

Statement by H.E. Insun KANG
Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs

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Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Before beginning, I would like to join the previous speakers in expressing my deepest condolences to the bereaved families and the people of Iran for the loss of the president and the accompanying members.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Korea (ROK), I would like to welcome the convening of the ICONS 2024 organized by the IAEA. Let me also convey my sincere gratitude to the Co-Presidents for their dedicated work in organizing the conference.

I want to start by emphasizing that, although the Ministerial Declaration was not adopted, we firmly support the Co-Presidents' joint Statement.

Today, the threat to nuclear security is becoming more pronounced than ever before for two reasons.

The first is technological advancement and innovation. For example, Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) comes with significant benefits as well as new type of risks; and emerging technologies represented by AI have the potential to change the very nature of a global nuclear ecosystem.

The second is geopolitics. Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues to pose grave threats to the safety and security of the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) and other nuclear plants. The protection of nuclear facilities in armed conflicts is one of the many challenges that must be addressed collectively by the international community. Whether we will be successful in rising to these challenges will be crucial for global nuclear safety and security in the future.

Against this backdrop, the ICONS 2024 with its theme

"Shaping the Future" no doubt arrives at a critical juncture for the global nuclear security community.

As Mahatma Gandhi said, "The future depends on what we do in the present." It is my sincere hope that this Conference will provide us with valuable opportunities to discuss ways to commit to nuclear security.

Distinguished Delegates,

As the host of the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit as well as the first ICONS in 2016, the ROK is a strong advocate of global nuclear security efforts. I would like to share with you three key contributions made by the ROK in the field of nuclear security since the ICONS 2020.

Firstly, the ROK has consistently supported various IAEA activities, through financial and personnel contributions. Since 2010, Korea has donated over 10 million US dollars to the Nuclear Security Fund

(NSF), including the establishment of the IAEA Nuclear Security Training and Demonstration Centre in Seibersdorf.

In 2022, we made a voluntary contribution of 1.2 million US dollars to support nuclear safety and security in Ukraine.

As the chair of the IAEA CyberCon23*, Korea has played a pivotal role in raising awareness about cybersecurity at nuclear facilities. Moreover, Korean experts have actively participated in international processes such as the IAEA Advisory Group on Nuclear Security (AdSec), facilitating nuclear security policy discussions with their advice and recommendations.

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In 2021, Korea and the IAEA established the ROK-IAEA Policy Consultation on Nuclear Security which serves as a pragmatic channel to expand our cooperation. Korea has also supported the

universalizing the amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (A/CPPNM).

Secondly, the ROK has established and offered nuclear security training courses for international community.

In line with our pledge made at the 2010 Nuclear Security Summit, the Korea Institute of Nuclear Nonproliferation and Control (KINAC) has been operating the International Nuclear Nonproliferation and Security Academy (INSA) since 2014. Over the past decade, Korea trained more than six hundred officials from 28 countries through INSA training programs.

And lastly, the ROK has significantly contributed to nuclear security capacity-building by hosting a variety of workshops. In 2021, we hosted the "Asia's Consideration of Nuclear Security Workshop" with the objective of raising awareness about nuclear security in Asia. Last year, Korea and the United States co-hosted

the "Operation PABAL: Radiological Response Crisis Communications Workshop" in Seoul.

These workshops have provided the participants with opportunities to deepen their knowledge on nuclear security and also contributed to boosting interpersonal networks of nuclear security experts worldwide.

Distinguished Delegates,

The potential of nuclear technology to enhance human life will not be fully realized unless we work tirelessly to prevent its malicious use. To address future nuclear security threats, the Republic of Korea is committed to the following actions.

First, we will contribute 2 million US dollars to the Nuclear Security Fund (NSF) this year, supporting not only nuclear safety and security in Ukraine but also intensifying global efforts to counter emerging nuclear

risks and threats. Korea will remain steadfast in its support of the IAEA and its nuclear security activities.

Second, we will continue to work closely with the IAEA in the development of long-term international training programs aimed at enhancing nuclear security capacities.

Third, Korea will actively participate in the discussions on nuclear security considerations for SMRs led by the IAEA such as the Nuclear Harmonization and Standardization Initiative (NHSI).

In closing, let me reiterate the Republic of Korea's unwavering commitment to nuclear security. Korea will continue to closely engage with the IAEA and the international community in our common efforts to strengthen nuclear security capacities.

Thank you. /End/