PRESS RELEASE

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New report confirms that the Kvanefjeld mining project is not sustainable

Jan Willem Storm van Leeuwen who is an expert in technology assessment and life cycle analyses of energy systems at Ceedata Consultants in the Netherlands has published a new report on the Kvanefjeld mining project. The report comments on the bias of regulators such as the IAEA and WHO and gives new evidence of the project's negative impact on public health and the environment.

Among others, it is stressed that Kvanefjeld, which according to the licensee, Greenland Minerals and Energy, might contain the world's second largest uranium deposit, will be the first big open pit uranium mine located on top of a mountain. This means that mining water and spills from the processing of the ore could run off the slopes and reach inhabited areas in a very short time. Furthermore, dust from the mining pit could reach inhabited areas within minutes.

The report also indicates that seepage and spills of heavily contaminated water from the mining pit and from the two residue storage facilities are practically unavoidable. 875 million tons of concentrator tailings containing a series of toxic chemicals will be placed in the nearby Taseq Lake. Furthermore, tens of millions of cubic meters tailings from the refinery will be placed in a natural basin. Not least because there are much more thorium than uranium in Kvanefjeld and all the thorium is discarded, the refinery tailings are about ten times as radioactive as the ore rocks and contain radionuclides and various non-radioactive toxic elements in a soluble and consequently very mobile form.

"Recently, The Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland, GEUS, has evaluated the potential for uranium deposits in Greenland and concluded that there are twenty one high and seven very high potential areas [1]", says Mikkel Myrup, chairman of Avataq. "This new analysis of the Kvanefjeld project shows how important it is that the uranium stays in the ground, because it cannot be mined in a sustainable way".

"Particularly troubling are the risks that will be inflicted on the inhabitants of Narsaq, situated just below the planned uranium mine", says Hans Pedersen from SustainableEnergy. "Risø National Laboratory [2] has estimated that up to a thousand tons of radioactive dust might be released annually. Some of the dust will be carried by the heavy polar winds towards Narsaq and across the region, where it could affect among others sheepfold and food crops".

"Because of the low grade of the uranium ore, the mine's energy consumption is very high", says Christian Ege, director of the Danish Ecological Council. "Thus, uranium production at Kuannersuit will be near the bottom of the energy cliff. This means that a nuclear energy system using uranium from this ore, measured from cradle to grave, is actually an energy sink and does not deliver useful energy to the world".

"According to the report, it appears that no uranium mining and processing site in the world has ever been rehabilitated in an acceptable way" says Palle Bendsen from NOAH Friends of the Earth Denmark. "That is perhaps the best counterargument. Most of the radioactivity remains in the tailings, which will stay dangerously radioactive, as well as chemically toxic, for thousands of years and inevitably lead to contamination of food and water".

J.W. Storm van Leeuwen's report can be found here:
http://ecocouncil.dk/component/docman/doc_download/1540-140426-kvanefjeld-report

For further information, please contact:

Jan Willem Storm van Leeuwen, MSc, Independent consultant, Ceedata Consulting (www.stormsmith.nl), tel.: +31 161 491 369, e-mail: storm(at)ceedata.nl

For *Avataq* (www.avataq.gl): Mikkel Myrup, tel.: +299 22 84 23, e-mail: mikkelmyrup(at)post.com

For *The Danish Ecological Council* (www.ecocouncil.dk): Christian Ege, tel.: +45 33 18 19 33, (mob.) +45 28 58 06 98, e-mail: christian(at)ecocouncil.dk and Niels Henrik Hooge, tel.: +45 21 83 79 94, e-mail: nh_hooge(at)yahoo.dk

For *NOAH Friends of the Earth Denmark* (www.noah.dk): Palle Bendsen, tel.: +45 98 14 76 95, (mob.) +45 30 13 76 95, e-mail: pnb(at)mail.dk

For *SustainableEnergy* (www.ve.dk): Hans Pedersen, tel.: +45 51 92 24 14, e-mail: pedersen(at)ve.dk

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[1] Nynke Keulen, Kristine Thrane, Bo Møller Stensgaard and Per Kalvig: An evaluation of the potential for uranium deposits in Greenland, Center for Minerals and Materials, Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland, 2014, p. 73-76, http://www.geus.dk/geus-general/announcements/mimarapport2014-01.pdf

[2] Kim Pilegaard: Preliminary environmental impact statement for the Kvanefjeld uranium mine, Risø National Laboratory, 1990, p. 44, http://orbit.dtu.dk/fedora/objects/orbit:87561/datastreams/file_fa346e27-f1e1-4302-bf9b-03e5da76aa51/content