

World Water Council

PRESS RELEASE

WWC mobilizes competencies of its members

Marseilles, France – January 6, 2005 - On December 26, an earthquake measuring 9.0 on the Richter scale with its epicenter located at the western end of Indonesia's Sumatra Island struck the south of Asia. It was the world's most powerful earthquake in more than 40 years. It unleashed a series of tsunamis that crashed into coastal towns, fishing villages and tourist resorts from Sri Lanka to India, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia. The tsunamis killed over 150,000 people, leaving hundreds of thousands injured and homeless.

"The hearts of the officers, members and staff of the Council go out to the families of the thousands who have lost their lives and millions whose living conditions are imperiled by the disastrous event" said William J. Cosgrove, President of the World Water Council. The day after the tsunami happened, Cosgrove wrote to the heads of the UN agencies responsible for water grouped under UN-Water reminding them of the diverse resources available within the Council membership, and asked to be informed as quickly as possible as to how the Council's members may contribute to alleviating the situation in the medium term. "While emergency assistance is necessary, mid term support for reconstruction is equally important," Cosgrove highlighted.

Loïc Fauchon, Vice-President of the Council, long a proponent of greater Council involvement in cases of humanitarian disasters, has agreed to be the Council's focal point for our efforts. Already several Council members, amongst which the International Water Management Institute, the Seine-Normandie Water Agency, Suez and the Marseilles Water Supply Company have begun action on both emergency assistance and reconstruction issues. On the emergency side, personnel and equipment have been sent to the devastated areas, under the coordination of various governments, contributions to NGOs actions are being made and local operations in Asia have also proposed means to the competent authorities in the countries. Mr. Fauchon would be pleased to hear of activities being undertaken by other Council members to respond to this disaster.

The Council is currently conducting a reflection on the activities that could be coordinated in the perspective of the 4th World Water Forum to take place in 2006 in Mexico. On this occasion, water in emergency situations should feature high on the agenda. In the meantime, those who have not yet contributed may make personal or corporate donations to one of the many international relief efforts listed under "useful links" on our website.

* * *

PRESS CONTACT:

Stéphanie Porro, s.porro@worldwatercouncil.org

Phone: +33 (0)4 91 99 41 00