

April 5, 1960

**Proposed Press Release, 'Information Regarding
Activities in Atomic Energy in South Africa'**

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Summary:

A draft of an Atomic Energy Board press release on the Union of South Africa's new refining project, sent to the Secretary of Foreign Affairs in Pretoria.

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Meld asb. in u antwoord
In reply please quote
No. 11/1/1/0.

UNIE VAN SUID-AFRIKA - UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA.
RAAD OP ATOOMKRAAG,
ATOMIC ENERGY BOARD,

Private Bag 256,

P/A SEKRETARIS VAN MYNWESE,
C/O SECRETARY FOR MINES,

PRETORIA.

5th April, 1960.

The Secretary for External Affairs,
PRETORIA.

Re: INFORMATION REGARDING ACTIVITIES IN ATOMIC ENERGY
IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Attached hereto is a copy of a recent press release regarding the uranium refining project being sponsored by the Atomic Energy Board. It would be appreciated if this could be transmitted to the Union's Minister in Vienna for his use in publicising South Africa's progress in the nuclear energy field.

It will be remembered that this project was mentioned in the last progress report from the Atomic Energy Board but that Mr. Sole was requested to regard this item as being of a confidential nature. Since authority has now been granted to make the information public, the attached press release is being forwarded to provide preliminary information, while more detail will be found in the next quarterly progress report which is expected to be issued within the next few weeks.

A. J. A. Roux
A. J. A. ROUX.
RESEARCH DIRECTOR.

Skryf aan W. van a. u. b.

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ATOMIC ENERGY BOARD.PROPOSED PRESS RELEASE ON REFINING PROJECT.

The Research Director of the Atomic Energy Board, Dr. A.J.A. Roux, announced that plans for the erection of a pilot plant to produce nuclear grade uranium metal and pure compounds suitable for use as nuclear fuels, are in an advanced stage of preparation. Design work is nearing completion and equipment required from overseas sources has already been ordered. The pilot plant, capable of producing about 100 tons of metal a year will be erected at the Government Metallurgical Laboratories in Johannesburg and is expected to be put into operation before the end of this year.

This project, which is being financed by the Atomic Energy Board, is carried out jointly by the Board and the Chamber of Mines. The work is being undertaken by a team consisting of scientists and engineers seconded from the uranium industry and members of staff of the Board and the Government Metallurgical Laboratory with Dr. M.G. Atmore, Chief Metallurgist of the Board as leader. The overall direction of the work rests with a Steering Committee representing both the uranium industry and the Board under the chairmanship of Mr. E.T. Pinkney, Consulting Chemical Engineer of the Anglo American Corporation.

The project will enable us to fill wide gaps in our experience of the production of high purity nuclear materials and provide training in this field for South African scientists and engineers. Furthermore, it will place South Africa in a position to investigate techniques for the processing of nuclear grade uranium in this country and to refine portion of her own production. By so doing, the country will be placed in a more favourable position to offer uranium in whatever form it may be required on a competitive market, or for domestic consumption in the future.

*Copies of this press Release has
been sent to Vienna, under cover
of minutes 134/11/23 of 20/4/60*

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The rapid progress with this project since the Board's research and development programme was announced in September of last year was made possible only by the intimate collaboration between and the pooling of resources of the uranium industry, the Government Metallurgical Laboratory and the Atomic Energy Board.