



energy

Department:
Energy
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA RELEASE: IMMEDIATE

Minister of Energy visit Koeberg, satisfied with readiness for emergencies

The Minister of Energy, Ms Dipuo Peters, MP, today (*Tuesday*, 15 March) expressed sympathy and words of comfort to the government and the people of Japan during this difficult time as they deal with the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami.

“Our thoughts and prayers are with the government and people of Japan at this time. More so as they deal with the developing situation at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant. As anyone in nuclear energy sector may know, an accident anywhere in the world affects the entire sector worldwide.

We offer our support were possible in line with our strength. Like all concerned citizens of the world we would like the Japanese to succeed in evacuating people from the affected areas, quickly decontaminating the area and treating those who have been exposed. In this operation, the scientists and engineers working to contain the situation are exposed to physical dangers including nuclear radiation.

We need to get a comprehensive report from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and then formulate our approach because for now this is a developing situation and information is not complete. Obviously this situation will result in strengthening safety measures that are meant to prevent or deal with situations such as this”, Minister Peters said.

“Nuclear safety has always been uppermost in the policy direction of the South Africa and we are happy to see that this continues. The fact that Unit 2 at Koeberg Nuclear Power Plant is in a routine refueling and maintenance shutdown is further evidence of our commitment to safe operations at our nuclear power station”.

The National Nuclear Regulator has indicated that the Koeberg Nuclear Power Plant design structure provides a reasonable assurance of its ability to withstand external events such as earthquakes and tidal waves of a magnitude which are considered likely in accident

A review of nuclear safety features and back-up power system is being undertaken in different parts of the world. This step is being taken to check the ability of the reactors to withstand the impact of big natural disasters. This does not necessarily translate to a rethink of the decision to build nuclear power stations.

The Minister also visited Koeberg nuclear power station on Tuesday afternoon to see for herself the safety measures that are in place, including the emergency diesel power generators.

The severe accident management guidelines which would mitigate the consequences accidents the vicinity of the plant have been developed at Koeberg. The Koeberg Nuclear Disaster management plan has been developed and is tested every other year to ensure readiness in the unlikely event of an accident. The last of these exercises was done on 30 November 2010. The Minister is therefore satisfied at the level of readiness to deal with emergencies at Koeberg.

We must be ready to increase coal capacity in the IRP 2010 and invest in safer and cleaner technologies for both nuclear and coal, Minister Peters concluded.

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Issued by the Department of Energy

Date: 15 March 2011