

Panel: How Safe Are Nuclear Power Plants in South Korea? (Grand Ballroom III)

Date/Time: Wednesday, February 20, 2013 /14:00-15:15

Talking Points for: Lee Jong-In, Senior Advisor, Korea Institute of Nuclear Safety

How safe are NPPs in South Korea

Korea has endeavoring to promote peaceful and safe uses of nuclear energy under the basic national policy to meet the energy demand for continuing economic growth.

At present, we have 23 nuclear power plants in operation and 5 units under construction since the first NPP was put into commercial operation in 1978.

In Korea, the nuclear safety policy is to the principle of “priority to safety” and aims to protect the public health and safety from radiation hazards. The regulatory authority issued “the nuclear safety policy statement” containing 5 principles of nuclear safety regulation those are Independence, Openness, Efficiency, Clarity and Reliability.

After the Fukushima accident in 11 March 2011, President of Korea ordered an across-the-board safety check on South Korea's nuclear reactors. As a result of the check, 50 action items were identified for safety enhancement and have been being implemented in the areas of seismic and tsunami safety, prevention of severe accident, minimization of radioactive release to environment, and strengthening of emergency plan.

As the request of the Korean Government, the IAEA peer-review mission for regulator was conducted from 10 to 22 July 2011 at KINS. IRRS team evaluated that Korea's response and countermeasure against Fukushima accident was appropriately prompt and effective. Communications with the public, development of actions for improvement and coordination with international stakeholders were assessed as high quality. This Team identified the several good practices, and also identified certain issues warranting attention or in need of improvement and believes that consideration of these would enhance the overall performance of the regulatory system.

In the course of conducting the nuclear projects and of considering safety issues (e.g., feedback of operating experience, lesson learned from TMI and Fukushima, IRRS Mission, etc.), we believe that nuclear safety can be assured by combination of such efforts as asking the nuclear facilities physically sound and safe, and reinforcing the safety attitudes of the people and organizations involved through the promotion of safety culture. Once more, Korea has been making efforts for global nuclear safety with a strong commitment to international safety regime. We always keep in mind that “**How Safe Is Safe Enough?**”

* The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies.