

Statement

Mr. Sangmok LEE

Vice Minister of Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning

Head Delegate of the Republic of Korea

At the 3rd International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power in the 21st century

[Introduction]

Honorable Director General of IAEA, Yukiya Amano, Director General of ROSATOM, Sergey Kirienko and Distinguished Delegates, I would first like to congratulate Russia for successfully hosting the Third International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power in the 21st Century.

I also would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the Agency and to the Government of the Russian Federation for their effort to host this meaningful conference. Despite the growing concerns among the public over nuclear safety after the Fukushima accident, the role of nuclear energy has become more significant in our effort to address climate change and the rapid growth in energy demand. Nuclear energy remains the most viable and practical option when seeking to respond to these global issues.

At this current circumstance, it is crucial to reestablish the role of nuclear energy and I truly believe it is absolutely meaningful and timely for nuclear leaders and experts to review the role and future vision of nuclear energy as a sustainable energy source.

[Status of nuclear power in Korea]

Distinguished Delegates,

For the past half century, nuclear energy has been a strong power for our nation's rapid economic development. Therefore, the Korean government is actively investing in and supporting the peaceful use of nuclear energy as a safe and sustainable energy source.

Korea started the operation of its first nuclear power plant, 'KORI 1', in 1978, and now there are currently 23 nuclear power plants in operation in the country, accounting for 30% of all domestic electricity generation. Also, we are planning to construct 11 additional nuclear power plants by the year 2024.

Achieving localization, Korea developed the Korean Standard Nuclear Power Plant 'OPR-1000' and recently succeeded in developing 'APR-1400', our next-generation commercial reactor.

We obtained the world's first Standard Design Approval for our Small Modular Reactor 'SMART'.

It will serve as the foundation in the effort to utilize small modular reactors around the world.

Korea also has been making great effort in providing resources to support R&D activities to develop innovative nuclear reactor systems. Our activities include SFR, VHTR and the core technology for an environmentally friendly nuclear fuel cycle.

Honorable Delegates,

I strongly believe that it is never excessive to emphasize the importance of nuclear safety.

After the Fukushima accident, Korea set up the Nuclear Safety and Security Commission (NSSC) in order to ensure independence in its nuclear safety regulations.

Along with that, short- and long-term improvement measures are underway to ensure the safety of all nuclear power plants in operation.

We are also making every effort to take follow-up actions in response to the recommendations of the Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) mission.

Furthermore, we embarked on a project to construct a new 20MW research reactor in order to contribute to the stable supply of medical radioisotopes.

Finally, we are actively undertaking the research and development of the heavy ion accelerator for medical use as part of the effort to cure currently intractable forms of cancer.

[International cooperation to solve global issues]

Distinguished Delegates,

International cooperation to address current global issues is crucial to achieve sustainable development through nuclear energy.

Korea is actively engaging in international cooperation to solve various challenges, as we deeply understand the importance of the safe management of radioactive waste, which is a common issue to address around the world before any country can realize the sustainable use of nuclear energy.

Furthermore, Korea is actively participating in international collaborative research projects for innovative nuclear energy systems with enhanced safety features, such as GIF and INPRO.

Korea will expand the financial and in-kind contribution to facilitate infrastructure building in developing countries and its contribution to the IAEA PACT program to bring hope to cancer patients in developing countries.

We truly hope that the expansion of the IAEA's global partnership initiatives will help diminish the technological gap and extend the benefits of nuclear technology to the entire world. Korea is fully committed to such efforts.

[Closing]

Honorable Delegates!

The history of nuclear energy has been one fraught with challenges followed by crises and subsequent resolutions.

I strongly believe that we need to pool our collective wisdom to overcome the current challenges pertaining to nuclear safety and radioactive waste management issues so that nuclear energy can contribute to human prosperity.

Allow me once again to express my deepest congratulations to the Agency and to the Russian Government for successfully hosting this conference.

Thank you for your kind attention.