

Statement by Jongho Lee

Minister of Ministry of Science and ICT

Korea, Republic of

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Madam President, Vilawan Mangklatanakul,
esteemed colleagues.

It is an honor to be here today.

I would like to extend my congratulations
to Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi for his reappointment.

Madam President,

I hope we will take this opportunity to recognize the importance
of international cooperation in overcoming challenges and hardships and
consolidate our support for the collective global effort led by the IAEA
toward sustainable growth and a clean energy future.

Madam President,

Immediately after the new administration took office in May 2022,
the Korean government set forth a new energy policy framework
based on the recognition that nuclear power is indispensable
for achieving carbon neutrality and enhancing energy security.

Over the past year, we have worked to increase the share of nuclear energy
in our nation's energy mix and foster the ecosystem for the nuclear industry
as a national priority.

We have also included nuclear energy as part of Korean Green Taxonomy
and the National Strategic Technology.

Now, we are devoting our national strengths and resources to technology innovation and policy support with a particular focus on the three core areas of “future” preparation, technology “dissemination”, and technology “convergence”, as we step up our efforts toward climate response and carbon neutrality.

In our preparations for the “future,” we are accelerating the development of next-generation non-light water reactors such as MSR and VHTR in addition to the development of an advanced light-water SMR.

We have also established a system for public-private cooperation to ensure a fast response to technological challenges concerning different types of SMRs and enhance private sector’s capabilities in the area.

Furthermore, we are proactively setting the course for SMR safety regulations to advance the commercialization of this technology.

In an effort to disseminate Korea's safe nuclear technologies, we are actively participating in the construction of new nuclear power plants worldwide.

In parallel, we plan to support nations striving to secure carbon-free energy sources by offering them technical advice on the regulation for various types of reactors.

We are also promoting technology convergence, such as clean hydrogen production at nuclear power plants, as part of our efforts to promote broader applications of nuclear technology and carbon neutrality across industries.

Furthermore, we are developing technologies that ensure the safety of nuclear facilities throughout their lifecycles.

This encompasses advanced technologies for the safety management of operating plants, nuclear waste management including underground disposal research, and decommissioning.

Madam President,

As a responsible member of the global community, the Korean government fully supports the IAEA and its initiatives that enhance the contribution of nuclear technology to energy security, environment, and public health.

We also provide comprehensive assistance for the IAEA's core initiatives such as SMR Platform and ZODIAC, as well as promise close cooperation for the success of the 2024 International Conference on Nuclear Security.

In support of the IAEA's initiative for the career development of women professionals in the fields of science and technology, we will be hosting the IAEA Lise Meitner Programme in the Republic of Korea next year.

We look forward to the support and interest of women professionals from the Member States.

Madam President,

The Republic of Korea appreciates the excellent leadership of Director General, Rafael Grossi for the efforts of the IAEA in carefully reviewing the safety of Japan's plan to discharge contaminated water with the participation of the international community including a Korean expert.

We sincerely expect the IAEA to continue to effectively monitor whether the actual discharge is carried out in accordance with the plan as reviewed by the Agency as well as to transparently share relevant information of that monitoring.

Madam President,

Even at this moment, the DPRK continues its illegal nuclear activities in violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions, and has all but completed preparation for its seventh nuclear test.

Last September, Pyongyang promulgated its new law on nuclear policy, which adopts the most arbitrary and aggressive nuclear doctrine in the world.

North Korea is even openly threatening preemptive nuclear strikes against us.

Pyongyang's pursuit of its unlawful nuclear programs and escalating threats not only constitute a significant challenge to international peace and security but also pose grave threats to international non-proliferation regime.

We urge the DPRK to immediately cease its illegal provocations, move toward complete denuclearization, and return to the NPT and the IAEA safeguards.

To this end, the Republic of Korea reaffirms its commitment to actively cooperate with the international community including the IAEA to achieve the goal of complete denuclearization of the DPRK.

We render our full support to the five concrete principles and the seven indispensable pillars set by the Director General to ensure nuclear safety and security of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant.

We would also like to express our sincere appreciation for the efforts of the Director General and staff members of the IAEA including the establishment and operation of the ISAMZ.

Madam President
and esteemed colleagues,

The year marks the 70th anniversary of the charter "Atoms for Peace," upon which the IAEA was founded.

Everyone present here today has been working with the IAEA to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The Republic of Korea is firmly committed to supporting the Secretariat's leadership in its endeavors to create a safer, cleaner, and better future.