

**Congratulatory Statement
on the Occasion of the 15th Anniversary of the Establishment of
the International Science and Technology Center
(10 December, 2009)**

Dr. Donald Lehman II, Chairman of the ISTC Governing Board,
Mr. Adrian Van der Meer, Executive Director of ISTC,
Distinguished Delegates, Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, it is my great pleasure and privilege for me to make congratulatory remarks on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Korea at this meaningful occasion of the 15th anniversary of the foundation of ISTC.

The Korean Government joins others in lauding ISTC for its achievement in its bestowed missions since its inception in 1994 and also for contribution in supporting joint researches by scientists in CIS countries and other parts of the world and through that, to the closer international collaboration for the development of science and technology.

Since the Republic of Korea joined ISTC in 1997 as financial contributor, it has been actively engaged in supporting ISTC-initiated research projects and partner projects where Korean research institutes and private enterprises participated. I am please to note that the Korean Government has accumulatively provided assistance to 50 research projects and 9 partner projects over the last 12 years.

At this special juncture of the 15th anniversary of ISTC, I like to reckon that one of the most peculiar challenges ISTC is faced with, in fulfilling its goal successfully in the future would be the rapidly changing political and economic environment of the CIS countries. The economic capacity and living standards of the countries in the region generally have improved and political changes are also noticeable.

The stakeholders of ISTC, therefore, need to heed these environmental changes and encourage ISTC to lay a more organic but solid basis for undertaking its missions and activities in the years to come.

Another important factor to be considered for the ISTC's future would be securing financial stability of ISTC for sustainable support for research programs and other activities. The stakeholders should arm themselves with legitimacy in order to continue their financial contributions to ISTC. The ISTC Secretariat also should do their utmost to meet the expectations of member governments and partners in this regard.

Distinguished guests,

With its achievements and contribution over last 15 years, ISTC successfully gained reputation and respect as an important international research community and as a network of advanced science and technology. With more than 2,600 joint research projects ISTC has supported, it has stimulated quite meaningful progress and achievements in various sphere of biotechnology, public health, sustainable and eco-friendly energy, reduction of greenhouse gases, agriculture and medical science.

Among those important contributions ISTC has made so far, I think the mitigation of the threat of Weapons of Mass Destruction proliferation deserves to be recognized.

As we are well aware, international community is currently faced with a serious threat and challenge, that is, the North Korean nuclear activities. The North Korean nuclear program not only poses danger to the security of the Korean peninsula and Northeast Asia, but also to the global non-proliferation regime. North Korea is also known to keep producing and stockpiling a considerable amount of biological and chemical weapons.

Though encountered with stalemate at the moment, the Korean Government, together with other participants of the Six Party Talks,

namely, Russia, US, China, and Japan makes every possible diplomatic efforts to resume the Talks as early as possible with a view to achieving the eventual goal of abandonment of North Korea's nuclear weapons programs in a complete, irreversible and verifiable manner.

Having closely observed the ISTC's goals and successful implementation of activities since its inauguration, I would like to mention that the model and experience would be useful and applicable to North Korea in the future when considerable progress is made. A "North Korean version of ISTC" could be created encompassing the North Korean scientists in the fields of biology, chemistry and nuclear physics.

In this context, what ISTC has achieved in the field of global non-proliferation would not be regarded as one-off success story but would play a role of locomotive by disseminating its experience and know-how to other parts of the world.

Distinguished guests,

I wish to ensure that the Korean Government is committed to continue to play its role and participate at various activities of ISTC as financial contributor in the years to come as it used to for last 12 years.

Lastly, I would like to express again my deep appreciation to Mr. Van der Meer and other staff members of ISTC who have prepared today's commemoration and also best wishes for the continued success in fulfilling the ISTC's mission. Thank you.