use, according to La Nación newspaper.

The new code would have covered water in all its states, and would have also established limits and obligations in regards to water rights.

The head of the DGA’s legal division, Sandra Alvarez, was quoted by Chilean paper Estrategia as saying the reform was unnecessary, as water has been recognized as a national good for public use since 1857 in article 595 of the Civil Code, as well as in Article 5 of the Water Code.

She said that passing the code could take four years of discussion.

Alvarez said the government has made water issues a priority, and is focusing its resources on three key areas -- improving information, carrying out modernization studies and hiring capable new technical staff, Estrategia reported.

IADB, Spanish Fund Give \$50 Million USD in Grants to Haiti

WASHINGTON, DC, United States (OOSKANews)

The Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), together with the Spanish Cooperation Fund for Water and Sanitation in Latin America and the Caribbean (Spanish Fund), on July 21 announced \$50 million USD in grants for construction and repairs of drinking water and sanitation services in Haiti.

The Spanish Fund is granting \$35 million USD and IADB is providing the remaining \$15 million USD. The funds will focus on rehabilitation of water and sanitation services in Haiti’s capital city, Port-au-Prince.

Some \$29.5 million USD of the Spanish Fund grant will be for high-priority repairs and service expansion projects.

Repairs cover damage to reservoirs, pumping stations and water mains and wells resulting from the devastating January 12, 2010 earthquake.

There will also be projects to repair leaks, provide water to re-settlements, install water meters, purchase generators and install water kiosks where connections are not available.

A second component includes a \$17 million USD grant to strengthen the institutional capacity of Haiti's National Water and Sanitation Directorate (DINEPA).

These funds will support day-to-day operations, prepare and implement investment programs, help establish basic administrative and commercial systems and assess viable options for improving services, the IADB said.

Haiti's Ministry of Health will receive a \$500,000 USD in grant funds to help with combating waterborne diseases like Lymphatic Filariasis (elephantiasis) and parasites known as Soil-Transmitted Helminthes.

This is not the first grant program for Haiti on which the IADB and the Spanish Fund have cooperated. In April, the IADB approved a project for rural water and sanitation improvement, backed by a \$10 million USD grant from the Spanish Fund.

In October 2009, the Spanish Fund gave \$20 million USD in grants, while IADB gave \$19 million USD, for improvement and expansion of water and sanitation systems in Saint-Marc, Port-De Paix, Les Cayes, Jacmel, Ouanaminthe and Cap-Haitien.

The IADB is also currently working on a \$15 million USD project for water and sanitation in rural areas of the departments of Grande Anse, Nippes, Artibonite and Ouest.

IADB and the Spanish Fund have teamed up eight times for water and sanitation projects in Latin America since the fund's creation in 2008 by Spanish President José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, including projects in Peru, Bolivia and Guatemala.

The two institutions are also reviewing several more projects in Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras and Uruguay.

Petroecuador Oil Spill Will Take 75 Days to Clean Up

QUITO, Ecuador (OOSKAnews)

State-owned Petroecuador announced last week that it needs an estimated 75 days to clean up a heavy diesel fuel spill on the Teaone River in Ecuador's northern coastal Esmeraldas province.

The July 10 spill of 1,300 barrels of fuel from overflowing holding tanks entered a canal that flows into the river, contaminating water, flora and fauna.

Of the 1,300 barrels, 1,150 "were deposited into the (refinery's) canals and contingency pit," while the remaining 150 spilled directly into the river, the company said in a July 22 statement.

The heads of Petroecuador's health, safety and environmental departments toured the contaminated areas "where cleaning crews were manually weeding out and cleaning the vegetation affected," the statement said.

The company will continue providing local communities with "medical assistance" for health problems associated with the spill, it added.

"Technicians determined in a preliminary evaluation that, based on the characteristics of the fuel oil and the land surrounding the Teaone River, a clean-up technique using re-circulated water from that same river with biodegradable products should be employed," it said.

However, vegetation needs to be cleaned manually and organic waste will be processed at a refinery and then used later on for composting.

The company said they have collected about 100 barrels thus far, while 50 barrels are thought to be on the banks of the river and under-vegetation.

The Esmeraldas refinery is the country's largest, with a capacity of 110,000 barrels of crude oil a day.

LOCAL PRESS REPORTS

MEDIA BRIEFS FROM THE REGION

ALBANIA

World Bank Discusses New Country Partnership Strategy for Albania

WASHINGTON, DC

The World Bank Group's Board of Directors discussed a new Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) for Albania.

The strategy will provide the framework for the bank's assistance to Albania for 2011-2014, in line with the country's National Strategy for Development and Integration.

The new World Bank-International Finance Corporation (IFC) joint CPS envisages financing up to \$275 million USD from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and up to \$120-150 million USD from the IFC over the four-year period.

Jane Armitage, World Bank Country Director and Regional Coordinator for Southeast Europe, said the strategy "... will assist Albania to meet the new challenge of climate change, through improving water conservation and

management and increasing disaster preparedness."

"Building on the previous successful cooperation of IBRD-IFC joint interventions in critical sectors, such as energy, the IBRD and IFC have cooperated since the inception of this strategy for a programmatic approach, with a focus on important sectors for the sustainable development of the country, including energy, roads, water supply and waste management sectors, as well as improving the business environment," said George Konda, principal economist

in the Southern Europe and Central Asia Department of the International Finance Corporation (IFC).

Albania is among the European countries most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, and it needs to better manage water resources and water use to address changing climatic conditions, according to the bank.

This is one of the strategic objectives of the joint World Bank Group CPS program.

Source: World Bank Group

Lake Sevan Commission to Discuss Hydropower Plant

YEREVAN

The Commission for Lake Sevan on July 23 was to discuss construction of a hydropower plant on the Argichi River, according to Karine Denielyan, chair of the Lake Sevan Committee and of the association

for stable development.

The Argichi flows into Lake Sevan.

"I am totally against changing the Argichi riverbed for the sake of the new hydropower plant, as after that it will be directed to Vayots Dzor region, bypassing Sevan. One should not permit it," she said.

Experts said changing the

riverbed may considerably reduce the rate at which the lake water is rising.

In addition, 30,000 residents of five communities -- Gegharkunik-Geghovit, Madina, Vaghashen, Nerkin Getashen and Verin Getashen -- will be left without irrigation water if the Argichi riverbed undergoes changes to accommodate the hydropower plant.

Armenia's Ministry of Nature Protection has acknowledged that a hydropower plant could not legally be constructed on the Argichi; it gave permission for construction of the plant on the Yeghegis feder, which runs through the Vayots Dzor region.

However, the plant construction project has been moving forward regardless.

Source: ARMINFO News Agency

ARMENIA

AZERBAIJAN

11 Facilities Penalized for Water Resources Violations

BAKU

Eleven facilities and orga-

nizations were fined \$5,260 USD for violations of water resources protection laws.

The violations were detected

during routine monitoring by Azerbaijan's Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources this month. Altogether, five acts were compiled and five

mandatory instructions given.

Source: News.az (Azerbaijan)

BULGARIA

Sofia to Host Second Environmental International Forum Event

SOFIA

The Environmental International Forum SAVE the Planet – Waste & Water Management, Recycling will be held in Sofia, Bulgaria on April 13-15, 2011.

The 2010 Forum served as a market and networking venue for providers of technology and expertise in waste and water management and recycling.

It included over 250 participants and speakers from Austria, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Norway, Spain, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

The focus country was the

Netherlands.

The event was held under the auspices of the Bulgarian Ministry of Environment and Water and the Energy Efficiency Agency. International partners included the German Water Partnership, the European Water Partnership, the Netherlands Water Partnership, the Netherlands Waste Management Partnership, the European Organization of Strategic Planning, and WADE - World Alliance for

Decentralized Energy.

Bulgarian branch partners included the Bulgarian Association of Recycling, Energy Agency of Plovdiv, Information Group Passive Buildings Bulgaria, Bulgarian Association for Construction Insulation and Waterproofing and the Bulgarian Water Association.

Source: Via Expo Ltd.

CHINA

Oil Spill Threatens Water Quality, Marine Life

BEIJING

China's largest oil spill has

spread to 430 square kilometers, and threatens water quality and marine life. "The oil spill will pose a severe threat to marine animals, and water quality and the sea birds," Huang Yong, deputy bureau chief for the Dalian, China

Maritime Safety Administration, said on July 21. Forty oil-skimming boats and 800 fishing boats are being used to clean up the spill; in addition, a 15-kilometer oil barrier has been set up to stop the slick spreading.

China Central Television had reported that an estimated 1,500 tons of oil had spilled. The oil slick originated when a pipeline at a busy northeastern port exploded.

Source: TodayOnline (Singapore)

GERMANY

Algae Bloom Found in Baltic Sea

SCHWERIN

A blue-green algae bloom covering about 377,000 square kilometers has formed on the surface of the Baltic Sea.

The algae threatens marine life and could pose a risk to humans, according to authorities.

The long heat spell and calm

weather gave cyanobacteria the chance to form the largest algae carpet seen in the sea since 2005.

Germany's Office for Environment, Nature and Geology in the northern state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania sent an observation ship on July 22 to take water measurements. Early indications are that the bloom include the Anabaena and Nodularia types.

"The types are potentially toxic and can cause skin in-

flammation," and swallowing water containing algae could cause gastro-intestinal problems, said Karin Stein, head of the environmental analysis departments.

The carpet of Algae stretches from Finland down to the Curonian spit on the coast of Lithuania, over to the Bay of Pomerania on the coasts of Germany and Poland and across to Rügen, a German island off the coast of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.

Microbiologist Klaus Jürgens of the Institute for Baltic Sea Research in Rostock, said the algae outbreak was a man-made problem.

The northern and central parts of the sea off the coasts of Finland, Sweden, Russia and parts of the Baltic states, were most affected he said.

"The satellite pictures are being analysed at the moment," he said.

Source: The Local (Germany)

GHANA

Tariff Hikes Could Lead to Lay-Offs

ACCRA

Recent increases in water and electricity tariffs of 36 percent and 89 percent, respectively, could result in some industries closing and employees being laid off, according to President of the Association of

Ghana Industries (AGI) Nana Owusu Afari.

At a July 21 press conference, Afari said that in order to save industries from collapsing, "the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission (PURC) [should] consider re-instatement of the tariff adjustments mechanism that has been suspended for the past three

years.

"This mechanism ensures regular increment on gradual basis, instead of leaving a long gap and suddenly imposing high utility rates on consumers."

He said utility service providers should put measures in place to improve illegal

connections, recovery of public institutions' unpaid bills and to reduce corruption and improve power supply. He called for a suspension of the implementation of the adjusted tariffs until a review was completed.

Source: Public Agenda (Ghana)

INDIA

World Bank Loan for North Karnataka Supply

BANGALORE

The World Bank will lend an

additional \$150 million USD for a water supply project in 11 districts of North Karnataka, under an agreement signed last week by the bank, the Indian government and the government of Karnataka

state.

The new funds will help extend the \$172.3 million USD Karnataka Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project (KRWSS) to an additional 4

million people in 1,650 villages, including Beglaum, Bidar, Bijapur, Dharwad, Gadag, Gulbarga, Koppal, Raichur and Uttara Kannada.

The project will be imple-

mented between July 2010 to June 2012.

It has already provided clean

drinking water to about 5 million people.

The \$150 million USD is in

the form of a credit from the International Development Association (IDA), which provides interest-free loans

with 35 years' maturity and a 10-year-grace period.

Source: PTI (India)

INDONESIA

Indonesia to Face Water Crisis

JAKARTA

Indonesia is on the verge of water crisis due to environmental destruction and rapid population growth, according to both water experts and governmental officials.

"Java and Bali will experience shortages of 134 billion and 27.6 billion cubic meters, respectively, of fresh water by 2015," said Sutopo Purwo Nugroho of the Agency for Assessment and Application of Technology (BPPT).

"Sulawesi and East Nusa Tenggara's deficits will stand at 42.5 billion and 4.5 billion cubic meters, respectively."

"Irreversible deforestation has played a huge role in climate change, which will inevitably have an impact on water catchment areas or resources, such as rivers and lakes," Sutopo told attendees at a seminar in Jakarta on July 21.

He said Indonesian forests were disappearing more quickly than any other part of the world.

Meanwhile, the country's

population at a rate of up to 1.53 percent per year.

"The government must increase its water production capacity to accommodate the ever-increasing population of Java," Sutopo said.

According to Dr. Gadis Sri Haryani of the Indonesian Institute of Sciences, noted that because of environmental degradation "...the dry seasons will be longer, which means there won't be enough rainwater absorbed in catchment areas. At the same time, a definite temperature rise will speed up evaporation, and this will seriously reduce the water

supply available in reservoirs, lakes and rivers."

Continued environmental degradation could even lead to deterioration of water resources on islands thought to have abundant water resources, like Kalimantan and Sumatra.

An official with state-owned water company PDAM said coal mining along the Tabalong River along with deforestation had seriously damaged the river basin and polluted its water.

Source: Jakarta Post (Indonesia)

ISRAEL

Erdan Questions Water Authority Campaign

TEL AVIV

Environmental Protection Minister Gilad Erdan called into question the Water Authority's new ad campaign, which suggests that water

conservation will only be necessary for another three years until new desalination plants were completed.

In a letter to National Infrastructures Minister Uzi Landau and Water Authority head Professor Uri Shani, Erdan said the message of the campaign was not in line with "sustainable" living; the

term "is not a rude word for times of crisis only, but a way of life that takes into account natural resources and does not destroy them," he said.

Erdan said water conservation should be emphasized all the time.

For its part, the authority said, "The Water Authority

has invested and will continue to invest in education and PR campaigns about wise use of water all the time. Since the middle of 2008, a campaign has been running along the same lines that the minister presented, under the banner 'Israel is drying out.' And in fact, the Israeli public reduced its water consumption by 20 percent.

“During the current PR campaign, the Water Authority is continuing the exact same message and is continuing to ask the public to conserve. At the same time, the Water Authority sees as its responsibility to report to the public what steps it is taking in parallel to the public’s efforts to conserve water: erecting essential desalination plants that will be completed within three years and will remove the danger of Lake Kinneret drying up; rehabilitating polluted wells; drilling new wells; increased pumping; and more.”

“The campaign does not permit the destruction [of the Kinneret], but rather reflects to the public the situation of the water economy and even specifically points out: In three years ‘the Kinneret will emerge from the danger of drying out,’ but until then, and after then, the public must continue to conserve,” it said.

Source: The Jerusalem Post (Israel)

FoEME Urges Closure of Jordan Baptism Site

TEL AVIV

Environmental group Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME) urged the Israeli government to close down a baptism site at the lower Jordan River until water quality standards for tourists and pilgrims were met.

“...the lower Jordan River has long suffered from severe mismanagement,” the group said in a statement.

It said Israel, Syria and Jordan were diverting 98 percent of its water and were discharging untreated sewage, agricultural run-off, saline water and fishpond effluent into the river, causing serious health risks.

FoEME’s Israel Director Gidon Bromberg also accused the Tourism Ministry and Nature and Parks Authority

of attempting to lower health standards to keep the baptism site open.

The Health Ministry said no decision had yet been made about closure, because results of samples taken by the Nature and Parks Authority had not yet come back. It said it would not change existing guidelines. The environmental group called on Israel and Jordan to work on rehabilitating the river.

Source: Ha’aretz (Israel)

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German, Israeli Ministries Launch Research Project

GREIFENBERG

The German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the Israeli Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) launched a \$1.9 million USD research project involving Dresden Technical

University, the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel and German membrane and ultrafiltration company inge wassertechnologies AG.

The project aims to find ways to reduce fouling and scaling in membranes, especially in treating municipal wastewater, and to make the plants using Multiple Integrated Membrane System (MIMS) more efficient in the long term.

According to estimates, the cost of desalinating secondary wastewater is only about a third of the cost of seawater desalination, as long as the strain placed on the membranes by the wastewater does not lead to significantly higher fouling rates in both the ultrafiltration and RO (reverse osmosis) membranes.

The project will conduct tests in the lab and in a water treatment plant in Israel near Beer Sheva.

Source: inge AG

New Penalties for Water Theft

AMMAN

People found guilty of water theft face new penalties including jail and fines under new amendments to the penal code that went into effect on July 1, according to Minister of Water and Irrigation Mohammad Najjar.

A new amendment to Penal Code No. 16, Article 456 was cancelled and replaced with a new one, Paragraph B, stipulating that those found guilty of stealing water from main or domestic networks, sabotaging such networks, or illegally pumping or tampering with water meters will be imprisoned for three to 12 months and fined \$140 USD to \$700 USD.

If the crime is repeated, violators will be imprisoned between four and 24 months and fined \$280 USD to \$1,400 USD.

“These people should end their violations and rectify their situation because there are stricter regulations now that lead to jail and we will be serious about enforcing them,” Najjar said.

He added that an ongoing field study carried out by three companies in Amman to measure water loss in the capital “...indicated that water loss is highest in the south of Amman because some people illegally pump water from water networks to irrigate their crops.”

“There are nine areas in south Amman where water loss is the highest, estimated at 20

JORDAN

percent out of the total water loss in Amman of 35 percent. Faulty meters and pipes will be fixed, and violations will be prosecuted," he said.

The ministry is launching a

campaign in August to end all violations on water networks, he said.

"If the ministry's teams face resistance or violence from violators it will seek help from

security authorities," he said.

Najjar also warned that "Some people take advantage of the hot weather during summer and fill up their tanks from water sources that are

not monitored by authorities or designated for irrigation and sell the water to people, which causes health problems."

Source: Jordan Times

Progress Report on Nam Theun Project Notes Environmental Challenges

VIENTIANE

As Laos begins to see its first revenues from the Nam Theun 2 hydropower plant, the country still faces challenges in terms of safeguarding natural resources, according to a project update report by the World

Bank and Asian Development Bank, which provided funding for the project.

The report noted that the project's environment protection and social development program in Nakai Plateau, Nam Theun and Xe Bang Fai Downstream Areas and the NT2 Watershed were overcoming some obstacles to implementation.

However, the report warned

that pressure on natural resources has been growing as a result of local population growth as well as of extraction of timber, mineral and fish resources by commercial interests.

It said that downstream on the Xe Bang Fai River, the report said most of the impacts of increased water flow had been anticipated and mitigation measures put in place.

A monitoring program is continuing to watch for unanticipated impacts downstream.

Laos received its first revenues of \$600,000 USD in June from sales of electricity to Thailand.

Source: International Water Power and Dam Construction

LAOS

New Study Needed on Water Supply, Demand

KLANG

The federal government should carry out a new study on water supply and demand in the country, according to Klang MP Charles Santiago.

Santiago said reports produced by the Malaysia Water Association and the National

Water Resources Study (NWRS) had failed to take into account climate change, which had caused floods and droughts at some locations.

"The El Nino phenomenon we encountered in 1998 is one good example. Take the [\$2.8 billion USD] Kelau Dam project in Pahang. Climate change was not taken into consideration when the government mooted the project. There is plenty of downpour

there now but due to climate change, the wind can just blow and shift the rain clouds to other areas. That will make the dam useless," he said.

With 97 percent of Malaysia's water resources coming from rivers and streams, the government should work on diversifying water resources, he said. "Can you imagine what will happen if it doesn't rain much anymore and our rivers get polluted? That will

cause a major water crisis," he said.

Santiago was commenting on the back-and-forth currently taking place between Selangor Menteri Besar (Chief Minister) Khalid Ibrahim and Energy, Green Technology and Water Deputy Minister Noriah Kasnon on Klang Valley water issues.

Source: Free Malaysia Today

MALAYSIA

POLAND

128 Polish Districts Susceptible to Drought

WARSAW

One hundred twenty-eight dis-

tricts in Poland are vulnerable to drought this summer, according to the Institute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation (IUNG).

The institute issued a statement warning of the potential for drought between May 10 and July 10.

Warnings of drought have

been issued for 128 districts, mainly in the western provinces of Wielkopolska, Western Pomerania and Lubusz.

Source: PAP (Poland)

ROMANIA

Gabriel Resources Resurrects Rosia Montana Mining Project

TORONTO, ON

Canada's Gabriel Resources resurrected a cyanide-based gold mining project in Rosia Montana that was declared illegal and is opposed by many Romanians.

Toronto-registered Gabriel Resources owns 80 percent of the stakes in the Rosia Montana Gold Corporation (RMGC), while Romanian state-owned Minvest Deva holds most of the remaining shares.

The project has faced opposition since 2002. One reason is that it would involve the resettlement of all villagers from Rosia. The most pressing

concern is that the cyanide used to extract the gold could pollute land and water in the area, according to a study by the Romanian Academy. The Academy has advised against the project.

The RMGC, for its part, claims the project will stop pollution and protect the environment. The firm said it would clear existing pollution and clean up everything once

extraction is completed.

A resolution voted by the European Parliament in May asked for a complete ban on cyanide-based mining. The EU Water Framework Directive said "cyanide mining ... runs the risk of causing enormous cross-border damage, the cost of which is usually not met by the responsible operating companies."

Source: IPS

RWANDA

75 Percent of Rwandans Have Access to Clean Water

KIGALI

Seventy-five percent of Rwandans have full access to clean water, according to Infrastructure Minister Vincent Karega.

"Before 2003, only 4 percent

had access to electricity, but now it is 15 percent, while currently, 75 percent of Rwandans have access to clean water," Karega said.

He said the ministry aims to have the entire population accessing clean water from as close to home as possible by 2015.

He called on the Rwanda Electricity Cooperation and

Rwanda Water and Sanitation Cooperation (RECO/RWASCO) to expedite current projects so additional projects can be financed to meet this goal.

RECO/RWASCO management said the country still has a deficit of 20,000 cubic meters of water per day.

Karega was speaking during a visit to the \$24.7 million USD

Nzove Water Treatment Plant in Nyarugenege District.

Director General of RECO/RWASCO Yves Muyange said that by December 2010, the plant will double production to 30,000 cubic meters per day.

Source: The New Times (Rwanda)

New Reservoir to Ease Shortages in Nyarugenge District

KIGALI

The Rwanda Water and Sanitary Corporation commis-

sioned a new water reservoir that will ease water shortages in the Nyakabanda, Kigali, Nyamirambo and Mageragere sectors in Nyarugenge District.

Construction of the reservoir cost \$165,000 USD.

Director of Water at the Rwanda Electricity Corporation and Rwanda Water and Sanitary Corporation (RECO-RWASCO) Theoneste Minani said construction was completed in five months.

“We urge residents of the area

to maintain this water tank because it’s very expensive to construct and the more you protect it, the more it will be of benefit to you” Minani said.

Source: The New Times (Rwanda)

Egypt Dismisses Reports of Nile Basin Crisis

KAMPALA

Egypt dismissed reports of a crisis among Nile Basin

countries over the sharing of River Nile.

Egyptian Ambassador to Uganda Sabry Magdy Sabry said his country was committed to work for Nile Basin Initiative goals through dialogue

and cooperation.

He said there was no need for international arbitration in the Nile Basin dispute.

Ugandan Foreign Affairs Minister Sam Kutesa said Egypt

and Uganda were bound together inseparably by the Nile and hoped all parties would work to resolve all outstanding issues.

Source: New Vision (Uganda)

UGANDA

Local Authorities in Mashonaland West Dump Raw Sewage Into Water Bodies

HARARE

Most local authorities in Mashonaland West Province discharge their raw sewage into major rivers and dams, posing a threat to the environment, according to the province’s Environmental Management Agency (EMA).

The agency said it will be forced to prosecute the local authorities to enforce compliance with environmental laws.

For their part, the local councils said the sewage infrastructure in their areas is dilapidated and beyond repair.

A recent inspection by the environmental watchdog found that sewerage treatment facilities in Kadoma, Chegutu, Kariba, Karoi and Chinhoyi were operating without licenses.

In Kariba, the Nyamhunga sewage pond near Lake Kariba has not been de-sludged for eight years; its water jets are no longer functioning and raw sewage is being discharged directly into the lake, according to the agency.

In Kadoma, raw effluent from Rimuka and Visser treatment plants is being discharged into Hoffman Dam and Mshuma Stream. In Chegutu, raw sewage is being directly released into Mupfure River from the decommissioned Heroes ponds.

EMA Mashonaland West provincial environmental quality officer Simbiso Pedzisai said local authorities would be issued orders to address the problem this week.

“Some of the local authorities are not that bad but attention is lacking in making sure that the problems, which could cause an environmental hazard are attended to,” she said.

Source: The Herald (Zimbabwe)

ZIMBABWE