

Headline: Nuclear industry: Allow us to combat climate change

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Published Date: 05:12 AM October 10, 2019

Section: business

Word Count: 2747

Content:

As the Department of Energy (DoE) reaffirmed a pact with Russia to explore joint efforts related to nuclear power in the Philippines, the World Nuclear Association (WNA) asked governments worldwide to allow the industry and its low-carbon feature to contribute in the fight against climate change.

WNA director general Agneta Rising said in a statement the nuclear industry was committed to “delivering what it needs to do to save our planet from climate change.”

“Our technology is ready, our supply chain is ready and our people are ready,” Rising said.

Her statement was addressed to the Austria-based International Atomic Energy Agency, which reported to the United Nations and which earlier this week held an International Conference on Climate Change and the Role of Nuclear Power.

According to the WNA, nuclear power avoids the emission of more than 2,500 million metric tons of carbon dioxide every year when compared to fossil fuels. The number is equivalent to the emissions of about 400 million cars.

“Nuclear reactors are the low-carbon backbone of the electricity system, operating in the background, day in and day out,” Rising said. “Often out of sight and out of mind, they are the silent giants we rely upon daily.”

“Governments are called upon to take action to allow the nuclear industry to deliver the Harmony goal, so that the world can meet the climate challenge,” she added.

“Harmony” refers to the WNA’s program, which has the goal of providing at least one-fourth of the world’s electricity supply before 2050.

Over the weekend, Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez announced during President Duterte’s visit to Russia that the DoE signed with Rusatom Overseas a memorandum of intent “to jointly explore the prospects of cooperation in the construction of nuclear power plants in the Philippines.”

Rusatom Overseas is part of the state-run Rosatom State Corp. Group.

In November 2017, the DOE signed with Rosatom State Atomic Energy Corp. a memorandum of cooperation (MOC), which the former said “will enable the country to come up with national policies for the development of safe and secure power generation practices through nuclear energy.”

The MOC also covered the “audit and assessment of the [Bataan Nuclear Power Plant or BNPP’s] technical condition, including the option of its rehabilitation.”

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In December 2018, following an eight-day mission of a multinational team to review the Philippines' nuclear industry, the International Atomic Energy Agency said the review "marked the readiness of the [Philippines] to make a knowledgeable commitment to a nuclear power program."