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## **Moldova Takes over the Presidency of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR)**

VIENNA, 18 January (UN Information Service) -- The Republic of Moldova is taking over today the Presidency of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) for the year 2006.

Mr. Constantin Mihaelescu, Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Moldova, will serve as President during this year and will guide the activities of the ICPDR. "During my presidency I am committed to promote development which meets the hopes of the people and the needs of nature", said Mr. Mihaelescu. He hopes to emphasize the essential role of the ICPDR as a forum for the resolution of conflicts related to water management – including for the Danube Delta where controversial navigation projects have created tensions between neighboring countries.

Moldova is particularly interested to ensure that there is stronger integration of downstream countries in the work of the ICPDR and to utilize the Presidency as a way of demonstrating to the people of Moldova the benefits of intensified cooperation with other Danube countries. "I as the President will work hard to ensure that non-EU countries such as Serbia-Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Moldova and Ukraine are fully engaged in the Danube cooperation in the frame of the ICPDR," emphasized Mihaelescu.

Despite the different political situations in traditional and new EU Member States, applicant countries and other European countries, all of the Danube Basin Countries are committed to implement the EU Water Framework Directive. Water managers and experts throughout the river basin are working toward achieving "good water quality by 2015" as required by the Directive and the coming year will be essential in creating the Danube River Basin Management Plan that must be completed by 2009.

Michaelescu expressed further interest to support the work needed under the Water Framework Directive to strengthen cooperation in sub-basin rivers including along the Prut River shared between Moldova, Romania and Ukraine. Danube Day celebrations on June 29, 2006 will focus on this region.

The ICPDR Presidency rotates annually among the Contracting Parties of the Danube River Protection Convention. Moldova follows Hungary and will be succeeded by Romania in 2007.

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