



Following the 1992 UN General Assembly Resolution, World Water Day is observed on 22 March each year. **“Waters and Disasters”**, this year’s theme was debated at the Romanian Parliament House in a symposium chaired by Ms. Speranta Ianculescu, Minister of Environment and Water Management. The event, co-hosted by the Ministry and the National Company “Romanian Waters”, focused on Romania’s water management and water-related disasters. Participants heard messages from Mr. Ion Iliescu, President of Romania, Mr. Adrian Nastase, Prime Minister, Mr. Nicolae Vacaroiu, Senate President, and Mr. Michael Jarraud, Secretary General of the World Meteorological Organization.



Symposium at the Romanian Parliament House

The crucial role played by the UN both in hazards effect mitigation, as well as in prevention and early warning was highlighted in the message from Ms. Soknan Han Jung, UN Resident Coordinator/ UNDP Resident Representative, conveyed by Mr. Thore Hansen, UNDP Deputy Representative. Mr. Hansen also presented an overview of UNDP’s interventions in water governance in Romania and around the world. Through the 40 multi-stakeholders consultations carried out in six regions of the world under the “Dialogue on Effective Water Governance”, UNDP succeeded in putting water governance on the agenda of decision makers. Recognizing that the water crisis is mainly a crisis of governance, UNDP was the lead author of the recently published World Water Development Report. In Romania, UNDP supports the Black Sea Commission and also implements Black Sea Environment Programme, a regional best practice of ecosystem rehabilitation. When Romania had a major cyanide spill in the Tisa river in 2000, UNDP timely supported the Government with “Emergency Preparedness for Hazardous Waste Spills in International Inland Waterways of NW Romania”, a project that contributed to reduce further accident risks and mitigate damages.

Other topics presented by experts included: the influence of forest and agriculture management on disaster occurrence; new approaches on water management and sustainable development based on the EU legislation; preventive measures based on a regional cooperation model for Tisa River; law enforcement in high-risk regions; legal and institutional framework for hazardous water pollution mitigation.

The importance of water as a “friend” as well as an “enemy” was highlighted. The friendly waters are central to human survival and sustainable development, while the others are causing over 75% of all natural disasters, followed by significant losses of lives and economic damage. Therefore, participants at the seminar stressed the urgency to put in place a national integrated meteorological system and the early warning system for floods and hazardous waste spills. These systems will allow managing waters in an integrated approach, and will enhance national capacity and preparedness to respond effectively to water-related disasters.

For more information please contact UNDP Romania Environment Section at environment@undp.ro



Water as a “friend”, as well as an “enemy” in Romania