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Press Release from the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development: Conference on the theme “The management of a common good: access to drinkable water for all” (8 November 2018, Pontifical Urbaniana University)

The Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, in collaboration with the Embassies of France, Italy, Monaco and the United States to the Holy See, is promoting an international conference on the theme “The management of a common good: access to drinkable water for all” to be held on 8 November 2018 at the Pontifical Urbaniana University, which will sponsor the event.

The meeting is intended to reaffirm the absolute and urgent need for general commitment to ensure that access to drinkable water is guaranteed to all, in any situation, and to express the Church’s solicitude towards the suffering and hardship of these who are excluded from access to this asset which is fundamental for life, and to services connected to it. Indeed, as the Holy Father reiterated in his Message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation in 2018, “access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right”. In addition, it is one of the issues highlighted in the first chapter of the Encyclical *Laudato si’*, one of the sustainable development goals set by the United Nations to be achieved by 2030, as well as a crucial theme for the Pan-Amazon Region to which the next special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, to be held in October 2019, will be dedicated.

Through a multidisciplinary approach involving representatives of ecclesial and non-ecclesial institutions, experts in environmental and social sciences, representatives of the academic world, and leaders of the great religions, the conference will be attended by Cardinal Peter K.A. Turkson, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, and the secretary of the Dicastery, Msgr. Bruno-Marie Duffé. The speakers will include: Professor Luca Pandolfi, lecturer at the Pontifical Urbaniana University; Professor Léo Heller, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation; Mr. Frédéric Van Heems, director general of Veolia Eau France; Dr. Milagros Couchoud, president of the Mediterranean Water Institute; and Mr. Jean-François Donzier, general secretary of the International Network of Basin Organizations. In addition, representatives of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) and of the Italian Hindu Union will also attend.

Testimonies from the countries that suffer most from a lack of drinkable water will demonstrate the importance of accountability of all actors in the field, and coordination between local, national and international governance

agencies. The theme will also be treated from the point of view of international law, pollution and implications in the healthcare field and for healthcare structures in developing countries.
