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UNIS/INF/219
31 July 2007

ICPDR-Led Project Nominated for International Award

VIENNA, 31 July (UN Information Service) -- A groundbreaking cooperation on integrated river basin management, led by the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) has been nominated as a finalist in the prestigious Eur 189,000 International Thies Riverprize. The cooperation in the Danube River Basin was chosen as a finalist for its collaborative approach to improve water quality.

The winners of the International Thies Riverprize will be announced at a special ceremony on Tuesday, 4 September 2007 during the 10th International Riversymposium and Environmental Flows Conference in Brisbane, Australia, from 3 to 6 September. The International Thies Riverprize is a partnership between the International River Foundation (IRF) and Riverfestival.

The Danube River Basin, which covers nearly 10 per cent of Europe, has a diverse economic and historic past. The last 100 years have seen parts of the Danube River Basin ravaged with environmental problems including toxic waste pollution, destructive farming practices and the loss of natural river stretches. On the other hand, some of the most well preserved areas can still be found here – such as the Danube Delta.

“The ultimate goal of ICPDR is to see the rational use of water within the Danube Basin and minimize any negative impact the 2780-km long Danube may have on the Black Sea,” said Philip Weller, Executive Secretary, ICPDR. “Though not all countries of the Danube River Basin are members of the European Union - all have agreed to cooperate to meet strict EU water protection directives, showing their commitment to applying integrated river basin management. Much has been achieved such as the establishment of the water monitoring network and the transboundary warning system in the case of pollution accidents. ICPDR has been active for the Danube and its people for the last 15 years.”

Riversymposium Chair Professor Paul Greenfield added that the cooperation in the Danube River Basin exemplifies the spirit of the International Thies Riverprize: “Many countries are facing a water crisis and now, more than ever, it is important for the International Thies Riverprize to reward and promote best practice water management. All people involved in the ICPDR should feel proud that their efforts have been recognized in this way.”

Three other government and community groups from Canada, China and New Zealand have been nominated as finalists for the Australian prize for their work in tackling pollution, water quality, erosion and flooding.

More information on the International Thies Riverprizes can be found at www.riversymposium.com.

Additional information and images are available upon request.

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