

Statement by Tae-Seog Oh

The 1st Vice Minister of Ministry of Science and ICT
Korea, Republic of
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Mr. President,
Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi,
Excellencies,
and Distinguished Delegates of Member States,

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the President and the Director General for hosting this General Conference even amidst this challenging period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Korean government highly commends and firmly supports the activities and efforts made by the IAEA to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

In this context, the Korean government has again decided to provide one million US dollars, following last year, to the ZODIAC initiative. We are also positively considering a contribution to Rays of Hope, as well as the NHSI, which are being pursued by the IAEA in earnest as its key initiatives.

We are committed to providing our full support to the IAEA as a responsible member of the agency.

Mr. President, in an effort to respond to the intensifying climate crisis, countries around the world are working hard to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and achieve carbon neutrality.

In line with these efforts, the new government of Korea has also been developing and implementing a new set of energy policies, including those aimed at expanding the share of nuclear energy in the country's energy mix and promoting

the use of nuclear power, which will assist the country on its journey toward carbon neutrality.

As part of this endeavor, we will resume the construction of Shin-Hanul Unit 3 and 4 and continue the operation of existing nuclear reactors, while making safety our utmost priority.

Also, we will participate in overseas nuclear projects to share Korea's expertise in the safe design, construction, and operation of nuclear power plants, as well as its experience of successfully commercializing nuclear technologies, with the international community.

In addition, Korea is pushing forward more advanced SMR models based on its experience of developing the existing model SMART. We are also establishing regulatory frameworks and relevant technologies for SMR safety verification. We look forward to close cooperation among the Member States in this endeavor.

In order for nuclear energy to play a practical role in enhancing energy security and coping with climate change, we recognize that the concerns regarding spent nuclear fuel need to be properly addressed.

To this end, we call for closer technical cooperation among the Member States and efforts to find feasible solutions for spent nuclear fuel treatment.

Mr. President, the Japanese government continues to implement measures to dispose of contaminated water from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant into the sea, by approving plans to install marine discharge facilities in July, and by subsequently allowing their construction.

As this would be the first case in history where contaminated water created as a result of a nuclear accident is released into the sea, it is of paramount importance to transparently share information, to seek understanding and cooperation of the international community, and to ensure thorough safety verification.

As a country that shares marine ecosystems with Japan, Korea has been repeatedly conveying the Korean public's concerns regarding the discharge of

contaminated water into the sea, and has been continuously requesting that Japan take responsible measures to address them.

We would like to reiterate that Japan must fully comply with international laws and standards in disposing of the contaminated water and do so in a scientifically and objectively safe manner.

We highly appreciate the IAEA's efforts in this regard, and expect that the IAEA will continue to play an active role in the entire monitoring process of disposal from an independent and objective standpoint.

As the closest neighboring country to Japan, Korea will continue to actively participate in the IAEA's verification process, including the analysis of radioactivity in the contaminated water.

We are also willing to discuss measures to strengthen monitoring from the perspective of marine environmental protection with the IAEA and interested Member States.

Mr. President, the nuclear programs of the DPRK are a serious threat to the international non-proliferation regime and a clear violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions.

Our government has proposed the Audacious Initiative that promises supportive measures to dramatically improve the economy and livelihood of the people of North Korea, which is conditional on the DPRK's willingness to stop its nuclear development and make substantive progress toward denuclearization.

We ask for the unwavering support for our efforts to achieve North Korea's denuclearization and establish sustainable peace on the Korean peninsula.

Mr. President, Korea would like to join other IAEA Member States in expressing grave concerns over the situation in Ukraine, where the safety of nuclear facilities, including the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, is under serious threat.

Furthermore, the facility has failed to fully comply with the Seven indispensable Pillars announced by the Director General for ensuring the safety of nuclear power plants let alone the IAEA's regulations on safeguards, nuclear safety and security.

The Korean government is highly appreciative of the efforts of the Director General and staff members of the IAEA to ensure the safety of the nuclear power plants in Ukraine. And we also fully support a IAEA's proposal to establish a nuclear safety and security protection zone near Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

What we need to do now is to ensure that nuclear energy contributes safely to the peace and prosperity of humankind.

Korea urges all the Member States to unite to protect the global environment and human life and to ensure that the nuclear non-proliferation regime is firmly maintained.

Korea will lead the way forward, together with the IAEA and its Member States.

Thank you.