

# SA’s nuclear plans ‘far off job-creation mark’

MARIANNE MERTEN

SOUTH Africa’s focus on a nuclear-build programme is detracting from sustainable jobs that could be created through renewable energy – and from ensuring energy justice for all, according to outgoing Greenpeace International executive director Kumi Naidoo.

“Our government is talking nuclear; we think it’s completely crazy. It’s too expensive. It’s too dangerous. It will deliver too little, too late,” said Naidoo. “The job-creation potential of renewable (energy) is great. But we need to invest in young people now, in education.”

Speaking to the Cape Town Press Club yesterday, Naidoo said it was irresponsible for the government to pursue an energy future with technology imported from outside South Africa at a staggering cost.

“Who benefits from it is a legitimate question for South Africans to ask,” said Naidoo, pointing out that globally, nuclear power deals were untransparent, benefiting the powerful, while construction of nuclear power plants took at least 10 years – if there were no delays.

Underscoring this, Naidoo recalled Greenpeace discussions with German Chancellor

Angela Merkel in 2011: despite Germany’s multibillion-euro investment in nuclear, there were just 30 000 jobs, while at the time, the emerging renewable energy sector already employed 400 000 people.

“I’m coming home. One of the triggers for me was the nuclear proposals (in South Africa). But the bigger picture is energy justice,” said Naidoo. “It is scandalous, 20 years into democracy so many people live in energy injustice (not able to access or pay for energy).”

**Germany created 30 000 jobs, while renewable energy employs 400 000**

At the end of the year, Naidoo will return to South Africa after six years at the helm of Greenpeace International, where one of his focuses has been bringing together organisations across civil society to co-operate on mitigating climate change and ensuring sustainable energy.

Climate change was not an environmental matter alone, but also involved human rights, social justice, faith-based and trade union movements.

“In South Africa, we are not quite there, but people are com-

ing together,” Naidoo said. “If we treat these issues as standalone... we will fail miserably. We have a responsibility to invest in the leadership development of young people.”

This week, he joined the weekly vigil outside Parliament against South Africa going nuclear. On his list of things to do on his return is volunteering and working part-time at an activist leadership school and organic farming training project.

Naidoo still laughs at his first experience at Greenpeace, like coming to grips with the alphabet soup of acronyms or the reaction of family and friends in Durban when he was arrested in Greenland over protests against a UK company prospecting in 2011: “What the hell is an African doing in the Arctic?”

Regarding climate change: “We have a small window of opportunity left to take the action needed... the window is fast closing,” Naidoo said.

Already the impact of a warmer planet is felt in the increasing intensity and frequency of extreme weather events.

“It’s a mistake to talk about climate change as if it will hit us in the future. Lives are being lost now... agriculture is affected now,” he said.

“Nature does not negotiate.”

# Mandela rules for treatment in prison

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THE UN has renamed its standard minimum rules on the treatment of prisoners the “Nelson Mandela Rules” to honour his legacy.

The renaming came as the UN presented updates to its 60-year-old standard rules yesterday. The updates include the establishment of a prisoner’s right to healthcare and the prohibition of torture and discrimination.

“The Nelson Mandela Rules convey a simple but profound message: prisoners are human beings, born with dignity and entitled to security and to the protection of their human rights,” said Mogens Lykketoft, the president of the UN Gen-



FAMOUS PRISONER: Nelson Mandela

eral Assembly.

He then quoted Mandela: “It is said no one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails. A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones.”

The updates also give guidance for intrusive searches like strip searches and body cavity searches, and specify provisions on solitary confinement, which is now defined as 22 hours or more a day without human contact.

The rules also require

prison directors to report any death or serious injury that happens to their prisoners immediately and to investigate these situations promptly and without bias.

UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon called the changes “a great step forward”.

When the executive director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, Yuri Fedotov, first announced the resolution in May, he said: “The rules probably represent one of the most significant human rights advances in recent years.”



STREETS AHEAD: Head technician for Imperial Green Mobility, Jacob Penyenye, leads the way in Sandton yesterday as part of EcoMobility Month. The company hopes to launch tours for corporates and tourists on the personal mobility vehicles in both Sandton and Soweto in the near future.

PICTURE: DUMISANI SIBEKO

# Whizzing through Sandton’s streets with greatest of ease

Electric scooters show what future could look like

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A GROUP of journalists had the pleasure of zipping through Sandton’s normally congested streets on Segway personal mobility vehicles yesterday.

Standing upright on these two-wheeled, self-balancing, battery-powered electric scooters is great fun.

Kasi Tours is running Segway tours through Sandton during EcoMobility Month in preparation for the Soweto tour launch.

Climbing onto a Segway for the first time makes you feel like you have sea-legs – a bit wobbly.

But with a little guidance from accomplished Segway driver and guide Jacob Penyenye, the group are soon

whizzing and wobbling around a parking lot practice ground.

The good thing about these strange vehicles is that it’s very difficult to fall off, so even the most nervous drivers quickly feel confident.

“It’s very easy, it’s self-balanced,” Penyenye reassures. You lean forward to go faster, backwards to slow down or reverse, and to the side to turn.

Very soon we’re ready for a quick drive through Sandton. Some of the normally packed roads are blocked off and eerily quiet – a relief for us novice Segway drivers.

Other roads, such as Rivonia Road, don’t seem to show a decrease in traffic, despite the City of Joburg’s request for

drivers to ditch their cars during October and use public transport.

At least two motorists hoot impatiently as we cross the intersection.

Kasi Tours director Claudia Ferro told The Star they were invited to participate in the EcoMobility festival in preparation for a Segway Soweto tour they are hoping to launch.

“We’re here for people to see what it’s about.”

“Segways are not authorised to be on the roads yet. We are working with the City of Joburg and the Department of Transport to get permission to be on the roads.”

After the company has been given the thumbs up, it will launch various tour options for



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corporates and tourists. These novel machines can reach a top speed of between 24km/h and 30km/h, and when fully charged – which takes about eight hours from flat – can travel as far as 40km.

Meanwhile, the Gautrain has reported a passenger increase of 7.7 percent since the festival started. On Monday, 60 120 passengers used the train compared to the normal average of around 55 800.

The bus service increased by 512 passenger trips.

“The recent increase in the usage by Gautrain passengers shows commuters are making a conscious shift from private car use to public transport, and public transport is safe, reliable and affordable,” spokeswoman Barbara Jensen said in a statement.

However, minibus taxi drivers who have been hired to take commuters from the Innesfree Park park-and-ride facilities say they haven’t had much support.

When The Star visited yesterday around 2.30pm, there were seven cars parked there and more than double the number of taxis. The park-and-ride co-ordinator, Vusi Macheke, said he expected the numbers to increase as more people became aware of the facility.

The Star SATURDAYStar THE SUNDAY independent

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# World Mental Health Day focuses spotlight on issues to be addressed

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DESPITE the existence of legislation like the National Mental Health Policy Framework, there are still critical issues that need to be addressed and rectified.

Mental health has often been dubbed the “Cinderella of the health system”.

Speaking about World Mental Health Day, observed internationally tomorrow, the South African Federation of Mental Health said yesterday it was everyone’s responsibility to ensure legislation was implemented so that all people were treated with dignity and respect.

It has selected “Dignity in Mental Health” as the theme for the day.

“Dignity is seen as a basic human right for all citizens, which is protected in our constitution. South Africa is also a signatory of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which enshrines the universal rights of all persons with disabilities,” said Marthé Viljoen, the organisation’s programme manager for information and awareness.

Earlier this month, Minister of Health Dr Aaron Motsoaledi inaugurated for the first time a ministerial advisory committee on mental

health. The committee was appointed at the discretion of the minister in terms of section 71 of the Mental Health Care Act No 17 of 2002.

In 2012, at the request of the National Health Council, the National Mental Health Summit was held. The summit reviewed the status of mental health in all nine provinces and adopted a roadmap to further transform mental care.

The roadmap and resolutions of the summit were translated into the National Mental Health Policy Framework and Strategic Plan 2013-2020 adopted in July 2013, and is currently being implemented.

The advisory committee will mainly facilitate the achievement of the resolutions of the summit and the objectives of the 2013-2020 plan, as well as the Mental Health Care Act.

In addition, the committee will advise the minister on other important issues in mental health.

“We hope it will make a difference, but only time will tell.”

“We’re hopeful this committee will have the hoped for effect,” Viljoen stated.

The organisation said much still needed to be done to ensure the dignity of mental health care users.

This included easy and

## HOW MENTAL DISORDERS AFFECT SOUTH AFRICA

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others and make choices.

1 in 3 South Africans will or do suffer from a mental illness at some point in their life

Only 25% of people receive mental health care

Only 23 mental hospitals in the whole country, 18 beds per 100 000 people

•There are 23 completed suicides each day in the country  
•Youngest known suicide has been 7 years old  
•1 in 5 teens have attempted suicide at least once  
•9.5% of all teen deaths are due to suicide

Mental disorders accounted for 12% of the global burden of disease in 2000. This figure will rise to 15% in 2020, when it is estimated that depression will be the second most disabling health condition in the world (World Health Organisation 2001).

Graphic: Sithembile Mtolu Source: World Health Organisation

# Workers threaten to black out city

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JOBURG could be plunged into darkness on Monday if angry City Power workers don’t get their way.

The planned strike by the South African Municipal Workers Union (Samwu) is likely to mirror the one in September 2013 when City Power’s contractors cut off power to several suburbs in protest against shift changes.

Plans to disconnect electricity to the entire city relate to Samwu’s claims that City Power has failed to address issues relating to, among other things, corruption claims against the managing director, Sicele Xulu.

The allegations include that Xulu interfered in disciplinary processes by imposing his own sanctions on people, people being housed for free in City Power premises, and the installation of faulty meters.

During the 2013 strike, security guards, police and soldiers were placed at four national key points – where electricity from Eskom is fed into Joburg’s grid – to prevent the illegal strikers extending the blackout to more suburbs. The utility also obtained a court order to interdict the strikers.

The workers who were behind the outage were given final warnings.

Yesterday, City Power said the latest threat constituted an act of sabotage and that it would press charges.