

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor and privilege to speak at this International Conference on the 2012 Seoul Nuclear Security Summit and Next Generation Nuclear Security. I greatly appreciate the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security (IFANS), Korea Institute of Nuclear Nonproliferation and Control (KINAC), and the Fissile Materials Working Group (FMWG) for organizing this event. As Sherpa of my government, I am confident that the outcome of this conference will greatly be beneficial to our preparation for the Summit.

As you are well aware, the Nuclear Security Summit was initiated by President Obama of the U.S. and held last year in Washington D.C., where 47 countries and 3 international organizations took part in the summit. Why is it necessary for so many leaders to meet every other year to discuss this issue of nuclear security? Is nuclear security that important? My answer to that question has always been “yes,” and I would like to share with you today why it is so and where we stand for the preparation of the Summit.

First, nuclear terrorism is one of the most serious threats to international security, considering the devastating consequences it would have on the global economy and beyond, regardless of where it takes place. The threat of nuclear terrorism is real: there have been a total of 33 cases of unauthorized possession or losses of highly-enriched uranium and plutonium reported to the IAEA Illicit Trafficking Database (ITDB) from 1993 to 2010; recent reports show that Al Qaeda has actually made attempts in acquiring nuclear materials; and there are still nuclear materials scattered around the world, some of which are not adequately secured.

It is said that one should be prepared for the worst-case scenario with regard to security issues, which is the so-called precautionary approach; in this sense, we should not neglect to address even the slightest possibility of nuclear terrorism. In this globalized world, countries are more interdependent than ever, and nuclear terrorism is not a problem of one or two countries. It is a challenge that the world faces together, and which requires joint efforts.

Second, the Nuclear Security Summit is significant in the sense that it provides the highest political impetus to enhance nuclear security, thus leading to real achievements. Significant progress has already been made since the Washington Summit: a substantial amount of HEU have been removed from many countries for safe elimination; the security of nuclear materials storage and transportation have been upgraded; 14 additional countries ratified the amended Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials and 12 additional countries ratified the International Convention on Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism; the UNSCR 1540 Committee’s mandate was extended, as was the G8 Global Partnership; 4 new States joined the GICNT; the IAEA physical protection guidelines document (INFCIRC 225/Rev.5) was updated and published and the budget and number of voluntary donors to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund have increased; more than 10 national/regional training centers opened for nuclear security training and research.

The list of achievements goes on. Moreover, the Republic of Korea has developed a technology to produce high-density LEU powder which will contribute to the conversion of HEU reactors to LEU reactors. All these results were possible because leaders around the world started to realize the seriousness of the problem and the need for action, committing to work together to make this world a safer place from nuclear terrorism.

Then, what will be the value added in the Seoul Summit?

The 2012 Seoul Summit will strengthen the nuclear security regime by expanding the scope of discussions, building upon the achievements of the Washington Summit. Two agendas that will most likely be newly introduced or strengthened compared to last year's Summit are the issues of radiological security and the interface between nuclear security and safety. While the consultations among participating countries are still going on, we plan to address the issue of securing radioactive sources more comprehensively. Although the destructive impact of radiological terrorism using 'dirty bombs' is much weaker than that of nuclear terrorism, appropriate management in safely securing radioactive sources is vital given the higher probability and the enormous psychological aftermaths of radiological terrorism.

In addition, there is an ever growing need to address the issue of nuclear safety within the context of the Nuclear Security Summit in light of recent developments as a result of the Fukushima nuclear accident. Nuclear security and nuclear safety need to be enhanced in a mutually-reinforcing way, considering the fact that the consequences of a terrorist attack on a nuclear facility may be equivalent to a nuclear accident. The Seoul Summit aims to address the interface between the two.

We appreciate the international community for giving the ROK full confidence in hosting the second Nuclear Security Summit. We are of the view that the international community recognized that the ROK has played a responsible role in supporting nonproliferation principles and in leading green growth against global climate change. It can also be seen as recognition of Korea's role as a bridge between developed and developing countries in solving major global issues, as was demonstrated at last year's G20 Seoul Summit. Korea will play a bridging role in the nuclear field as well, between nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states, and between states with advanced nuclear energy industries and those with developing industries. Through the hosting of the Seoul Nuclear Security Summit, Korea will demonstrate its leading role not only in global economy, but also in international security.

With the Seoul Summit less than five months away, preparations for the Summit are in full speed. It could be said that there are two main pillars with regard to the outcomes of the Seoul Summit: one is the final document, or the Seoul Communiqué, which is being discussed amongst the Participating States; the other is the national progress reports, which Participating States will voluntarily present at the Seoul Summit.

In fact, a Sherpa Meeting to prepare for the 2012 Seoul Summit was just held last month in Helsinki, Finland, where all the Sherpas of the Participating countries gathered together to have a

constructive and fruitful discussion on the Seoul Communiqué and other key issues related to next year's Summit.

At the Helsinki Sherpa Meeting, the Sherpas agreed on five guiding principles which we have offered in drafting the Seoul Communiqué. First, nuclear security remains to be the main focus of the Summit. Second, the Communiqué should maintain continuity from the first Summit while demonstrating progress. Continuation from the first Summit means that all the Participating countries respect what was agreed upon in the Washington Communiqué and Work Plan. However, since continuation does not mean simple repetition, the countries also agreed that the Seoul Communiqué should reflect elements of progress in its text as well. Third, the participation of States and their commitments made in the process of the Nuclear Security Summit is voluntary. Fourth, the Nuclear Security Summit does not purport to create a new regime. Fifth, participating countries respect the 4 years lock-down vision of President Obama as announced in the 2009 Prague speech.

The Sherpas discussed the text of the Communiqué drafted by Korea based on the five principles and will continue discussions at the New Delhi Sherpa Meeting to be held in January next year. It is my hope that we will be able to reach a consensus on the Communiqué at the New Delhi Sherpa Meeting. The Seoul Communiqué will provide the foundation for moving the political vision on enhancing nuclear security to a stage of concrete and practical measures.

As the NSS process started with the 4-years lock-down vision, the Seoul Summit is also significant in that it serves as an opportunity for a mid-point assessment on that objective. This is also why the NSS process needs to have at least one more Summit in 2014 to assess how much has been achieved within the 4-year period. Whether or not the NSS process will continue beyond 2014 will be a decision that would need to be addressed by the participating leaders after the Seoul Summit.

Lastly, the year 2012 is a highly significant year both for the Korean Peninsula and beyond. It is a year in which there will be changes in the global leadership not only in the Republic of Korea but also in the United States, Russia, and China. By bringing world leaders to Seoul to discuss one of the key international security issues, the 2012 Summit will send out a specific and firm message on renewing the importance of maintaining peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and pursuing the denuclearization of North Korea.

Meanwhile, President Lee Myung-bak's proposal to invite Chairman Kim Jong-Il to the Seoul Summit on conditions that it agrees to abandon its nuclear program is a proactive political initiative to urge North Korea to denuclearize and step toward a more prosperous future by opening its door to the international community.

I look forward to insightful and constructive debates today. I believe we will all benefit from the diverse range of perspectives presented in this Conference. I wish you every success in ensuring highly fruitful outcomes. Thank you.