

National Statement by Hongtaek Yong,

1st Vice Minister of Science and ICT, Korea, Republic of,

at the 65th IAEA General Conference

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Mr. President,

Director General of the IAEA,

Excellencies

and Distinguished Delegates of Member States,

I send my greetings to you all on behalf of the Korean government.

I am confident that this General Conference will be a success under the outstanding leadership of Mr. President and Director General even in this challenging period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Korean government highly appreciates and firmly supports the IAEA's efforts to develop technologies to address marine plastic pollution as well as the ZODIAC project, which are being pursued by the IAEA in earnest as its key initiatives.

The Korean government has made extrabudgetary contributions of 1.3 million US dollars over the past two years to help Member States strengthen their capacities in responding to infectious diseases such as COVID-19.

Additional contributions to other IAEA programs such as the ReNuAL+ project, Marie Curie Fellowship Programme, and NUTEC Plastics are also being considered.

We will remain committed to fulfilling our role as a responsible member of the international community.

Mr. President,

Nuclear safety is a definite prerequisite necessary for the peaceful uses of nuclear

energy.

This is why we must make tireless efforts to ensure the highest level of nuclear safety even amidst the current global pandemic.

As part of this endeavor, the Korean government is engaged in exhaustive preparations for safe decommissioning following the application submitted in May this year for the approval of ‘Kori nuclear power plant(NPP) Unit 1’ decommissioning.

Since this is our very first decommissioning project, the Korean government will develop regulatory guidelines based on the safety requirements of the IAEA and enhance safety by working closely with the IAEA and its Member States.

With safety as our top priority, we will also undertake a thorough review on the completeness and implementability of the accident management plans, including severe ones, so that the public can be assured of the highest level of nuclear safety with absolute certainty.

Korea will continue close cooperation with the IAEA in the establishment of the IAEA Nuclear Security Training and Demonstration Center and development of cyber security training program.

Mr. President,

In April, the Japanese government announced that it would discharge contaminated water stored at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant into the ocean.

When it comes to matters that may cause transboundary marine pollution such as the release of contaminated water, states in charge shall conduct a sufficient level of consultation in good faith with stakeholders including neighboring countries before making a decision.

However, the Japanese government made the decision unilaterally without

engaging in sufficient consultations with Korea, its closest neighbor.

Despite Korea's consistent opposition to the decision of releasing the contaminated water into the ocean, Japan has been taking concrete measures, and in late August, the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) announced its plans for implementing the decision.

The Korean government once again expresses its deepest regret that Japan is pushing ahead with its decision, not engaging in sufficient consultations with stakeholder countries and without making every effort to build full understanding with the international community.

Korea urges Japan to reconsider its decision to dispose of the contaminated water into the ocean.

We believe the IAEA's role is crucial in ensuring objectivity, transparency and safety in the process of handling the contaminated water in the Fukushima power plant.

In this context, as the closest neighboring country of Japan, Korea would like to continue to participate in the IAEA's monitoring and safety review activities related to the disposal of the contaminated water, including the analysis of the radioactivity in the contaminated water.

Japan should take a sincere approach as a responsible Member State of the IAEA and accommodate the requests of its closest neighbor.

In this regard, we look forward to the IAEA's continued role in addressing concerns and providing necessary cooperation.

Mr. President,

The North Korean nuclear issue should be addressed with a sense of urgency through diplomacy and dialogue.

We see that the Director General's report in August, which expresses concern over the DPRK's nuclear activities, is a reflection of such urgency.

Recognizing the above, the Korean government will spare no effort in making substantive progress toward denuclearization through early resumption of US-DPRK and inter-Korean dialogues.

We count on continued support of the IAEA, its Member States and the international community in establishing peace on the Korean peninsula.

Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,

All of us gathered here have tirelessly committed ourselves to promoting the peaceful uses and the development of nuclear energy.

However, the global COVID-19 pandemic is posing unprecedented threats to the sustainable development and prosperity of humankind.

To realize universal values of humankind, and to preserve and maintain a safe environment and lives, I hope that all Member States, under the leadership of Mr. President and the Director General, work more closely than ever and pool collective wisdom as "One Team".

Korea will lead the way in this direction.

Thank you.