Message

From: Martin, Peter G [MartinPG@state.gov]
Sent: 3/30/2017 6:02:54 PM
To: Kasman, Mark [Kasman.Mark@epa.gov]
CC: Sapp, Emmett E [SappEE@state.gov]
Subject: FW: Vatican Makes Waves on World Water Day

Mark -
FYI - Will also forward you news from earlier today that you may have already seen.
Peter

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Subject: Vatican Makes Waves on World Water Day

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Action Office:	POL_ECON, PAS

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Reference:	A) 15 VATICAN 64 B) 15 VATICAN 60 C) 15 VATICAN 52
Subject:	Vatican Makes Waves on World Water Day

1. (U) **Key Points**:

- Pope Francis marked World Water Day by sponsoring "Watershed" – the first in a series of activities to raise consciousness about water issues, including clean water for at-risk populations.
- Policy makers and academics, together with students, artists, and business leaders from around the world attended the event.
- FM Archbishop Gallagher said access to clean water is a universal right and not a tool for political control.
- The next steps of the program are to enlarge and expand Watershed with greater participation of national governments and local governmental authorities.

- These efforts are part of the Holy See's work to maintain momentum on environmental issues in the wake of the publication of *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis's encyclical on the environment and human development (reftels).

Water Day

2. (U) To mark World Water Day 2017, Pope Francis led a global conversation on an initiative called "Watershed" –co-sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Culture and the environmental NGO, Club of Rome. Speaking to visitors and pilgrims during his weekly General Audience March 22, Francis told conference participants that the meeting represented "yet another stage in the joint commitment of various institutions to raising consciousness about the need to protect water as a treasure belonging to everyone, mindful too of its cultural and religious significance." The pope urged the implementation of educational programs for children and young people on water conservation and management.

First in a Series

3. (U) Watershed is the first in a series of programs and activities planned for the next five years. It consists of four main efforts:

1. a Vatican-hosted conference of NGOs and others with a stake in the global water crisis;
2. a continuing global social media conversation among the public that encourages people to share compelling stories about their water values via #MyWaterStory;
3. an expert workshop that brings together different perspectives and objectives concerning water issues; and
4. a sensory and virtual reality experience inside "The Miracle Molecule," a larger-than-life model of an H2O molecule that brings water risks to life. Launched in Rome for the week beginning March 20, it will become a traveling exhibit.

U.S. Participation

4. (SBU) Some 200 policy makers and academics attended the event, together with students, artists, business leaders and men and women from the most at-risk populations for clean water shortages. A number of Americans participated in the conference, including J. Carl Ganter from Michigan-based Circle of Blue and Yusuf Nessary of the NGO Zam Zam Water. Nessary said that as a Muslim American, he was particularly proud to be participating in the Vatican conference. Matt Damon, actor and co-founder of Water.org, made a video appearance as well. During opening remarks, Holy See FM Archbishop Paul Gallagher declared that access to clean water was a "fundamental, essential, universal right of all human beings," and "not simply a commodity or a tool for social and political control." Cardinal Peter Turkson, the Holy See's lead on environmental affairs, explained to delegates that the Church's stance that access to water is a universal right flows from Catholic teachings on peaceful coexistence and the dignity of the individual.

UN Speech

5. (U) Similar messaging came from the Holy See's representative at the UN, Archbishop Bernardito Auza, at a meeting on sustainable development goals in New York. Archbishop Auza called on all nations to recognize the responsibility to care for and share water, because it is a life-sustaining resource. He cited Pope Francis's 2014 address to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome, advising the staff that "water is not free" and that its protection is vital to prevent war. "Thus, rather than causing conflict," the Archbishop continued, "the need for water sharing should be an opportunity for cross-border cooperation and greater efforts toward adopting binding instruments to ensure stable and predictable transnational relations." He said nongovernmental organizations and individuals must assume responsibility to preserve clean water for present and future generations to preserve peace and ensure that the earth is a "more habitable and fraternal place, where no one is left behind and all are able to eat, drink, live healthy lives and grow in accordance with their dignity."

Targeting Governments

6. (SBU) Anna Kurdziel of the Pontifical Council for Culture told us that the Holy See saw the Vatican-based events as only the beginning of an ongoing effort to raise consciousness about water issues. The next steps are to enlarge and expand Watershed with greater participation of national governments and local governmental authorities. She reported that the Rockefeller Foundation has expressed interest in working with the Holy See to move the project forward.

Comment: Continuing Momentum

7. (SBU) Hosting the Watershed conference and pushing the issue at the UN is another step in the continuing efforts of the Holy See to maintain momentum on environmental issues in the wake of the publication of *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis's groundbreaking encyclical on the environment and human development (reftels).

Signature:	BONO

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