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Establishment of International Cooperation Office to Strengthen Status as a Leading Country in Climate and Environment in the International Community

- ‘Regulations on the Ministry of Environment and its Affiliated Agencies’ revised draft adopted by the Cabinet meeting, to be implemented from February 25

The Ministry of Environment (Minister Kim Wansup) announced that the revised Regulations on the Ministry of Environment and its Affiliated Agencies, aimed at strengthening international environmental cooperation and responding to environmental trade barriers, including the establishment of a new International Cooperation Office, was adopted at the Cabinet meeting on February 18 and will be implemented from February 25.

This organizational restructuring focuses on proactively responding to the rapidly changing international environment due to the deepening climate crisis and the strengthening of carbon trade barriers, while enhancing Korea’s international status and influence by taking a leading role in international environmental negotiations, as well as establishing a dedicated organization to effectively support the entry of domestic green industries into overseas markets.

The main contents of the establishment of the International Cooperation Office are as follows.

First, an International Cooperation Office will be established within the Planning and Coordination Office, with subordinate organizations including an International Cooperation Officer, International Environmental Treaties Team, and International Development Cooperation Team.

The International Cooperation Officer will perform functions overseeing international cooperation in the environmental sector. Specifically, the Officer will engage in collaborative activities with multilateral environmental forums such as the United Nations (UN), Group of Twenty (G20), and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). In addition, the Officer will strengthen cooperative and exchange activities with other countries in the environmental sector and be responsible for follow-up tasks such as managing the implementation of international environmental treaties and agreements. Furthermore, to secure the international competitiveness of domestic companies on the ground, the Officer will enhance the sales capabilities of enterprise-oriented green industries.

In addition, the International Cooperation Officer will systematically support the entire process of discovering, bidding, negotiating, and financially investing in new overseas climate and environmental projects.

The International Environmental Treaties Team is responsible for responding to international norms in the climate and environment sector, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity. It actively participates in bilateral and multilateral environmental negotiations, including the UN Climate Change Conference Of Parties, contributing to international cooperation for solving global environmental issues. Furthermore, to respond to rapidly changing international environmental norms, it will establish and coordinate trade policies in the environmental and sustainable development sectors and will also handle bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations.

The International Development Cooperation Team is responsible for planning and managing international development cooperation projects in the environmental sector, such as Official Development Assistance (ODA) projects, and promoting cooperation projects with multilateral development banks (MDBs) and international financial institutions. In addition, it will operate forums for the discovery and promotion of international development cooperation projects led by Korea, and will be responsible for planning greenhouse gas international reduction projects utilizing the provisions of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, as well as managing reduction performance and supporting greenhouse gas reduction projects in developing countries.

Son Ok-joo, Deputy Minister of the Planning and Coordination Office, stated, “With the establishment of the International Cooperation Office, we will lead discussions on environmental norms in the international community as the primary ministry responsible for implementing carbon neutrality, thereby elevating our status as a leading country in global environmental efforts, while also taking the lead in supporting the enhancement of environmental competitiveness for domestic companies and their entry into overseas markets.”