Statement

by

Mr. SHIN Dong-ik
Representative of the Republic of Korea

at

the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

7 May 2003
Geneva
Cluster III issues

In the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, it is the view of my delegation that the IAEA has played a key role and will remain so. In this respect, my delegation would like to emphasize the importance of the Agency's work in a number of different areas, from agricultural productivity and food safety, water resource management, and the application of sterile insect technology, to such issues as human health and environmental monitoring.

The Republic of Korea has always actively promoted the peaceful and safe uses of nuclear energy under the comprehensive national nuclear promotion programme, which includes nuclear applications in industry, medicine and agriculture. Being an active promoter of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the Republic of Korea is currently the sixth largest generator of nuclear power in the world. At present, 18 nuclear power plants are in operation, providing 40% of the country's total electricity supply, and 2 more units are under construction.

In order to meet the growing demand for electricity, the Republic of Korea has stepped up its efforts to develop advanced nuclear power technologies, and has achieved satisfactory results. APR1400, a next generation Korean reactor of 1400 MWe, will be deployed in the country around 2010. The basic design of SMART, a system-integrated modular advanced reactor used for both desalination and power generation was completed in 2002 and construction of the one-fifth scaled pilot plant of SMART will be finished by 2007. We will then be in a position to demonstrate the SMART technology prior to industrial-scale application and will be able to gather operational information and data.

My delegation would like to point out the growing significance of international cooperative initiatives when it comes to the development of innovative reactors and fuel cycles such as INPRO (International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles). We note with satisfaction that the Agency's INPRO has fulfilled the criteria for user requirements in the areas of economics, safety, proliferation resistance, and environment as well as crosscutting issues.
The issues of safety and security of nuclear material deserve special attention when it comes to devising a strategy for potential peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the future. In this respect, we recommend that all States strive to maintain the highest possible levels of nuclear safety, both through the implementation of rigorous national measures and through intense international cooperation. It is imperative that all of us take concrete steps to relieve public concerns about the operational safety of nuclear power plants and the disposal of radioactive wastes. Furthermore, no effort should be spared to apply the existing standards and guidelines with regard to accounting, physical protection and the transport of nuclear materials. In this regard, my delegation would like to urge all contracting parties of the Convention on Nuclear Safety to remain strongly committed to fulfilling the objectives stated therein. At the same time, my delegation strongly supports the early amendment of the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

Radioactive waste management is another crucial topic with regard to public acceptance. An important confidence-building measure in this respect is the "Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management", which came into force in 2001 and was ratified by the Korean government in September 2002. Considering the vital importance of safety in managing spent fuel and radioactive waste, my delegation would like to call upon all those states outside the legal framework to accede to all relevant conventions as soon as possible and to fully implement their ensuing commitments.

Finally, my delegation shares the view, enshrined in the 1995 Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, that particular care should be taken to ensure the inalienable right of all parties to the Treaty to promote the research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with Articles I, II and III of the Treaty. My delegation is of the view that, while coherent and salient benefits should be provided for those non-nuclear-weapon States that comply fully with their NPT obligations regarding the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, such benefits can not be made for those States that remain outside the Treaty or violate their obligations under the Treaty.