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Massive reserves of underground water found in northern Kenya

By Catholic Online (NEWS CONSORTIUM)
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It's a miracle for troubled Kenya. In a parched nation where water is precious and desperately needed, scientists have now discovered massive underground water supplies in the north. The find could very well improve the lives of Kenyans for many generations to come, as well as stop constant bickering between local groups fighting over precious natural resources.

LOS ANGELES, CA (Catholic Online) - "Two aquifers ... were identified using advanced satellite exploration technology," the United Nations' cultural agency, UNESCO, said in a statement. The U.N. says it has identified five aquifers in arid Turkana, two of which have been verified.

"Their existence was then confirmed by drilling conducted recently by UNESCO, but there is need for further studies to adequately quantify the reserves and to assess the quality of the water," UNESCO said.

Three more aquifers have been discovered in the same area, but have not been confirmed by drilling and will need further assessment, UNESCO said.

The discovery of the aquifers is being heralded as being crucial for Kenya. With a population of 41 million people, at least 17 million Kenyans lack access to safe water. More than half the population of Kenya, about 28 million, lacks adequate sanitation.

"The news about these water reserves comes at a time when reliable water supplies are highly needed," Judi Wakhungu, the nation's cabinet secretary for the environment, water and natural resources says.

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

The underground resources will also promote agriculture in the region, which has long suffered from desert-like conditions. Kenya faces water insecurity worsened by erratic rainfall patterns, triggering

battles for natural resources among various communities.

Deadly cattle raids and conflicts over grazing land, resulting in violence and death among local tribesmen are endemic to the area.

Underground water supplies will also provide irrigation and livestock needs, drinking water and help discourage malnutrition in the region.

The project between UNESCO and the Kenyan government was funded by Japan. Kenya will conduct more studies to determine the quantity and the quality of the water.

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