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## SA plans new nuclear power station by 2020

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Reuters quoted Ms Dipuo Peters energy minister of South Africa as saying that the country plans to have new nuclear power plant up and running by 2020.

It may be noted that state owned power utility Eskom, which operates Africa's sole nuclear power plant with a total capacity of 1,800 MW, cancelled plans to build a new facility at the end of last year, citing financial constraints.

The government has since taken the lead in developing the next power station, saying it wants to develop a local nuclear industry in partnership with a technology firm rather than adopt a commercial bidding process used by Eskom.

Ms Peters said that the new nuclear plant would produce about 20,000 MW. She added that "It's a huge project, and in any project situation you plan with the end in sight, so we are looking at 2020."

Ms Peters said that she was concerned by news of delays that could affect two of Eskom's coal fired power stations, Kusile and Medupi, being built to help plug a power deficit in Africa's biggest economy, which suffered a near collapse of its power grid in January last year, denting economic growth. She added that "We are not oblivious to the fact that should there be any delay in commissioning these two plants, consequences will be too ghastly to contemplate."

Kusile and Medupi, both designed to generate 4,800 MW each, are Eskom's first new power plants in more than two decades.

Eskom has been rationing electricity since early last year after the national grid nearly collapsed forcing mines and smelters to shut for days and affecting industrial production, costing the economy billions of dollars. Eskom has launched an ambitious expansion program but still needs to raise parts of the ZAR 385 billion required to supply fast rising demand in the country.

(Sourced from [www.reuters.com](http://www.reuters.com))

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