**PRESS RELEASE**

Sustainable water resource management calls for smart solutions

**30 March 2022:** The International Water Association (IWA) estimates that, out of an anticipated global population of 9.7 billion people by 2050, 66% will reside in urban areas. One out of five people are at risk from floods, while 40% of the world’s population is affected by water scarcity.

“We really need to think differently about the future of water. Our goal as [Zutari](http://www.zutari.com) is to co-create a footprint of engineered water solutions that reframes innovation, sustainability, and resilience from an African perspective,” comments **Neeren Govender**, Client Director, Water, at the leading consulting engineering and infrastructure advisory firm.

Climate change is placing ever-increasing pressure on existing surface water users across the Africa continent. “Groundwater offers a resilient solution in adapting to climate change,” argues Govender. Future-proofing water infrastructure in partnership with governments and communities is essential to ensure that water solutions are practical from a local context. Zutari continues to embrace the spirit of innovation in its role as thought leader to improve water security across Africa for future generations.

As a civil engineer with over 20 years’ experience in the water industry, Govender’s career spans a range of multidisciplinary water related projects, from inception through to master-planning, design and construction supervision and ultimately commissioning and operations. “The reason I am so passionate about this sector is the impact that we have on the communities we work with and the tangible difference we make on their quality of life.”

Through legacy companies such as Africon and Ninham Shand, Zutari has a track record of almost 90 years in the water sector. This includes the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP), originally conceived by legacy company Ninham Shand in the 1950s. The firm was involved in the feasibility studies undertaken in the 1970s and in the design and construction of Phase I in the 1980s and 1990s. Zutari is currently involved in the design of the infrastructure for Phase ll of the LHWP, which remains the largest water transfer scheme in Africa.

Zutari’s water services straddle all of the market sectors it is involved in, from transport to energy, government, health, education, property and land development and resources and manufacturing. A large part of its work lies in the government sector, from municipalities to local, provincial and national authorities and also public and private water utilities. Its scope extends into Africa and the Middle East, where it is delivering key water-related projects.

Zutari has been involved in various iconic water infrastructure solutions across the continent, including the Berg River Dam, the Lower Thukela Bulk Water Supply Scheme, the Olifants River Water Resources Development Scheme, the Mokolo Crocodile Water Scheme, the Maguga Dam in Eswatini, the Kashimbila Multipurpose Dam and Hydropower Scheme in Nigeria, the Shire River Basin Management Programme in Malawi, the Water Security and Climate Resilience Project in Kenya and the Nile Basin Initiative – Pilot Application of the Nile Basin Decision Support System.

In terms of its capabilities and expertise, Zutari’s focus includes water resources planning and management, ranging from urban areas to multi-basin studies and also includes large dam and hydropower projects. Another speciality is bulk conveyance, collection and distribution for water waste- and stormwater in particular. On the treatment side, it is able to offer advanced process technologies for reuse and desalination, as well as for dirty or industrial water and biosolids treatment. On the advisory side, Zutari offers climate change and sustainability solutions which is a key focus for the water sector across Africa.

“This definitely gives us a leading edge in the market. From an African perspective, we not only have an extensive network of offices and resources, but partners in various countries as well. It ensures we have a broad team of multidisciplinary water specialists that can apply their local knowledge and technical expertise on a range of projects throughout the continent,” says Govender. In addition, Zutari has extensive international experience as far afield as Australia, New Zealand and South East Asia.

Large portions of Africa vary from arid to semi-arid which is solely dependent on groundwater for their livelihood and economic vitality. “As the population and economy of these regions grow, there will be a need to advocate and promote the sustainable management and protection of this finite resource. The ability to use and re-use this valuable resource as part of circular economy is key to ensuring the livelihood of future generations,” says Govender.

The impact of smart infrastructure on the water sector has led Zutari to develop cutting-edge digital capabilities that embrace the Internet of Things and Industry 4.0. It has major experience in working with the latest industrial automation and instrumentation technologies, which it deploys for infrastructure performance improvement and real-time visibility. Zutari has developed innovative data-mining tools for advanced analytics to assist clients with strategic decision-making and long-term planning.

A trend is applying the operational Digital Twin concept to water infrastructure. For example, if a water system needs to be improved, the impact of any changes can be visualised in the digital replica to best optimise the process and carry any lessons or insights through to the real world. Zutari has developed energy recovery tools that can assist water utilities to not only optimise their energy consumption, but also evaluate the feasibility of waste-to-energy projects, where the energy potential of wastewater can be converted into biogas, for example.

Burgeoning urban populations and uncertainty surrounding climate change represents a significant challenge for the water sector. “Water is the source of life, the most widely-used resource, and a commodity with intrinsic value. Our collective future depends on its sustainable use and preserving water resources. As water stewards, we need to focus on smart, sustainable and resilient water infrastructure solutions,” concludes Govender.

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**Notes to the Editor**To download hi-res images for this release, please visit <http://media.ngage.co.za> and click the Zutari link to view the company’s press office.

**About Zutari**

As engineering consultants and trusted advisors, Zutari co-creates an engineered impact that enables environments, communities and economies to thrive. Few others can match our local capacity, long-standing presence and understanding of the challenges required to operate successfully across various regions in Africa.

We have created an impact across Africa for almost 90 years (1932 to 2022) and remain committed to this continent, making us the perfect partner to those less familiar with working in Africa. We are experienced in international projects and our Global Design Centres allow us to bring world-class solutions to our clients.

As a private management-owned company, our commitment is true and we have vested interest in our clients’ success. Our strong relationships allow us to connect the right expertise, processes and resources to match client’s needs and bring stakeholders that have shared interests together.

We blend the old and the new. We have moved beyond traditional engineering and work collaboratively to integrate technical and creative thinking. This process of co-creation allows us to unearth new opportunities with our clients and partners.

Zutari’s broad collective of in-house, industry-recognised engineering consultants and trusted advisors provide seamless and integrated delivery. This unique ability to offer scaled engagement allows Zutari to solve complex challenges more efficiently.

Grounded in digital engineering, we continuously deliver better results.

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