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Attention: Lameez Omarjee  
Specialist Journalist  
Media 24

[Lameez.Omarjee@24.com](mailto:Lameez.Omarjee@24.com)

Dear Lameez

### **News24 query: IAEA report on Eskom**

Your email enquiry as reference. Please find NNR response as follows:

The IAEA report on its assessment of Eskom's Koeberg earlier this year has been made available publicly (see attached).

#### **1. I understand that the IAEA's requirements are not equivalent to national regulations for nuclear power.**

*NNR Response:* The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safety Aspects of Long Term Operation (SALTO) peer review service is designed to assist operating organisations such as Koeberg in adopting a proper approach to ageing management and preparation for safe Long Term Operations (LTO) of nuclear power plants (NPPS) and to provide recommendations and suggestions for improvement of the preparations for safe LTO.

International peer review is a useful tool to exchange experiences, learn from each other and apply good practices in different activities conducted throughout the lifetime of Nuclear Power Plants (NPPs) and research reactors, including Long Term Operations.

The evaluation of programmes and performance is based on IAEA Safety Standards and uses combined expertise of the international review team. The review is neither a regulatory inspection nor an audit against national codes and standards. Rather, it is a technical exchange of experience and practices at the working level aimed at strengthening the procedures and practices implemented at the Koeberg nuclear installation.

The objective of the Koeberg SALTO was to review the status and future plans for safe LTO programmes and activities performed at the plant with comparison to the relevant IAEA Safety Standards, guidance documents and internationally accepted practices. The SALTO report presented good practices and areas of improvement for Koeberg.

**2. Does the NNR consider the outcomes of such a peer review in its own processes to grant Eskom a licence to extend the life of Koeberg? Or are the two separate, unrelated processes?**

NNR Response: Yes.

The process for an LTO application is initiated with an application which needs to be accompanied by a safety case. The NNR then commences with the review of the safety case. As part of the review, the applicant must demonstrate and justify that the facility is fit to operate for the extended applied for. The NNR then, prior to making a decision, requests input from the public. Once the NNR is satisfied that concerns from members of the public have been addressed and that the safety case has a sound basis, it will then be able to make a decision to approve or reject the application.

**3. Does the national regulation for nuclear trump that of the IAEA's?**

NNR response: IAEA Safety Standards provide the fundamental principles, requirements, and recommendations to ensure nuclear safety. The IAEA is not a regulator and therefore does not prescribe regulations. Regulations are developed as per respective national requirements using IAEA Safety Standards as a reference for protecting people and the environment. The regulations cover the scope of actions and the administrative requirements relevant to nuclear safety regulation. The regulations are more detailed in respect to operations, design safety, maintenance, radioactive waste safety, transport safety, and emergency preparedness.

The IAEA Secretariat works with its Member States such as South Africa to promote safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear energy. Through technical cooperation programmes the IAEA assists its Member States and promotes the exchange of scientific and technical information between them. Peer review mechanisms are examples of IAEA programmes to assist member states.

**4. I assume that the national regulations are also aligned to international standards for nuclear?**

NNR Response: Refer to response in (3)

**5. There is a view publicly that Eskom is not on track with the timelines for Koeberg's life extension beyond 2024. Has Eskom met the NNR's timelines and submission requirements thus far?**

NNR Response: Yes

## **NNR comments.**

“The NNR regards the IAEA SALTO review as a positive step towards assisting Koeberg through recommendations and suggestions for improvement in preparation for safe Long Term Operations. Furthermore, holding an IAEA SALTO peer review mission demonstrates proactiveness and transparency by the various role-players whilst reaffirming the focus on improving safety to protect persons, property, and the environment.” stated the NNR’s Acting CEO Ms Ditebogo Kgomo.

## **To Note:**

The NNR’s international cooperation footprint is broad in scope and ranges from fulfilling legally binding national obligations, contributing to the enhancement of global safety standards, participating in IAEA expert peer review missions, technical counterparts on cooperation initiatives, facilitating bilateral cooperation on regulatory matters and participating in various multilateral fora.

Various NNR technical staff participate actively in the following IAEA Safety Standards Committees:

- Nuclear Safety Standards Committee
- Radiation Safety Standards Committee
- Emergency Preparedness and Response Standards Committee
- Transport Safety Standards Committee
- Waste Safety Standards Committee

Additionally, the IAEA invites NNR internationally recognised subject matter experts to participate in IAEA Peer Review missions such as the Integrated Regulated Review Services (IRRS) and Integrated Review Service for Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel Management, Decommissioning and Remediation (ARTEMIS) missions to other countries.

## **For more information:**

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