

# Statement by Hyuk Chae KOO

Vice Minister of Ministry of Science and ICT

Korea, Republic of

September 16, 2025

Mr. President Peter Burian,  
Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi,  
Distinguished Delegates,

It is a great honor to address the 69th General Conference of the IAEA.

I extend my deep appreciation to you, Mr. President, and to Director General Grossi for your strong commitment to the peaceful and safe uses of nuclear energy.

I also warmly welcome the Republic of Maldives as the new Member State of the Agency.

Mr. President,

The Republic of Korea is committed to weaving together technological innovation and enhanced safety, driven by the development of next-generation technologies and the AI technology.

AI is no longer just a tool.

It has become a transformative force, driving both economic growth and societal innovation.

In the nuclear sector, we are leveraging this power through the ‘AI for Nuclear’ to enhance safety, economic efficiency, and reliability.

We aim to harness AI, robotics, and digital twin technologies to reinforce safety and elevate economic performance across the entire nuclear life cycle.

Korea is actively advancing a diverse portfolio of reactors.

This includes not only innovative light-water reactors like SMART and i-SMR, but also other next-generation systems such as SFR, HTGR and MSR.

At the same time, we are establishing a robust, science-based regulatory framework to ensure the safe and responsible deployment of SMRs.

Korea is also constructing a multipurpose research reactor, underpinned by our advanced reactor design capabilities and proliferation-resistant fuel technology.

The Kijang Research Reactor (KJRR), slated for completion in 2027, will provide a stable supply of medical isotopes to Member States.

This reactor will establish itself as a key infrastructure for sharing reactor operation and fuel technologies.

Korea has recently established a solid institutional framework for the safe and transparent management of high-level radioactive waste, including spent fuel, through the enactment of a special law and the creation of an independent management authority.

At the same time, we are advancing the decommissioning of Kori Unit 1, our first commercial nuclear power plant, thereby building practical experience in safe and responsible nuclear life cycle management.

We stand ready to share these experiences with the international community and to work together in seeking common solutions for the future of nuclear energy.

Mr. President,

Korea has consistently contributed to the Agency's Technical Cooperation activities, with a firm commitment to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

We have actively supported the SMR Platform and the INPRO programme through both financial and in-kind contributions enabling Member States to prepare for SMR deployment and to develop sustainable nuclear systems.

Korea also actively participates in the Agency's initiatives dedicated to the safe development of SMRs, such as NHSI and the SMR Regulators' Forum, thus contributing to securing the highest level of nuclear safety in line with new technological advances.

Alongside these efforts, Korea is committed to further expand its contributions in nuclear applications notably by signing a practical arrangement on cooperation under the Atoms4Food initiative during this General Conference.

Mr. President,

The DPRK's nuclear and missile programs pose a grave threat to peace and security on the Korean Peninsula, across the region, and to the global non-proliferation regime.

We call on the international community to remain united in supporting our endeavors to reduce tensions on the Korean Peninsula and to achieve substantial progress toward denuclearization through peaceful dialogue.

Korea commends the Agency's tireless efforts to resolve the outstanding nuclear issues with Iran.

In this regard, we note the recent agreement between the IAEA and Iran, and look forward to continuing this momentum for cooperation.

Mr. President,

Korea has consistently underscored the importance of ensuring that the disposal of contaminated water stored at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station is conducted in a transparent and scientifically objective manner.

This process must be in full compliance with international law and relevant international standards.

We acknowledge the Agency's effective monitoring efforts and reaffirm our commitment to actively engaging in related activities going forward.

The Republic of Korea also remains deeply concerned about the prolonged threats to nuclear facilities in Ukraine, and supports the Agency's on-site missions.

Mr. President,  
Director General Grossi,  
Distinguished Delegates,

The Republic of Korea looks forward to the early entry into force of the amendment to Article VI of the IAEA Statute, which will enhance the Board's representativeness and strengthen its democratic legitimacy.

We call upon all Member States yet to ratify the amendment to do so without further delay.

Looking ahead, we hope that the upcoming International Symposium on AI and Nuclear Energy, scheduled for this December, will be a meaningful platform to shape the future of nuclear energy and AI.

Furthermore, in October 2026, the Republic of Korea will proudly host the IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power.

We welcome the active engagement and cooperation of the Secretariat and Member States to ensure the success of this critical event.

Thank you.