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HKNIC provides update on Licensing Operational Events at Daya Bay Nuclear Power Station over the past six months in 2010

(15 November 2010) The Hong Kong Nuclear Investment Company Limited (HKNIC) Managing Director, Mr SH Chan, meets with media today to give an update on the latest Licensing Operational Events (LOEs) at the Daya Bay Nuclear Power Station (Daya Bay), which took place in the past six months in 2010, in view of the increasing public concern on the safe operation of Daya Bay.

Since May 2010, there are a total of 3 LOEs, among which, two were classified as Below Scale (also known as Level 0) and one as Level 1. “All the LOEs are of no safety significance or consequence and therefore do not cause any safety, health and environmental impact to the surrounding area and the community in the vicinity,” said Mr SH Chan. The number of LOEs identified at Daya Bay this year, is similar to that of the average number of past six years (in the range of 1 to 4 per year). Since 2005, the performance of Daya Bay has been substantially improved, reducing the annual average of 13 LOEs (between 2000-2004) to 4 or below.

The Level 1 event was identified during the Unit 1 planned maintenance outage on 23 October. During the on-site inspection of the planned outage, a flaw was observed at a water pipe section of a residual heat removal system, the water of which is used to take away the residual heat of the reactor for preparation of regular inspection and maintenance work. As the flaw is sufficiently minute, the normal system function was not affected.

“Since the concerned pipe section and the residual heat removal system are installed and completely sealed off in the totally enclosed containment building, which is made up of a 900 millimetre thick pre-stressed reinforced concrete structure with a 6 millimetre thick inner steel lining, the event does not lead to any safety, health and environmental consequence to both the safe operation of the power station and the surrounding area,” further added by Mr Chan.

The operator of Daya Bay is currently replacing the affected pipe section and investigation of the cause of the event is being conducted for further improvement. In the meantime, in order to enhance the transparency, the descriptions of all the three LOEs will be uploaded to the HKNIC website.

“While all the LOEs identified are minor events with no safety impact on the power station and the surrounding environment, we fully understand the public’s concern on nuclear safety. Therefore, we will further step up our efforts in communication with the public regarding the operation of Daya Bay through website, visit programme as well as other public education activities.” said Mr Chan.

LOEs at nuclear power station are classified according to the International Nuclear and Radiological Event Scale (INES) of the United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency into Level 1 to 7. Events classified as Below Scale (also known as Level 0) or Level 1 represent that the concerned event is of no safety significance and no safety consequence respectively. The scale is commonly used by major nuclear operators over the world including France, Japan, Britain, etc.

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