

Statement by Dr. Chang-kyung KIM
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Head Delegate of the Republic of Korea
at the IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety
20 June 2011

(Introduction)

President Guerreiro,
Director General Yukiya Amano,
and Distinguished Delegates,

It is an honor to join you all at this IAEA Nuclear Safety Ministerial Conference.

Allow me to express my sincere appreciation on behalf of the Korean Government to President Guerreiro and Director General Yukiya Amano for their dedicated efforts in preparation of this important meeting.

Firstly, the Republic of Korea expresses its deepest condolences to the government and people of Japan who continue to suffer the effects of an unprecedented and devastating natural disaster.

We appreciate Japan's initial response to the difficult circumstances of the twin natural disasters and ensuing nuclear accident at the Fukushima Power Plant. Japan's handling of this incident made a valuable contribution to the global community's efforts to draw lessons from the accident by providing relevant information.

The Republic of Korea hopes that the successful implementation of the Roadmap towards Restoration from the Accident at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station will facilitate a rapid recovery from the disaster.

(Domestic influence and Korea's response)

Mr. President,

The Republic of Korea, as the closest country to Japan, analyzed the accident and evaluated the domestic radiation effects by organizing and operating an emergency response task force immediately after the Fukushima accident occurred.

In addition, Korea carried out a safety review of all domestic nuclear sites from March 23 to April 30 under consideration of the implications of the accident.

Based on the principle of Defence-in-Depth, Korea reconfirmed that the margin of safety of its installations against earthquake and tsunami are within design criteria. A comprehensive examination confirmed that the safety functions of nuclear power plants and emergency preparedness and response in case of natural disaster exceed design criteria.

The result of the safety review ascertained that safety is secured against the maximum impact of earthquake and tsunami specified in the design criteria. Based on this outcome, Korea has established 50 short and long-term improvement plans to ensure the safe function of nuclear power plants and emergency response capacity against natural disasters that exceed the design criteria. These plans will be implemented by the operating utility in 5 years..

The primary responsibility for nuclear power plant safety resides with the utility. However, the role and responsibility of the regulatory body to oversee the utility is also extremely important.

The Fukushima accident helped us recall the importance of securing trust and transparency for the general public to feel secure in an emergency situation.

The Republic of Korea continues to make every effort to improve its regulatory framework and capability. In this light, we consider the upcoming IAEA Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) mission to Korea, the first such mission to a Member State in the wake of the Fukushima disaster, as an opportunity to further enhance our regulatory infrastructure.

(International cooperation in deriving lessons from the Fukushima accident)

Mr. President,

The Republic of Korea assures you of its full support to enable the IAEA to play a central role in global nuclear safety and security. We stress the need to further strengthen the role of the IAEA in conducting international surveillance of nuclear safety and enhancing emergency response.

International harmonization is essential in order to draw lessons learned from the Fukushima accident and determine appropriate follow-up activities. In this regard, we welcome the Japanese government's report to this Ministerial Conference which identified 28 lessons learned from the accident. We believe that the report will provide valuable input to the international community's efforts to strengthen nuclear safety. Korea also expects the IAEA to provide its own comprehensive and transparent assessment of the accident to the Member States in due time.

In addition, Korea hopes to participate in the IAEA activities in the medium and long term to evaluate the environmental effects and perform accident assessment.

Given the transnational effects of nuclear accidents, it is necessary to enhance the emergency response framework// at the national, regional, and international level. At the 4th Korea-Japan-China summit held in May 2011, the three countries made an agreement to cooperate to strengthen safety by conducting an exhaustive review of the accident and sharing lessons learned.

The Republic of Korea, as the fifth largest country in the world to operate nuclear power plants, commits to actively participate in discussions to strengthen global nuclear power plant safety standards, such as IAEA safety standard review, reflecting lessons learned from the accident. Furthermore, we will fulfill the responsibility as a nuclear power plant exporting country transfer the necessary safety related systems and know-how to newcomers.

(Closing)

Mr. President and Distinguished Delegates,

It is expected that this IAEA Ministerial Conference will generate necessary political momentum to arrange detailed measures to strengthen nuclear power plant safety through lessons derived from the Fukushima nuclear power plant accident.

Therefore, we request the IAEA to establish a detailed action plan in order to strengthen nuclear power plant safety, incorporating the lessons learned from the recent Fukushima accident. We also urge rapid implementation of the plan.

While expressing Korea's will to actively participate in the international community's activities to strengthen nuclear power plant safety, Korea will also continue to make its utmost effort to improve domestic nuclear power plant safety by applying robust safety standards.

Thank you.