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PRESS RELEASE

angle: South African Sector Tsunami Support

SA Water Sector Response to Sri Lanka and the Maldives

Following the tsunami/earthquake disaster in the Indian Ocean on 26th December 2004, a South African delegation led by the Minister of Health Dr Manto Tshabalala-Msimang and Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry Ms Buyelwa Sonjica attended an international donor conference to aid victims of the Tsunami in Indonesia.

On their return the South African delegation briefed the Inter-Ministerial Committee led by Minister of Provincial and Local Government Mr Sydney Mufamadi, Cabinet, various stakeholders as well as the media on the situation in the affected regions of the Pacific Rim countries.

The South African Cabinet Committee on Disaster Management (IMC) decided that assistance to the affected countries should be considered. South Africa's strong experience in **Reconstruction and Development**, as well as **Health issues**, gave effect to the IMC's request for a **partnership approach** when considering possible assistance to tsunami-affected countries. Ms. Buyelwa Sonjica, MP, Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry, convened a number of the major role players from the South African Water Sector in January 2005. The Public and Private sectors, as well as Civil Society responded very positively.

The proposed aid contemplated, mainly comprises the voluntary donation of the expertise and time of people with particular skills to these affected countries. Specific conditions for assistance were tabled by the IMC and from the six countries chosen initially, the Water Sector linked up officially with the relevant government components in the **Maldives and Sri Lanka**.

The selected reconnaissance teams for the Maldives and Sri Lanka will report back on their findings at a proposed event on 14 September 2005 at the CSIR International Convention Centre from 14h30 – 16h30. All interested parties are welcome to register with Elanda Botes, elanda@dwaf.gov.za or 012- 336 7851

Building on the strong Afro-Asian Collaboration, a Sri Lanka delegation will also form part of the 14 September audience where disaster response in the Water Sector will be discussed and debated.