



Green Cross International welcomes North Korean suspension of uranium enrichment, calls for restart of Six-Party talks on Korean denuclearization

5 March 2012/Geneva: The announcement that North Korea (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) will halt its enrichment of uranium, stop long-range missile and nuclear weapons testing, and allow international IAEA inspectors back into the Yongbyon nuclear facility is a major step forward to renewing progress in denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, according to Green Cross International.

"This is a most welcome initiative by North Korea, especially in light of the upcoming Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul in late March," says Green Cross International (GCI) President Alexander Likhotal. "By reducing the nuclear threat, lasting peace can be achieved on the Korean Peninsula and wider region."

GCI, which has advocated and promoted economic development and demilitarization globally since its founding by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1993, believes this initiative was welcome not only from an arms control and nonproliferation perspective, but also a humanitarian perspective.

Dr. Paul Walker, head of the GCI's Environmental Security and Sustainability Program, says: "240 thousand metric tons of food aid, as promised by the United States, will improve security and peacemaking on the Korean Peninsula, while nuclear bombs would have dramatically undermined it. The world is well aware of the dire economic and food situation in North Korea, and helping to save lives anywhere is a very worthy goal."

"North Korea, should it continue to follow through on nuclear disarmament, and join the nuclear, chemical, and biological arms control regimes, will establish a much more peaceful and prosperous northeast Asia for all," Dr. Walker adds. "We urge the other parties in the six-party talks - China, Japan, Russia, South Korea, and the United States - to respond positively to this North Korea initiative and push for reopening long stalled negotiations."

Green Cross points out that South Korea had taken a major step forward several years ago when it unilaterally destroyed its chemical weapons stockpile under the watchful eyes of inspectors from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

Green Cross International, founded in 1993 by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Mikhail Gorbachev, is an independent non-profit and nongovernmental organization working to address the inter-connected global challenges of security, poverty eradication and environmental degradation through a combination of advocacy and on-the-ground projects. GCI is headquartered in Geneva and is present in over 30 countries.

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