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Californian Prodigy, Utilities Win Stockholm Junior and Industry Water Prizes

Stockholm – California faces increasing water shortages, but environmental innovation is no short supply. Orange County Water District and Orange County Sanitation District were the second from California to be recognized at the World Water Week in Stockholm, where they received the prestigious Stockholm Industry Water Award a day after California high student Joyce Chai, won the Stockholm Junior Water Prize.

The Orange County Water District and the Orange County Sanitation District received the award for their pioneering work to jointly develop the Groundwater Replenishment (GWR) system, the world's largest water purification plant for groundwater recharge. GWR will help supply the county's 2.3 million current residents and provide enough water to meet the needs of an additional 500 000 people without diminishing groundwater resources for future generations.

Joyce Chai, 17, from Palos Verdes Peninsula High School in Rolling Hills Estates received the Stockholm Junior Water Prize from the hands of H.R.H. Crown Princess Victoria. Ms. Chai received prize a USD 5,000 scholarship for her project "Modelling the Toxic Effects of Silver Nanoparticles under Varying Environmental Conditions." Her research discovered that silver nanoparticles, a micropollutant commonly used in industry, repudiated the assertion that they are less environmentally hazardous than toxic silver ions.

The Stockholm Junior Water Prize is presented each year to high-school age students for outstanding water-related projects. The international honour is given to an individual or group who, like their 30 co-competitors, has been awarded the top prize among national competitions. 31 countries participated at the international final in Stockholm in 2008.

Alexey Shinkarev, Russian Federation, and the Sri Lankan team of R.D. Dasun Thakshala Siriwardana, Sandun Gayath, Sameera Dissanayaka and A. Sujith Madushan Silva received honourable mention.

The Stockholm Industry Water Award honours and encourages business sector contributions to sustainable development in the water sector and is presented each August at the World Water Week in Stockholm. It was established in 2000 by the Stockholm Water Foundation in collaboration with the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

The World Water Week in Stockholm is the leading annual global meeting place for capacity-building, partnership-building and follow-up on the implementation of international processes and programmes in water and development. The theme of the week in 2008 is Progress and Prospects on Water: For a Clean and Healthy World with Special Focus on Sanitation. The World Water Week continues at the Stockholm International Fairs and Conference Centre until Saturday, August 23.

High-resolution photos for press are available after 22.00 Central European Time at www.worldwaterweek.org.

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