



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

檳城消費人協會 பிளாங்கு பயனீட்டாளர் சங்கம்

10 Jalan Masjid Negeri, 11600 Pulau Pinang, Malaysia
Tel: 604-8299511 Fax: 604-8298109
email: consumerofpenang@gmail.com

Websites:
www.consumer.org.my

Media Statement/Letter to the Editor

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Halt the Mission – Nuclear Energy is NOT an Option!

The Malaysian Coalition Against Nuclear (MyCAN) is appalled that the Malaysian Government is determined to go down the nuclear energy route with the completion of the Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review (INIR) mission for Phase 1 of 'readiness' that was conducted by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) last October.

When receiving the final mission report from the IAEA on March 8, at the sideline of the 8th Annual Nuclear Power Asia Conference, held in Kuala Lumpur, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri proclaimed that Malaysia is 'thoroughly prepared' to decide on adoption of nuclear power generation.

Minister Nancy has said that the report would be presented to the Cabinet soonest for a decision to be made as Malaysia has 30 days to respond to the recommendations.

In light of this latest development, MyCAN calls upon the government, in the interests of transparency, to do the following:

1. Disclose the Cabinet's decision
2. Emulate other countries that have made public the INIR Mission report on the IAEA's website
3. Make public the Nuclear Power Infrastructure Development Plan
4. Make public the results of the public consultation
5. Update on the Atomic Energy Regulatory Bill
6. Disclose expenses incurred thus far to conduct the above activities described in 3, 4 and 5 as well as Phase 1 of the INIR mission

We are deeply concerned that with the completion of Phase 1 of the IAEA's INIR mission which paved the way to embark on Phase 2 of the mission i.e. 'Preparatory work for the contracting and construction of a nuclear power plant after a policy decision has been taken', the Government is exacerbating the country's ailing financial and economic situation.

According to Bank Negara Malaysia 2016 annual report, Malaysia's total external debt rose by 9% to RM908.7bil, equivalent to 73.9% of the country's gross domestic product. However, it is unclear, if this latest figure has surpassed the government's self-imposed safeguard limit of 55% for government debt.

Nevertheless, it is well-documented that nuclear power generation project almost always inadvertently exceeds its initial projected costs. Furthermore, based on the RM21.3bil estimated costs for the two reactors stipulated in the Entry Point Project of the Economic Transformation Programme way back in

2010 and coupled with the weakening of the ringgit, it is reasonable to conclude that the costs will rise exponentially.

Last November, Vietnam took a wise decision to abandon its nuclear energy plan despite spending millions in its preparation after conceding that the estimated costs had doubled. Indonesia has also postponed its plan for nuclear new-build.

We call upon the Malaysian Government to take heed of this development in the region and refocus its resources towards developing its fledgling renewable energy sector. The Malaysian Government needs to stop going further with this INIR Mission.

The INIR process

Carried out at the invitation of Malaysia, a member state of IAEA, the 8-day mission purportedly built upon a detailed self-evaluation report by the Malaysian Government and reviewed the country's readiness in 19 infrastructure issues according to the IAEA's milestones approach, comprising three phases and three milestones.

(For more details, go to <http://www-pub.iaea.org/books/IAEABooks/10873/Milestones-in-the-Development-of-a-National-Infrastructure-for-Nuclear-Power>)

Phase 1 of the three-phase INIR mission deals with '*Considerations before a decision to launch a nuclear power programme is taken*'. Malaysia is now deemed to have reached the first milestone - '*Ready to make a knowledgeable commitment to nuclear power programme*'. Judging from the Government's behavior thus far, it is logical to believe that it is very likely to make a decision to move on to the next phase.

The 19 infrastructure issues (both hard and soft) that were supposedly assessed are: national position; nuclear safety; management; funding and financing; legal framework; safeguards; regulatory framework; radiation protection; electrical grid; human resources development; stakeholders involvement; site and supporting facilities; environmental protection; emergency planning; nuclear security; nuclear fuel cycle; radioactive waste management; industrial involvement and procurement.

Interestingly, Minister Nancy noted that one of the five recommendations by the report for further progress is 'enhancing public awareness', as she euphemistically called it.

The high confidence attached to the government preparedness belies the fact that on at least one of the 19 infrastructure issues, the nuclear proponents has failed completely. Stakeholders' involvement is neither '*open, transparent or timely*' as prescribed by the IAEA Milestones approach.

Therefore, MyCAN is of the view that the INIR mission needs to be regarded as a strategy of the government to obtain international endorsement to counter growing opposition from its citizens.

Since the announcement to install two units of 1,000MW reactors in 2010, the nuclear proponents had tried in vain to win over the public with its so-called public outreach programme.

Initially envisioned to have the first reactor operating by 2021, the plan is now deferred to 2030. It is believed that heightened public distrust of the dangerous technology after the Fukushima Daichi nuclear reactors meltdown and the ensuing radiation fallout and contamination in March 2011 halted the momentum of the proponents as they awaited the crisis to blow over.

However, the crisis simply refused to go away. Instead it grows more serious. Six years after the nuclear disaster which is likely to eclipse the Chernobyl crisis, the crippled power plant of Fukushima has become a living testimony to what could go wrong with nuclear energy facility.

(See <http://insider.foxnews.com/2017/02/08/unimaginable-levels-radiation-fukushima-pacific-ocean-leaks>)

MyCAN regrets that the Malaysian Government has ignored the plea of its citizens to abandon the expensive, dangerous and dirty nuclear energy plan and focus its attention on truly sustainable energy resources.

We abhor those who have nary a care of the implications of their decisions on the citizens especially future generations that will have to bear the consequences of radiation risks, financial burden, energy security and unresolved radioactive waste disposals challenges.

Therefore, in conjunction with Earth Day on 22 April, MyCAN is relaunching its campaign to petition the Government of Malaysia against going ahead with this disastrous plan.

The online petition can be signed at <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/300/019/434/stop-nuclear-power-plants-in-malaysia/> and hardcopy petition forms are downloadable from a link on the facebook page <https://goo.gl/5YMS0X>.

MyCAN is a coalition comprising:

1. Anak Malaysia Anti-Nuklear (AMAN)
2. Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP)
3. Malaysian Physicians for Peace and Social Responsibility
4. Malaysian Youth Delegation (MYD)
5. Monitoring Sustainability of Globalisation (MSN)
6. Pertubuhan Alam Sekitar Sejahtera Malaysia (GRASS Malaysia)
7. PowerShift Malaysia
8. Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM)
9. Third World Network (TWN)
10. Treat Every Environment Special (TrEES)

S. M. Mohamed Idris

President

Consumers Association of Penang

f. MyCAN

Notes to Editor:

For clarification and interviews, please contact the Consumers' Association of Penang at Tel: 04-829 9511