



# Nuclear energy best viable option to meet future demands says UAE

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Abu Dhabi: Exponential growth in energy needs has made the UAE Government opt for nuclear energy.

Local energy requirements are expected to grow by more than 160 per cent by 2020 and nuclear energy offers the best viable alternative to meet the demand, the federal government announced in a white paper on Sunday.

A Nuclear Energy Programme Implementation Organisation was created to further develop the programme, as recommended by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said Shaikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Foreign Minister, in a briefing to key officials.

Shaikh Abdullah also announced the appointment of Hamad Al Ka'abi as the Special Representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for International Nuclear Cooperation.

## Most viable option

A study conducted by the federal government revealed that demand for electricity will increase to more than double the current demand of 15,546 megawatts (MW) of energy. Known volumes of natural gas, it stated, would be insufficient to meet the future demand.

Based on the future plans for the nation, the growth in the local economy and infrastructure, the government predicts that 40,858 MW of energy will be required to meet demand by 2020, reflecting a cumulative annual growth in demand of approximately 9 per cent.

The white paper, Policy of the United Arab Emirates on the Evaluation and

Potential Development of Peaceful Nuclear Energy, justifies nuclear energy as the most economic and environment-friendly option for the UAE.

Although it sets forward an agenda for a further planning phase, no timeframe has been set on when the process would begin or which company would be handed the responsibility of building the reactors. The paper also stresses the UAE's commitment to a transparent, peaceful and secure programme.

- *Additional inputs from Abbas Al Lawati, Staff Reporter*

### **What is it?: power of fission**

In its simplest form, nuclear energy is a way of creating heat through the fission of atoms, particularly, uranium, plutonium or thorium or the fusion of hydrogen into helium.

This process has been proven by the International Atomic Energy Agency as the future for alternative energy due to the ability of uranium to produce energy 10 million times that of coal.