



Attention: Editor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

14 June 2020

WOMEN IN NUCLEAR SOUTH AFRICA (WINSA) SUPPORTS THE ISSUING OF REQUEST FOR INFORMATION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF MINERAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY

WINSA welcomes the move by the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) to issue the Request For Information (RFI) for the South African nuclear new build programme. On Sunday, 14 June 2020, the DMRE released the RFI, a stand-alone information-gathering exercise which does not commit to any competitive tender. This follows the approval of the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) in October 2019. The IRP provides a blueprint for South Africa's envisaged energy mix. Decision 8 of the IRP 2019 suggests that government should immediately commence with small-scale nuclear build programme to the extent of 2 500 Megawatt (MW) by 2030, at a pace, scale and cost affordable to the country "*because it is a no-regret option in the long term*". The plan also provides for the extension of the design life of the existing Koeberg Nuclear Power Station beyond 2024, when it reaches the end of its 40-year life, which will be subject to regulatory approvals

Speaking about the release of RFI, Ms Nomathemba Radebe, WINSA President commented: "Gender equality is one of South Africa's Sustainable Development Goals. WiNSA sees the expansion of the nuclear industry as a great opportunity for women in nuclear research, industry entrepreneurs, and collaboration between the private sector, academia as well as the public sector. South Africa needs to invest in infrastructure for security of energy supply and for economic growth."

According to WiNSA, nuclear energy is still the most viable option in order to stimulate the economy even though the national conversation and narrative around the nuclear build expansion programme has been tainted with inaccuracies and fears that are based on hearsay and blatant refusal by anti-nuclear groups and widespread perspective founded

on fictional rhetoric. Therefore, it remains crucial that a factual public awareness campaign gains greater momentum. Moreover, South Africa is amongst the top three largest producers of Nuclear Radioisotopes globally from the SAFARI-1 research reactor operated by Necsa. Currently, the Koeberg Nuclear Power Station hosts the only operational Nuclear Power Reactors on the African continent, with a capacity of 1800 MW baseload power to stabilise the Western Cape grid at one of the lowest costs of production. For over 30 years, Koeberg has contributed towards both the Western Cape and South African economy through job creation, infrastructure development, community development and transformation.

The website of World Nuclear Association (WNA) stipulates that in order to combat climate change, the world must rapidly reduce its dependency on fossil fuels to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Nuclear energy is low-carbon and can be deployed on both small and large scale in the time frame required, supplying the world with clean and affordable electricity.

“As WiNSA, it is important that we become the nuclear ambassadors of this country and the African continent in general. There is a great need, as a collective, to educate our people so that they can understand and appreciate the technology. The future of women in this sector is promising.” says Ms Radebe

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Notes to Editors:

WINSA is a not-for-profit organisation of women in the nuclear industry, which was launched in 2003 with the aim to promote meaningful participation of women in the fields of nuclear technology, safety, and non-proliferation. The organisation has over 1000 registered members from different organisations within the nuclear industry such as, South African Nuclear Energy Corporation (Necsa), Eskom, National Nuclear Regulator (NNR), National Radioactive Waste Disposal Institute (NRWDI), iThemba Labs, Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE), and other private organisations such as Mzansi Energy Solutions (MZESI) as well as nuclear medicine.