

Statement by Sang Im YOO

Minister of Ministry of Science and ICT

Korea, Republic of

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Mr. President Sang Wook Ham,
Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi,
And esteemed colleagues,

It is an honor to be part of this group of distinguished delegates at the 68th IAEA General Conference.

I would first like to express our government's gratitude for the commitment and dedication of Mr. President and Director General towards ensuring the safe and peaceful use of nuclear energy.

The Republic of Korea highly values the IAEA's efforts in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy and has actively cooperated with the Agency.

This March, we successfully hosted the IAEA Lise Meitner Programme, aimed at empowering women scientists in nuclear fields.

Furthermore, the Republic of Korea plans to contribute over 1.75 million euros to support key IAEA projects, including ZODIAC and the SMR Platform.

As a responsible member state, Korea will continue to fully support the IAEA's mission.

Mr. President,

Nuclear energy is critical for achieving carbon neutrality, and its importance has never been greater.

For over 60 years, the Republic of Korea has safely operated nuclear power plants making world-class nuclear technology.

We also have been supporting other countries in safely utilizing nuclear energy, thereby contributing to solving global energy challenges.

In particular, Korea is helping drive the global shift to sustainable energy through the investment and development of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), which are safer, more economically efficient, and compatible with renewable energy.

To accelerate the commercialization of SMRs, Korea is collaborating with the private sector on technology development and demonstration, while also establishing new regulatory standards and workforce training for an SMR-centered nuclear ecosystem.

This May, the Republic of Korea hosted the INPRO Dialogue Forum on SMRs, sharing experiences with other member states.

We look forward to supporting the success of the SMR Conference next month.

Through these efforts, we hope to share our extensive experience in safe reactor operations and next-generation nuclear technologies with IAEA member states.

Mr. President,

the international community recognizes the Republic of Korea's nuclear technologies and industries.

It will be further strengthened by the IAEA IRRS mission since it is planned in November this year, for the first time in 10 years.

This mission will allow the Republic of Korea to review its safety regulatory system according to international standards so that we can move forward.

My government will fully support the IAEA IRRS mission team across the board.

Mr. President,

the ROK government firmly believes that the disposal of contaminated water stored at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station should proceed safely, in a scientific and objective manner and in compliance with international laws and standards, with full transparency.

To this end, we request that the IAEA continue to operate the monitoring system effectively and ensure that all relevant information is shared transparently, in order for the contaminated water to be safely disposed as planned.

Mr. President,

the DPRK's nuclear and missile programs pose a grave threat to the international non-proliferation regime as well as to regional and global security.

The Republic of Korea strongly condemns the DPRK's unlawful nuclear and missile programs, which violate multiple UN Security Council Resolutions.

We urge the DPRK to immediately cease provocations, return to full compliance with IAEA safeguards and the NPT, and accept our proposal for dialogue without conditions.

My government will actively cooperate with the IAEA and the international community for the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the DPRK.

The increasing military cooperation between Russia and the DPRK threatens peace and stability of the entire world.

We urge Russia and the DPRK to immediately cease their unlawful cooperation and fully comply with all relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

Mr. President,

the Republic of Korea is deeply concerned by the prolonged threats to the safety and security of nuclear facilities in Ukraine, including the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Director General and the staff members of the IAEA for their efforts to address the current situation in Ukraine.

We will extend our full support for concerted global efforts towards nuclear security led by the IAEA, including this year's contribution of 2 million US dollars towards the Nuclear Security Fund that we pledged at ICONS 2024.

Mr. President,

the Republic of Korea believes that the Amendment to Article VI of the IAEA Statute should enter into force without further delay for the restoration of true sovereign equality amongst Member States.

This will help ensure better representation of the expansion of the IAEA and allow all Member States to be assigned to one of the regional groups.

We sincerely urge the Member States that have not yet done so to proactively take measures to ratify the Amendment to restore sovereign equality within the IAEA.

Thank you.