Media Release

Five government ministers from Angola, Namibia and South Africa, will participate in an extraordinary Ministerial Conference of the Benguela Current Commission on March 25.

The ministers, who are responsible for the management of marine industry, marine transport and the marine environment in their respective countries, will discuss the progress of the Benguela Current Commission.

The Commission was established by the three countries to help them restore, maintain and conserve the biological integrity of the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem (BCLME), which stretches from Port Elizabeth in the south to the Angolan province of Cabinda in the north. The BCLME supports vitally important economic activities, such as fishing, mining and oil and gas production and is considered to be one of the most productive ecosystems in the world.

At Friday’s Ministerial Conference, Edna Molewa, Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs in South Africa (who is chairperson of the Benguela Current Commission), will meet with her ministerial counterparts from Angola and Namibia, namely:

- Hon. Syanga Kivula Samuel Abilio, Deputy Minister of Petroleum, ANGOLA
- Hon. Anibal Octavio Da Silva, Deputy Minister of Petroleum, ANGOLA
- Hon. Victoria de Barros Neto, Secretary of State for Fisheries, ANGOLA
- Bernard Esau, Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources, NAMIBIA

Although the meeting will largely deal with matters of institutional capacity building, the ministers are also expected to hear about progress towards a legally binding multilateral convention that will formalise and entrench the Benguela Current Commission. The three countries are hoping to ratify the convention in 2012. In doing so, they will recognise the unique character of the BCLME and commit themselves to taking joint responsibility for its sustainable management. The Ministerial Conference is to be held at the Stellenbosch Lodge, Country Hotel and Conference Centre on March 25.