



MEDIA

Response to Sunday Times

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Dear Andre Jurgens

Please find NNR response to your email enquiry as ref: Sunday Times media enquiry Koeberg; -

The National Nuclear Regulator (NNR) is a public entity which is established and governed in terms of Section 3 of the National Nuclear Regulator Act, (Act No 47 of 1999). The fundamental objective of the NNR is to provide for the protection of persons, property and the environment against nuclear damage through the establishment of safety standards and regulatory practices suited for South Africa. To this end, the NNR provides oversight and assurance that activities related to the peaceful use of nuclear energy in South Africa are carried out in a safe manner and in accordance with international principles and best practices.

The NNR is responsible for granting nuclear authorisations and exercising regulatory control related to safety over the siting, design, construction, operation, manufacture of component parts, and the decontamination, decommissioning and closure of nuclear installations; and vessels propelled by nuclear power or having radioactive material on board which is capable of causing nuclear damage.

Energy and power generation considerations are long term decisions a government takes towards ensuring sustainability. Therefore the nuclear industry's performance in decommissioning is vital for the future of the nuclear power generation industry and the society it serves. Plant decommissioning in the nuclear industry is a complex, multifaceted and multidisciplinary endeavour. As such, decommissioning is a lengthy process whose preparation starts well before any physical decommissioning activity, through the provision and revision of appropriate plans, during the lifetime of the facility, or even at the stage of its design.

Since the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi plant, energy policies and nuclear power programmes have been under review. In some cases, a nuclear phase-out policy has been decided or confirmed, which will lead to accelerated decommissioning processes. As an example, the German federal

government has decided to end its nuclear power programme entirely and to phase out all of its nuclear power plants by 2022. In accordance with international best practice, in South Africa decommissioning of nuclear power plants will be carried out under the various national legal, regulatory and institutional principles and frameworks. Such principles and frameworks are necessary to ensure that policies and strategies are set out and effectively implemented, and that financial and non-financial responsibilities are clearly defined and suitably allocated to those responsible for discharging the liabilities.

Decommissioning of nuclear power plants requires regulatory approval and oversight and as such Eskom's Koeberg nuclear power plant is licenced by the NNR and operates under the conditions of licence granted by the NNR. The NNR's mandate is focused on establishing and enforcing safety standards and regulatory frameworks to provide for the protection of persons and property against nuclear damage.

Operators of nuclear power plants are generally responsible for financing the costs of decommissioning. The NNR has strict requirements for the nuclear industry in South Africa, evidenced by the NNR's Safety Standard and Regulatory Practices regulation 388 which requires the authorisation holder to submit a decommissioning strategy as part of the prior safety assessment. Furthermore a decommissioning plan must be submitted to the NNR as a basis for authorisation of specific actions of phases of decommissioning.

In terms of obligations under other statutes, the NNR Act makes provisions for an explicit legal framework to give effect to co-operative governance with intergovernmental agencies where overlapping functions and responsibilities in respect of the monitoring and control of radioactive material or exposure to ionizing radiation as conferred by respective legislation. These ultimately ensure that regulatory provisions to ensure for the protection of South Africans against nuclear damage is in place. The NNR is mindful of the impact of the changing external environment on the stages of nuclear power generation technologies and strives to keep abreast by aligning and updating the regulatory framework to respond to these dynamics.

Should you require more information, please contact me.