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Why Not Nuclear?

WWF promotes the sustainable and efficient use of renewable energy resources in all industrial, residential and transport sectors. Together with many other NGOs in the Climate Action Network, WWF urges the increase of new renewable energies to 20% of the global primary energy consumption by 2020 and to around 100% by 2080. WWF also calls on the implementation of serious energy efficiency measures to handle energy demand.

That implies that the use of non-renewable energy resources such as fossil fuels and uranium have to eventually be reduced to zero - a phase out of fossil fuel and nuclear power.

In the face of growing energy-related problems such as global warming, acid rain and local air pollution, nuclear power is being promoted by interested industries and certain governments as a clean source of energy which could help to reduce energy related human impact on the environment. WWF strongly opposes this view.

One of WWF's leading priorities is to accelerate the implementation of the solutions to combat global warming. Solutions to energy-related problems such as global warming can only deliver long-term benefits if they reduce instead of merely displace humanity's demands on the environment.

As industrialized nations take on commitments to limit CO² emissions as required under the Climate Change Convention (Kyoto Protocol) and/or implement national legislation, some electricity industries (utilities and nuclear advocacy groups) and certain nuclear power producing countries have suggested that nuclear power is one of the central means to combat climate change. This lobby considers nuclear a key technology in achieving climate protection commitments.



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The finalized rules of the Kyoto Protocol exclude nuclear from the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and Joint Implementation (JI). This does not, however, have a direct impact on national decisions to run existing plants or install new nuclear facilities anywhere in the world.

WWF believes that the argument that the world should re-embrace nuclear power is seriously flawed.

We are not alone in this judgment. In fact, there are many industrialized countries that do not engage in nuclear technologies at all. There are also more and more governments, such as Belgium, Germany and Sweden that have embarked on nuclear phase-out programs. In yet other countries, there is a very strong debate about the future of nuclear. Research commissioned by WWF and many other organizations on the status of nuclear power programs and technological options for cutting back on CO² provides sound arguments for why nuclear is not the solution to global warming.

More specifically, WWF believes that nuclear power is not a sustainable