

Ecorea is a compound of the prefix “Eco”,
 which suggests an ecologically sound
 and comfortable environment,
 and the name of the nation, “Korea”

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The Minister's Message

In the 21st century, our view of the environment should proceed to recognize that it is the basic platform for the sustainable future growth.

Based on this recognition, President Lee Myung-bak announced the national vision of Low Carbon, Green Growth for the next 60 years on the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Korean government on August 15, 2008. For a successful implementation of the national vision, the Korean government came up with strategies and frameworks for green growth and made great efforts to raise the awareness of Korean people. In 2010, the Basic Act on Low Carbon, Green Growth was enacted, identifying policy directions as well as solidifying the institutional foundation for green growth.

As the leading government office, the Ministry of Environment established the Green Growth Action Plan for the Environmental Sector in 2009, which entails green growth strategies and policy priorities. The Ministry has tried to restore the health of major streams through the Blue-Green Network, advance environmental regulations, and expand environmental services to rural areas and environmentally-vulnerable people. Furthermore, in accordance with the Action Plan, the Ministry has made its utmost efforts to implement the policies that create jobs in the environmental sector.

In 2010, the Ministry of Environment will contribute to the implementation of the vision of Low Carbon, Green Growth by focusing on such areas as the Four Major Rivers Restoration Project, Waste to Energy (W2E) project, development of five green growth model regions and the management of biological resources of the Korean peninsula. Moreover, in order to share Korea's accumulated experiences and know-how with developing countries, the Ministry will try to provide assistance for them to develop plans for environmental improvement and also expand joint partnerships for the development of environmental technologies.



This special edition of ECOREA 2009 introduces the country's main goals and ten policy priorities for a new national vision of Green Korea, which pursues the harmony of the environment, economy and society. ECOREA 2009 does also present some environmental policies in the following areas: the Four Major Rivers Restoration Project, Comprehensive Measures for Asbestos Management, Implementation of Mandatory Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) for the Han River Water System and Waste Material Import and Export Declaration System.

Additionally, for a better understanding of the Ministry's organization and its roles, the appendices include such information on the Ministry's responsibilities by department and by bureau, organization chart budget and contact information of subsidiary/affiliated organizations.

I believe with the publication of ECOREA 2009 Korea's environmental policies and efforts will be better known to our global partners and relevant organizations which try to pursue a strategy of green growth. I wish your continuous support for the Ministry of Environment's ECOREA 2009.

MAANEE LEE
Minister of Environment

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maanee Lee'.

01 Green Growth Action Plans

The Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea recognizes the significance of the national vision of Low Carbon, Green Growth. The Low Carbon, Green Growth vision of the Lee administration was made based on a series of studies on a rapidly changing environment of policy-making home and abroad and is currently acting as a framework for future policy direction and national priorities. Since the declaration of the national vision, the Ministry has been reflecting it on sector-specific Green Growth policies concerning environmental issues.

Among government ministries, the Ministry of Environment was the first to establish and publicly announce the Green Growth Action Plans for the Environmental Sector on January 6, 2009. The Action Plans consisting of 49 tasks in 4 sectors encompass comprehensive green growth strategies and policy priorities. Since the announcement, the Ministry has periodically revised and supplemented the Action Plans and monitored the progress of implemented tasks to make proper responses to changes of the global policy-making environment.

Upon the official launch of the Green Growth National Strategy and 5-Year Plan on July 6, 2009, the Ministry of Environment completed the Green Growth Central Action Plans based on the Green Growth Action Plans for the Environmental Sector. In addition, the Ministry's Green Growth Central Action Plans have become legally enforceable since the enactment of the Framework Act on Low Carbon and Green Growth on January 13, 2010.

In February 2009, the Ministry of Environment introduced a new official position called a Green Environment Policy Chief. The Policy Chief is assigned for development of environmental policies for green growth and coordination and communication for green growth-related issues. In addition, the Ministry has initiated the Green Growth Forum, a public-private governance system, where both the central government and 16 city and provincial governments participate. Also, the Forum has been playing a critical role in expanding the low carbon green growth vision and promoting green lifestyle throughout the country. The Ministry also launched the Green Start Network, a public-private partnership program designed to lead a nationwide campaign for cutting GHG emissions in everyday life.

In cooperation with the Green Start Network, the Ministry of Environment has continuously increased its efforts to promote green lifestyle by sponsoring and hosting various contests and campaigns and making proper policies. Such activities include



Green Gas Reduction Contest (April 2009), Green Leadership Training (April 2009, 3,600 trainees), Climate Change Week (April 2009, 776,000 attendees), Greenhouse Gas Assessment Week (June 2006, 13,000 households participating), Light Off Campaign (June 2009, 390,000 households participating), Cool Clothing Campaign, Nationwide Implementation of Carbon Point System (June 2009, 138 local governments), Empty Dishes Point Bank (April 2009), and Green Living Wisdom for All Lifestyles (July 2009).

In 2009, the Ministry of Environment implemented various policies and plans for green growth which led to successful outcomes.

Firstly, on July 6 2009 the Ministry of Environment established and announced detailed action plans for the Waste to Energy and Biomass Energy Program, considering it as the most efficient measure for resources circulation, renewable energy use and GHG emissions reduction. The Program is expected to create an EVA (Economic Value Added) of 2.9 trillion Korean won and 9.16 million tons of CO2 reduction by 2013.

Secondly, the Ministry of Environment substantially expanded investment in core green technologies. The 2009 budget was increased to 149.2 billion Korean won from 111.2 billion Korean won of 2008. The Ministry also selected best practices of LPI (Liquid Petroleum Injection) System for LPG operated vehicles, PM/NOx reduction technology and device for diesel operated vehicles, advanced water treatment

technology and equipment, wastewater reclamation and reuse equipments for the electrical industry, Waste to Energy technology, and resource circulation technology for waste metals. Furthermore, these best practices of advanced technologies were promoted to businesses and Korean citizens.

Thirdly, as the first outcome of the plans to advance government agencies, the Korea Environmental Industry and Technology Institute (KEITI) was established on April 8, 2009. The KEITI has supported nurturing environmental industries and technologies and helped them enter overseas markets. Thanks to its efforts, a number of domestic technologies are currently being exported overseas.

Fourthly, the Ministry of Environment took a leading role in legislating CO2 emission standards for automobiles in order to reduce GHG emissions of the transportation sector, which accounts for 17% of the country's GHG emissions. By doing so, the Ministry aimed at improving global competitiveness of Korean automakers and advancing domestic environmental regulations to meet the global standard. The legislative effort, which shows the government's drive for Low Carbon, Green Growth, will encourage the corporate sector to further practice green management.

In addition, the Ministry of Environment signed an MOU with Korea Exchange for establishment of the Carbon Exchange in October 2008. Such effort was followed by Survey on GHG emissions by Local Governments in March 2009 and Emission Trading Pilot Project of EFCs (Environmentally Friendly Companies) and public organizations in December 2009.

Furthermore, the Ministry came up with a comprehensive plan to promote eco tourism of local communities, while, at the same time, preserving and making wise use of the ecosystem and natural and cultural resources.

In order to ensure efficient use and safe supply of water resources for green growth, the Ministry allocated a substantial amount of budget for the following projects; tube well construction project for securing public water in drought areas (2009, 47.7 billion Korean won), small sized water supply system improvement project (1,543 locations, 110.7 billion Korean won), supports for water pipe system check (April 2009, 10 billion Korean won), and waterworks pipe system management (improvement of over 28,000 km pipes by 2019, 2.8 trillion Korean won). The Ministry of Environment also presented a bill titled 'Act on Promotion of and Support for Water Reuse [June 8, 2008]' to the National Assembly. Furthermore, the Ministry carried out a project for waste water treatment and reclamation facilities (440 million tons per year by 2016, a publicly and privately funded program) and also integrated water works in the metropolitan and local areas.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Environment has been striving for improving water quality, restoring the aquatic ecosystem, and securing water-friendly spaces in the four major rivers and their basin areas. As for the most notable examples, the Ministry expanded investment to improve the water quality of the four major rivers by 3.9 trillion Korean won over 4 years and also established action plans for restoration of the four major rivers which included restoration of the aquatic ecosystem and management of aquatic animals and plants, establishment of integrated water pollution prevention center and management of environmental impact due to river constructions.

Lastly, in June 2009 the Ministry of Environment established and announced the Low Carbon Green Growth City Pilot Project in order to reduce GHG emissions and to improve the quality of life. On July 15, 2009, Gangneung city was selected as the first pilot green city and the Ministry will further promote the green technology-based city model throughout the country with necessary policy supports.

Last year, the national vision of Green Growth began in earnest and the Ministry laid the foundation for green growth by spreading the vision nationwide, raising awareness on green growth, preparing strategies and identifying priorities. By opening dialogues on its practicalities, the Ministry of Environment and the Korean government will put tremendous efforts on the national vision of Low Carbon, Green Growth in its third year.



02 Overview of Korea

General

Country Name Republic of Korea
Capital City Seoul (10 million)
National flag Taegeukgi
National flower Mugunghwa (Rose of Sharon)
Currency won
Language Korean (Written form: Hangeul)

Geography

Location Strategically located at the crossroads of Northeast Asia. Korea lies between Japan, the Russian Far East and China.
Territory 223,170 km² (South Korea: 100,032 km²)
Major cities Seoul (10 million), Busan (3.5 million), Incheon (2.6 million), Daegu (2.5 million), Daejeon (1.5 million), Gwangju (1.4 million), Ulsan (1.1 million)
Climate Temperate with four distinct seasons

People

Population 48.61 million (2008)
Foreign residents 1.1 million
Population growth 0.31% (2008)
Life Expectancy Males 76.1 years, females 82.7 years (2007)
Religion A 2005 census showed a half of the population actively practices religion. Among this group, Buddhism (43.0%), Protestantism (34.5%) and Catholicism (20.6%) comprise the three dominant religions.

Economy

Gross Domestic Product \$928.7 billion (2008)
Per Capita GNI \$19,231 (2008)
GDP Growth Rate 2.2 percent (2008)
Exports \$422.0 billion (2008)
Imports \$435.3 billion (2008)
Major Industrial Products Semiconductors, automobiles, ships, consumer electronics, mobile telecommunication equipment, steel and chemicals

Source: <http://www.korea.net/>, The official website of the Republic of Korea



03 Institutional Mechanisms for Environmental Policies

The Ministry of Environment, as the main ministry for environmental conservation, is working with multiple subsidiary organizations including the National Environmental Dispute Resolution Commission, the National Institute of Environmental Research (NIER), the National Institute of Biological Resources, the National Institute of Environmental Human Resources Development and eight local environmental offices.

3-1. Administrative Organizations

Environmental Administrative Structure

Based on Environmental Laws enacted by the National Assembly, environmental policies are approved by the final decision the President and implemented by the executive branch. The environmental policies regarding water resources management are examined and decided by the Prime Minister-led Water Management Policy Coordination Committee after examination and coordination of the Office of Environmental Commissioner under the Office for Government Policy Coordination. Also, the Presidential Commission on Sustainable Development is currently taking a role of coordinating and suggesting eco-friendly and sustainable policies by mediating conflicts between developers and environmental activities.

Currently, Korea's structure of environmental policy-making is rather complex. The Ministry of Environment and the other seven Ministries, sub-governmental offices, local environmental offices and localities are all involved in the process.

Ministry of Environment

The Ministry of Environment, as the main ministry for environmental conservation, is working with multiple subsidiary organizations including the National Environmental Dispute Resolution Commission, the National Institute of Environmental Research (NIER), the National Institute of Biological Resources, the National Institute of Environmental Human Resources Development and eight local environmental offices. The four public organizations under the Ministry of Environment are the Korea Environmental Corporation (KECO), Korea National Park Service, Sudokwon Landfill Site Management Corporation (SLC), and the Korea Environmental Industry and Technology Institute. In addition, the Korean Environment Institute was established under the Prime Minister's Office for in-depth research on environmental policies, policy development and review of environmental impact assessment reports.

Main Office

As of June 2009, the Ministry of Environment, in charge of developing comprehensive environmental policies, consists of two departments, three bureaus, seven offices, thirty two divisions, four teams, and one task force team with a total of 518 employees working for the organization. The major responsibilities of the Ministry of Environment and its subordinate organizations include: establishment of framework for environmental administration through enactment and amendment of

environmental acts and introduction of environmental systems; development and implementation of mid to long term comprehensive measures for environmental conservation; establishment of various regulatory standards; administrative and financial supports for local environmental offices and municipalities for management of the environment; and coordination of international collaboration for environmental protection.

National Environmental Dispute Resolution Commission (NEDRC)

Pursuant to Article 4 of the Environmental Dispute Adjustment Act, the National Environmental Dispute Resolution Commission (NEDRC) was established to settle disputes over damage caused by environmental pollution. The NEDRC was established under the Ministry of Environment and other Regional Environmental Dispute Resolution Commissions are working under metropolitan cities including Seoul and regional provinces. The Commission consists of the chairperson (first rank, standing) and eight non-standing members. The secretariat, consisting of 21 members as of June 2009, is currently providing administrative supports for activities related dispute resolution.

National Institute of Environmental Research (NIER)

In July 1978 the National Institute of Environmental Research (NIER) was launched as an independent environmental research institution, once an arm of the National Institute of Health. The Research is currently carrying out investigations, researches, evaluations and assessments related to environmental protection and prevention of environmental pollution.

With the inception of the Environment Agency in 1980, the NIER was transferred



from the Ministry of Health and Society to the Agency. In 2005 the Research started anew with the new name of 'NIER' and carried out restructuring to become a merit-based research body.

The NIER conducts researches, examinations and assessments to support policy-making of the Ministry of Environment. The research body consists of one office, four departments, 18 divisions, and six research centers with a total of 300 employees working for the organization as of June 2009.

National Institute of Biological Resources (NIBR)

The National Institute of Biological Resources (NIBR) was launched in February 2007 as a specialized research institute to conduct researches and studies for effective conservation and use of the national biological resources and to engage in promotion and exhibitions of biological resources. The Institute consists of two departments and eight divisions with a total of 102 employees working for the organization as of June 2009.

National Institute of Environmental Human Resources Development (NIEHRD)

The National Institute of Environmental Human Resources Development (NIEHRD) became an independent institute for environmental education from the NIER (the Environmental Education Department). The NIEHRD consists of two divisions with a total of 30 employees working for the organization as of June 2009.

River Basin (Local) Environmental Office

As a specialized local administrative agency for management of water systems and basin areas of the four major rivers, the Office has four River Basin Environmental Offices (Han River, Nakdong River, Geum River, and Yeongsan River) and three Regional Environmental Offices (Wonju, Daegu, and Jeonju) as its affiliated organizations. In addition, the Metropolitan Air Quality Management Office was also set up under the Office and is solely responsible for improving the air quality of metropolitan areas. The Office has a total of 785 employees currently working for the organization as of June 2009.

Local environmental offices are responsible for development and implementation of regional environmental management plans; consultations on the Prior Environmental Review System (PERS) and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA); conservation of the natural environment and ecosystems; inspection of pollution sources and measurement and analysis of environmental pollution; fostering and

support for environment-related industries; control over businesses which produce designated waste as well as waste treatment companies; and guidance and supervision on operation of the environmental infrastructure.

In addition to the aforementioned tasks, the four River Basin Environmental Offices are in charge of operating the Watershed Management Committee; using/allocating Watershed Management Funds; review and approval of water quality improvement projects by region; approval and assessment of the Total Maximum Daily Load Management System (TMDL); and imposing water use charges on businesses according to a special law on watersheds. The Metropolitan Air Quality Management Office is responsible for preventive air quality management of metropolitan areas under the Special Act on Metropolitan Air Quality Improvement.

Relevant Central Administrative Organization

As environmental affairs are so diverse, complex and wide-ranging, the Ministry of Environment has cooperated with other governmental bodies including eight ministries. They include the Korea Forest Service in charge of forests, which account for a large share of the territory and are home to a diversity of plants, animals, and microorganisms; the Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs, which is responsible for marine environment management and transportation policies, which are closely related to water flow management, river/stream management and air quality, as well as land use plans, which are directly linked with the environment; and the Ministry of Knowledge Economy, which is in charge of energy supply/demand policy, which is relevant to air pollution, and policies for control over businesses which emit pollutants.

Local (Municipal) Governments



emitting companies in and around industrial complexes and imposing environmental improvement charges, etc., commissioned by the Minister of Environment.

The environmental administrative agencies of the local governments vary; however, all of sixteen metropolitan cities have an environmental green area bureau or an environmental affairs bureau or a department for the environment, culture, tourism and marine affairs. Also, municipalities are working on environmental issues through an environmental protection division or an environmental management division or a department for maritime and urban functions.

3-2. Environmental Acts Structure

Under the provision of Article 35 of the Constitution, "All citizens shall have the right to a healthy and agreeable environment. The State and all citizens shall endeavor to protect the environment." The Environmental Acts specify environmental rights guaranteed by Article 35 of the Constitution. The concept of Environmental Acts can be interpreted in both a broad and a narrow sense. The Environmental Acts in a broad sense include all laws that stipulate the 'environment,' 'natural environment,' or 'living environment,' as regulated in Article 3.1 of the Framework Act on Environmental Policy. In a narrow sense, the Environmental Law signifies laws that are managed under the Ministry of Environment according to Article 40 of the Government Organization Act or laws related to preservation of the natural environment and living environment and prevention of environmental pollution.

Still, environmental problems cannot be solved solely by the laws under the Ministry of Environment, but are rather closely related to land policies, energy policies and industrial policies. Therefore, when discussing the problem of preserving and improving the environment in general, it is important to understand Environmental Acts in a broad sense.

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