



NATIONAL NUCLEAR REGULATOR

MINUTES : “BUILDING BRIDGES TO CONNECT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY NGOs MEETING – GAUTENG”

Date of Meeting: 25 June 2014

Venue: NNR Offices. Centurion

Time: 11:00:13:00

In attendance

Civil Society Representatives:

Ms Melita Steele (Greenpeace Africa), Ms Judith Taylor, Ms Lerato Maregele, Ms Nerisha Baldevu (Earthlife Africa), Mr Fenky Mofiwa (Off the Ground) and Mr Steve Brent, Mr Raleigh Ellis (Pelindaba PSIF).

NNR Officials:

Dr MB Tyobeka (CEO & Chairperson), Mr O Phillips, Mr T Pather, Mr P Mohajane, Mr S Pheto, Mr A Singh, Dr P Mkhabela, Mr A Joubert, Ms L Mpete, Mr M Mpundu, Mr M Ramerafe, Mr G Nhlapho and Mr G Moonsamy.

Apologies

- Mr Rob Garbett (Pelindaba Working Group / CANE)
- Mrs Christine Garbett (Pelindaba Working Group / CANE)

1. Introduction

Dr Tyobeka, in his capacity as Chairperson welcomed the attendees and declared the Meeting officially open. Dr Tyobeka then invited members to review the minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 March 2014 and consider the draft Agenda for necessary amendment and or approval.

2. Review of the Minutes and Adoption of the Agenda

The previous minutes were duly adopted by Ms J Taylor and seconded by Mr O Phillips. Under matters arising, the Chair noted the request from Ms J Taylor to make overall emissions data available from the Koeberg nuclear power station and Vaalputs radioactive waste facilities and noted Ms M Liefferink's request for the Civil Society representative from the NNR Board to be invited to these meetings.



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The agenda was reviewed and adopted with agreement that additional issues be discussed under General. The NNR CEO indicated that he will have to leave the meeting early due to other urgent business commitments.

3. Summary of High Level Discussions

3.1 Presentation made by Federation for Sustainable Environment (FSE): of the Summary of the expert meeting by the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War.

Ms Liefferink conducted a presentation on the meeting she recently attended on the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War which was held in Germany. The presentation focused largely on the fields of radiobiology, epidemiology, statistics and physics and highlighted current scientific evidence relating to the health effects of ionising radiation, especially in the area of low-dose radiation and concluded as follows:

- Even background radiation causes adverse health effects that are measurable;
- The use of radiation for medical diagnostics causes adverse health effects that are measurable;
- The use of nuclear energy and the testing of nuclear weapons cause adverse health effects that are measurable;
- On the basis of epidemiological studies that use the concept of collective dose, health risks of low-dose radiation can be reliably predicted and quantified;
- The ICRP practice of using studies on Hiroshima and Nagasaki survivors as a basis for determining risk factors for low-dose radiation must be considered outdated;
- An improved risk-based concept of radiation protection is needed, combined with stringent implementation of the imperative of radiation exposure minimisation.

In substantiation of the above-mentioned findings, she emphasised that 169 peer reviewed high confidence academic papers were referred to at the meeting.



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The Chairperson noted that the presentation was very informative and reminded the meeting that there were two sides to the story. The Chairperson further re-emphasised the NNR’s mandate and stated the NNR’s dissatisfaction with the current compliance index level of the mining industry in South Africa.

3.2 The Chairperson excused himself from the meeting and requested Mr O Phillips to continue with Chairing the meeting.

3.3 Mr Phillips opened the Q&A session of the meeting

- Ms Liefferink expressed concern over the lack of monitoring compliance by the Department of Water Affairs over the directives they have issued. She requested the NNR’s response to the presentation and indicated that she would like to send this information to the Public Protector.
- Ms J Taylor expressed concern over the non-cooperation by the Department of Health regarding the affected communities allegedly suffering from diseases emanating from water pollution. She stated that the NNR does not publish regulatory actions taken against mines and further requested the NNR to listen to NGOs and take stronger action in future.
- Mr John Pule provided a brief explanation on how studies of background radiation levels are conducted and the NNR’s approach to background radiation.
- Mr Phillips informed the meeting of the NNR’s approach to UNSCEAR case studies and recommendations and he summarised the role of the regulator versus the operator.
- Ms D Kgomo informed that the NNR does not ignore FSE requests and emphasised that there could be a process issue in dealing with such requests.
- Mr Phillips reminded the meeting of the correct communication channels to use for dealing with external enquiries and urged FSE to follow these channels.



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4. Resolutions stemming from the meeting

It was resolved that ;

- NNR to assist with requesting Koeberg (Eskom) and Vaalputs (Necsa) to provide Civil Society with emission data ;
- NNR to provide a response to outstanding FSE enquiries; and
- Invite Civil Society representative from the NNR Board to these meetings.

6. Conclusion

The NNR recognises that the “Building Bridges to connect with Civil Society” initiative continues to be a worthy platform for constructive dialogue and information sharing on matters relating to nuclear safety between NNR and Civil Society NGOs. Mr O Phillips thanked all participants for attending and closed the meeting.