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WQA PRESS RELEASE

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WQA coordinates with members, Water for People to deliver aid to tsunami survivors

Lisle, Illinois – January 5, 2005 WQA is actively looking for ways to help its members contribute to the survivors of the devastating tsunami that hit countries around the Indian Ocean on December 26.

First, we have contacted all WQA members and others in our databases who are located in affected countries to determine if they can receive donations of products and/or install and operate equipment in place. We can let the appropriate disaster relief agencies know who these companies are.

Second, we have a working relationship with Water For People (WFP), an international nonprofit development organization committed to the long-term impact of increased access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation and health. WFP is acting as a liaison with international organizations that specialize in relief work to deliver aid to the tsunami area.

WFP has offered to find water professionals who can go to help with technical assessments, engineering consulting, water quality evaluation, and other technical assistance. They are also working to find small scale, low-tech water purification and treatment equipment or other systems for the groups that are asking for help.

They have contacted CARE, World Vision, Catholic Relief Services, UNICEF, Lutheran World Relief, Mercy Corps, Direct Relief International, MAP International, Food for the Hungry, and Project CURE. These agencies indicate that they would like technical assistance and donations of equipment or water treatment items.

Clearly, the first priority is the immediate needs connected with digging out, burying the dead, and getting emergency rations and housing to people. The agencies will contact WFP soon asking for technical assistance and items that will help them address the intermediate needs of the victims.

As you know, the long-term dangers from water-related diseases could kill or sicken as many individuals as the tsunami itself. WFP is setting up a fund for people to donate to that will help address long-term water and sanitation needs.

The Water Quality Association is the not-for-profit international trade association representing the household, commercial/industrial, and small system water treatment industry.

WQA members can visit the WFP Web site—or the above organizations directly—if they want to help with the immediate needs.

WFP has been put in contact with some donors who have chartered two 707 airplanes to ferry supplies to the affected areas. So if WQA members can donate the equipment and materials needed to treat the drinking water, then we can get it to the affected areas quickly.

[Editor's note: It is essential to remember that the water left after the tsunami is profoundly fouled; equipment designed for household use—such as carbon filters—will not stand up to this challenge water and could, itself, become a source of contamination.

After a time, these household products may well be needed, so it's essential to follow the progress of the initial cleanup efforts to know what equipment can be used when.

Please contact WQA at info@wqa.org or 630 505 0160, or visit the WFP Web site at <http://www.waterforpeople.org/> for more information.

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