Media Release

The ministers responsible for the management of marine industries and the marine environment in South Africa, Namibia and Angola will come together in Cape Town on Thursday 2 September, for the Second Ministerial Conference of the Benguela Current Commission.

The Benguela Current Commission (BCC) promotes the optimal and sustainable utilisation of the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem (BCLME), the coastal area that stretches from Port Elizabeth in South Africa, to northern Angola.

The Benguela Current Commission, which was established in 2007, has a mandate from the three countries to work towards restoring, maintaining and conserving the biological integrity of the BCLME. Its key focus is the management of shared fish stocks; environmental monitoring; biodiversity and ecosystem health; the mitigation of pollution and minimising the impacts of marine diamond mining and oil and gas production.

At Thursday’s Ministerial Conference, Buyelwa Sonjica, Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs in South Africa will meet with her ministerial counterparts from Namibia and Angola, namely:

- Hon. Sianga Kivula Samuel Abilio, Deputy Minister of Petroleum, ANGOLA
- Hon. Anibal Actavio Da Silva, Deputy Minister of Environment, ANGOLA
- Hon. Victoria de Barros Neto, Secretary of State for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, ANGOLA
- Bernard Esau, Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources NAMIBIA
- Hon. Isak Katali, Minister of Mines and Energy, NAMIBIA
- Hon. Erkki Nghiimtina, Minister of Works, Transport & Communication, NAMIBIA

The ministers will discuss the progress made by the Commission in setting up an ambitious science plan and comprehensive training and capacity building programme. They will review the 24 projects that are being supported by the Benguela Current Commission and which are expected to provide the three countries with new information about the marine and coastal resources of the Benguela.

However, one of the most important objectives of Thursday’s meeting will be to chart the way forward for the Benguela Current Commission. It is expected that the ministers will begin discussions around a legally binding multilateral convention that will formalise and entrench the Benguela Current Commission. The three countries are hoping to sign the convention in 2012. In doing so, they will recognise the unique character of the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem and commit themselves to taking joint responsibility for its sustainable management.

Members of the media are invited to attend the opening ceremony of the Ministerial Conference which will take place at the Lagoon Beach Hotel, Cape Town from 10.00 to 10.45 on Thursday September 2.

Issued by the Benguela Current Commission
31 August 2010

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