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World Water Day: CWS Looks at Moldova

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World Water Day: Conference examines Moldova water supply issues

CHISINAU, MOLDOVA, March 22, 2011--Church World Service is joining today's global recognition of World Water Day (http://www.unwater.org/worldwaterday/download/wwd2011_maineventprogramme.pdf) with co-sponsorship of a major conference today in Chisinau, Moldova, Implementation of the Human Right to Water and Sanitation in Moldova, which will focus on the international Protocol on Water and Health.

"Access to clean water is one of the main problems facing the Moldovan population," says Dr. Vitali Vorona, CWS regional representative for Europe, who will present on CWS work at the conference.

Moldova's water supply and sewerage systems have degraded to the point that "up to 45 percent of the population uses drinking water that does not comply with sanitary standards," according to Vorona.

The Protocol on Water and Health (http://www.unece.org/env/water/text/text_protocol.htm), which took effect in 2005, is the first international agreement of its kind adopted specifically to attain adequate safe drinking water and sanitation for everyone in the European region. It is the first legally binding, multilateral agreement in the region linking sustainable water management and health protection.

With consumption of contaminated water recognized as a major cause of disease and death in Moldova, especially for young children, sustainable management of the country's water resources is a key issue. Church World Service implements water and sanitation projects in Moldova in cooperation with Women in Europe for the Common Future (WECF), the East Foundation and local partners.

To alleviate problems caused by water scarcity in a world where more than a billion people lack clean water, and more than 2.1 million people, mostly children, die each year from waterborne disease, Church World Service assists communities in obtaining and managing their own safe water supplies and watershed sources.

The global humanitarian agency's water projects (http://www.churchworldservice.org/site/PageServer?pagename=action_what_water_main) in developing countries improve health, hygiene and sanitation and help provide security through efficient irrigation, use of under-utilized natural water resources like groundwater, rain harvests, rivers, lakes, and lowland collections. They also help insure sustainability by improving water management in communities that suffer chronic drought and/or flooding. In addition, the projects support peaceful sharing of water resources to reduce conflict in communities where water resources are scarce.

Today's Moldova water conference features a panel of water experts who will examine a broad range of theoretical and practical problems related to the human right to water and sanitation in Moldova and provide a forum for water professionals, policy makers and researchers to exchange ideas and experiences.

"This gathering of stakeholders will play an important role in fostering partnerships between key agencies engaged in water supply and sanitation in



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Moldova and will create a broad platform for capacity building," Vorona says.

In addition to Vorona, speakers include Mahai Magdie, deputy minister, Moldova Ministry of Health; Ion Salaru, Moldova Ministry of Health; Tamara Guvir, Moldova Ministry of Environment; Sascha Gabizon, executive director, WECF; Dr. Anke Stock, WECF; Dana Craciunescu, senior banker, BERD; and Rodica Iordanov, Milieukontakt.

Church World Service and Women in Europe for the Common Future organized the conference in collaboration with other international and local stakeholders.

For further information on other CWS water-related work, see the March issue of SERVICE, CWS's e-zine:

http://www.churchworldservice.org/site/MessageViewer?em_id=7701.0&dly_id=10461

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