

Kenya says newly discovered aquifer could supply water for 70 years

Published: Sept. 11, 2013 at 6:59 PM

NAIROBI, Kenya, Sept. 11 (UPI) --

NAIROBI, Kenya, Sept. 11 (UPI) -- Kenya's government says a huge water source has been discovered in the arid northern Turkana region that could supply the country for 70 years.

The confirmation of two aquifers is significant for the drought-hit region, Kenyan Environment Minister Judi Wakhungu said in a Twitter posting.

"This newly found wealth of water opens a door to a more prosperous future for the people of Turkana and the nation as a whole," she later told a meeting of the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Satellites and radar were used to find the aquifers in the Turkana Basin and the Lotikipi Basin, with test drilling confirming the presence of water beneath the arid earth, the BBC reported Wednesday.

Turkana, one of the hottest, driest and poorest parts of Kenya, suffered a drought last year that was particularly hard on the region's nomadic herders.

The aquifers are estimated to contain around 325 billion cubic yards of water; Kenya currently uses about 4 billion cubic yards a year, Wakhungu said.

"We must now work to further explore these resources responsibly and safeguard them for future generations," she said.

© 2013 United Press International, Inc. All Rights Reserved.