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MOLYBDENUM-99 PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

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STATUS OF NTP'S CONVERSION PROGRAMME

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ABSTRACT

The SAFARI-1 research reactor and NTP ^{99}Mo production facilities at Pelindaba continue to produce and distribute significant quantities of ^{99}Mo for the world nuclear medicine market. Since commencing the development of an LEU based ^{99}Mo production process in early 2007 and the achievement of the first successful large scale LEU ^{99}Mo production in 2010, NTP has continued, together with its customers, with efforts to fully convert from HEU to LEU. Significant progress has been made in the past year with NTP's conversion efforts and it is nearing completion.

Most of the infrastructure related projects to ensure long term sustainable production and supply of LEU based Mo-99 have been completed or are in the final stages of commissioning. The LEU based Mo-99 production experience gained and excellent track record of supply over the past 8 years provides confidence to the market regarding a secure supply.

The economics of the ^{99}Mo supply chain continue to remain cause for concern with the critically important ^{99m}Tc isotope continuing to be undervalued. Added to this, the ongoing direct and indirect subsidization of the Mo-99 production and supply chain continues to add uncertainty to the longer term sustainability of the industry.

This presentation provides a status update on the conversion programme at NTP.