
Statement
by Mr. LEE Jin-gyu
1st Vice Minister
of the Ministry of Science and ICT
of the Republic of Korea

at the 61st IAEA General Conference

19 September 2017

[Opening Remarks]

Ms. President,

Distinguished delegates from the Member States!

On behalf of the government of the Republic of Korea, let me begin by conveying my congratulations to you on your election, and my best wishes for the success of the 61st IAEA General Conference.

I also welcome the new Member State, Grenada.

Allow me to extend my congratulations to honorable Yukiya Amano on his third term as Director General.

With his exemplary leadership proven over the years, I absolutely believe Director General Amano will continue to play a pivotal role in helping the Member States achieve the noble goal of "Atoms for peace and development".

[1. Korea' s Nuclear Policy]

Ms. President,

Nuclear energy has fueled Korea's economic growth over the past four decades.

That period has witnessed Korea not only achieving self-reliance in nuclear technology, but also contributing to the international community by sharing nuclear technologies.

All those achievements made Korea recognized as a unique nuclear success story.

However, Korea and other countries now are facing a grave challenge, that is, reinforcing nuclear safety.

As such, nuclear policy of our new government puts foremost value on safety of our citizens.

[2 Nuclear Safety, Decommissioning, Spent-fuel management]

Having said that, I would like to introduce new nuclear policy of new government of Korea.

Korean nuclear policy focuses on reinforcing safety at nuclear power plants, preparing for decommissioning and managing spent fuel.

With regard to strengthening safety of nuclear power plants in operation, based on the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the principles of Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety,

the Korean government is currently promoting R&D and revising regulations to prevent accidents.

In addition, following the permanent shutdown of Korea's first nuclear reactor, Kori-1, our government has completed regulatory steps for its safe decommissioning.

We are currently integrating the effort of the public and private sectors, academia, and research agencies, to secure core technologies and experts in the field.

Efforts to develop technologies for the safe management and processing of the ever-increasing spent fuels are also ongoing.

Korea welcomes the intensified efforts by the IAEA in the areas of nuclear safety, decommissioning and spent fuel management. Korea looks forward to actively collaborating with the Member States to share relevant technology and experience.

[3. Nuclear Innovation and Technological Convergence]

Ms. President,

I believe this age demands innovation as a new window of opportunity, and nuclear energy is not an exception.

Fortunately, nuclear energy has constantly driven innovation. The convergence of radiation technology with other fields and industries has provided solutions to our common challenges.

The Republic of Korea highly appreciates IAEA's effort through technological cooperation to achieve Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs).

In this regard, Korea will continue to participate in the RCA projects and IAEA's activities for developing countries.

Korea is promoting the development and use of nuclear medicine technology, and further plans to pursue innovation and convergence of nuclear energy with other fields, such as aerospace, marine and polar science.

With the conviction that increased application of radiation technologies will bring substantial changes and benefits to humanity, Korea will continue to support IAEA's corresponding endeavors.

[4. Calling for denuclearization of North Korea]

Ms. President,

North Korea conducted its sixth nuclear test early this month despite continuous warnings of the international community.

Such test is a grave act of provocation which undermines the very foundation of the global non-proliferation regime.

The explosive yield of the sixth nuclear test far exceeded the sum of all five previous tests. It clearly demonstrated the threats posed by North Korea's nuclear program are reaching a new level.

As noted in this year's IAEA Director General's Report, North Korea has continued nuclear activities, including the operations of the 5 megawatt reactor and enrichment facility in Yongbyon. This is clear violation of the UN Security Council resolutions.

In response to such dangerous and destabilizing behavior, the Korean government will work to ensure that actions will be taken in close coordination with the international community and the IAEA.

UN Security Council resolution 2375 which was adopted last week proved the international community's strong resolve to counter North Korea's nuclear threats.

It is my view that the adoption of a stronger resolution on the implementation of NPT safeguards agreement between the IAEA and North Korea at this year's IAEA General Conference will empower the united response of the international community.

As UN Secretary General and IAEA Director General have mentioned, I urge North Korea to heed the calls of the international community, to abandon all of its nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner. I also urge North Korea, to comply fully with its obligations under the NPT and IAEA safeguards agreements.

[Closing Remarks]

Ms. President,

The Member States have gathered here today under the firm belief that combining our efforts for noble goal is the fastest and safest way to achieve "Atoms for peace and development".

Korea expects the Member States to combine their willingness and strength in nuclear energy with the IAEA at the center, and to put their best efforts into using nuclear technologies for the prosperous future of the humanity.

Korea is committed to standing at the forefront of such efforts.

Before I close my remarks, I would like to say again the IAEA and the international community should never sit idly by in the face of North Korea's evolving threats presented by its nuclear ambitions.

It is my heartfelt hope that, at this year's IAEA General Conference, the international community's strong message will also be conveyed through the adoption of a resolution on North Korea's nuclear issue.

Once again, I extend my deepest gratitude to you, President Collinson and to the Director General and the IAEA Secretariat for all the hard work and dedication.

Thank you.