



## **Environment Digest 1**

**23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015**

### **Nuclear Energy**

In the first of our Environment Digests we consider South Africa's planned nuclear procurement programme. As the debate about nuclear energy rages on in various sectors of society, the constant emergence of new information is fuelling the conversation. The lack of transparency regarding the procurement process, as well as possible corruption, rank high on the list of concerns. It is undeniable that South Africa is in the throes of an energy crisis that could have further economic and all sorts of other adverse repercussions. Simultaneously, the country faces a host of major development challenges, exacerbated by the legacy and structures of apartheid. These include a dramatic gap between rich and poor; lack of infrastructure; high levels of urbanisation and unemployment; extreme inequality and poverty; and huge backlogs in service delivery to the majority of South Africans. Does nuclear energy offer a sensible and affordable response to the energy crisis? Or will the envisaged programme exacerbate existing problems?

As stated in the National Development Plan, all possible alternatives need to be explored, because the implications of the proposed nuclear build are extensive and far reaching indeed. South Africa's governance track record needs to be looked at realistically; and an active citizenry is vital to ensure that the population does not end up paying far more than necessary to keep the lights on.

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