Session 8: Nuclear Safeguard Systems

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Summary

Kim Byung Koo opened the debate by talking of the special safety, proliferation and security challenges that Asia must face as a “renaissance” region, with the construction of plants in China and India, the nuclear situation in Fukushima and the North Korean proliferation issue.

Ahn June Ho spoke of the birth of the IAEA safeguards regime, its role in connection with the NPT and its evolution from traditional quantitative material accountancy control measures to more qualitative information driven safeguards system in the 90’s, in response to international political framework change and growing consensus on the need of strenghthening the IAEA. The qualitative approach introduced by the Additional Protocol in 1997 has improved IAEA performance, but still faces major issues such as the reluctance of many NPT countries in accepting it.

John Carlson stated that the current priority regarding IAEA safeguards is to strengthen detection capability for undeclared nuclear activities, through the improvement of safeguards technology and methodology, further developing information treatment and universalising the Additional Protocol. The IAEA must also prepare for the expansion of nuclear programs and the introduction of new fuel cycle technologies. States could help the IAEA achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency through stronger partnerships with national authorities concerning safeguards implementation, and in availability of information by replicating regional safeguard systems like Euratom and ABACC, that add further confidence-building measures to IAEA safeguards. In this sense, initiatives like the Asia-Pacific Safeguards Network (APSN), which seek to strengthen the proficiency of national

safeguards authorities, are a valuable contribution to regional transparency and confidence-building.

In his lecture on safeguarding dual use nuclear technologies, Chaim Braun discussed possible IAEA improvements, including the implementation of technical enhancements to the Additional Protocol, the use of criteria-based scheduling and risk-informed safeguards priorization, the development of additional funding sources for IAEA Safeguards Department, the development of enhancements to IAEA technical support for member states in good standing, compliant with safeguards requirements and the improvement of nuclear export control regime.

Min Gyungsik adressed the evolving Safeguards System and its impact on the State's system of accounting for and control of nuclear material (SSAC), whose primary role is reporting on the nuclear material in a state regularly and providing support for the IAEA's verification activities. The search for greater effectiveness and efficiency has led the IAEA to apply the Integrated Safeguards (IS) to the State who accepted its strengthened safeguards system (Additional Protocol). The three key elements in the succesful implementation of the IS are a broader application of obtainable information, the introduction of new technology for material accountancy and enhanced cooperation with the SSAC. Although the new safeguards system of the IAEA may be interpreted as a new burden to the SSAC, it also gives a chance for the SSAC to increase the transparency of the nuclear activities and to strengthen the control of nuclear material in a state in terms of national security. At the same time it may also expand the role of SSAC in the international community.