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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### SQM ENTERED LIQUID FERTILIZER JOINT VENTURE IN EGYPT

**Santiago, Chile, February 18, 2003.-** The Sociedad Química y Minera de Chile S.A. group (SQM) (NYSE: SQM, SQMA; Santiago Stock Exchange: SQM-B, SQM-A) informed today that it signed a joint venture agreement with Hydro Agri and two Egyptian entrepreneurs with the intention to produce and market liquid fertilizers in Egypt through a new jointly owned company. Hydro Agri, a division of Norsk Hydro ASA, and SQM will each own 47.5% of the shares of the new company that will be called Misr Speciality Fertilizer Ltd. (MSF), whereas the two local partners will each own 2.5%.

Construction of the plant is expected to be completed in the course of 2004, reaching full commercial and technical capacity utilization of its 85,000 tons per year within six years from the start-up of production. The facility, to be erected in Noberia in the north of Egypt, is designed to host additional dry fertilizer activities.

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SQM is an integrated producer and distributor of specialty fertilizers, industrial chemicals and iodine and lithium. Its products are based in the development of high quality natural resources that allow the Company to be leader in costs, supported by a specialized international network with sales in over 100 countries. SQM's development strategy aims to maintain and strengthen the world leadership in its three main businesses: specialty fertilizers, iodine and lithium.

This leadership strategy is based in the Company's competitive advantages and in the sustainable growth of the different markets where it participates. SQM's main competitive advantages in its different businesses are:

- Low production costs based in vast and high quality natural resources.
- Know how and its own technological developments in its various production processes.
- Logistics infrastructure and high production levels that allow SQM to have low distribution costs.
- High market share in all its core products: 40% world lithium market, 28% world iodine market and 45% world potassium nitrate market.
- International sales offices with offices in more than 20 countries and sales in over 100 countries.
- Sales synergies due to the production of a complete range of specialty fertilizers.
- Continuous new product development according to the specific needs of its different customers.
- Conservative and solid financial position

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Statements in this release concerning the Company's business outlook or future economic performances, anticipated profitability, revenues, expenses, or other financial items, anticipated cost synergies and product or service line growth, together with other statements that are not historical facts, are "forward-looking statements" as that term is defined under the Federal Securities Laws. Any forward-looking statements are estimates, reflecting the best judgment of SQM based upon currently available information and involve a number of risks, uncertainties and other factors which could cause actual results to differ materially from those stated in such statements. Risks, uncertainties, and factors, which could affect the accuracy of such forward-looking statements, are identified in the public filing made with the Securities and Exchange Commission, and forward-looking statements should be considered in light of those factors.