

**Economy**

# Carbon capture and storage centre set up

## Technology will help SA in its transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy, minister tells conference

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SA HAS taken another step towards the development of carbon capture and storage capacity with yesterday's official launch of the South African Centre for Carbon Capture and Storage.

With SA set to increase its carbon dioxide emissions for at least another decade, carbon capture and storage — a process whereby carbon dioxide is captured from gases produced by fossil fuel combustion, compressed,

and injected into deep geological formations for permanent storage — is a mitigation measure to keep greenhouse gas emissions under control.

Energy Minister Dipuo Peters yesterday said the use of the technology was a transitional measure in the switch from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

"The world needs to wean itself from fossil fuels on to both nuclear and renewable energy. That process will take time and carbon capture and storage is seen as a transitional measure," Peters said.

She was speaking at a carbon capture and storage conference in Johannesburg at which the centre was launched. The two events are part of Carbon Capture and Storage Week. Other activities included specialised courses and workshops.

The South African National Energy Research Institute last year began a study for a carbon geological storage atlas. Peters said the atlas would locate potential geological storage sites for CO<sub>2</sub>.

"That atlas, which is scheduled to be published mid-2010, will form the

basis for future geological storage work in SA," Peters said.

A 2004 study by the then minerals and energy department showed there was potential for carbon capture and storage technology in SA.

Richard Worthington, climate change programme manager for World Wide Fund in SA, yesterday alluded to fears that the advent of the carbon capture and storage could sideline efforts to develop a renewable energy industry which would have social and economic benefits.

The centre's head Tony Surrridge

agreed with Peters that carbon capture and storage was a transitional measure.

"We believe that we must put a lot of money on renewable energy and energy efficiency. No technology should be left off the table."

John Gale, GM of the International Energy Agency greenhouse gas research programme, said carbon capture projects needed a combination of regulatory certainty, government financial support and public support.

Demonstration plants would be

the biggest test of public opinion. Gale said capturing made up 75% of the costs of carbon capture and storage. But technological developments could reduce the costs.

He said countries that planned carbon capture and storage projects could learn from those that had already carried out some. Prominent carbon capture and storage projects around the world include Rangeley (Colorado, US), Weyburn (Canada) and Sleipner (in the North Sea, about 250km off the coast of Norway.)

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