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The Seventh Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly Concludes - Discussions on Advancing Sustainable Solutions

- A ministerial declaration, resolutions, and a medium-term strategy reflecting UNEP vision were adopted
- An international platform for strengthening bilateral and multilateral cooperation, with the participation of environment ministers and vice ministers from various countries and international organizations

The Ministry of Climate, Energy and Environment (MCEE, Minister Kim Sungwhan) announced that the seventh United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7), held in Nairobi, Kenya, concluded on December 13.

* The United Nations Environment Assembly is held every two years in Nairobi, Kenya, and is the highest-level environmental meeting at which ministers and vice ministers from UN member states convene to discuss the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)'s programme of work and budget to adopt resolutions and declarations.

Approximately 3,500 participants from around 160 countries, international organizations, businesses, and civil society attended the Assembly, and Korea was represented by a government delegation led by First Vice Minister Kum Hanseung of the MCEE, comprising officials from relevant ministries and experts.

At the Assembly, a ministerial declaration on “Advancing Sustainable Solutions for a Resilient Planet” was adopted. The declaration outlines key

measures to address the global environmental crisis, including expanding sustainable solutions to tackle global environmental challenges; promoting the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements; strengthening means of implementation based on equity, inclusiveness, and accessibility; and establishing environmental governance systems that adhere to principles of international law.

In addition, the Assembly adopted a range of resolutions in the climate and environmental fields, including enhancing climate resilience of coral reefs; promoting the participation of children and youth in environmental and climate action; advancing sustainability in artificial intelligence (AI); leveraging sports for sustainable solutions; strengthening global wildfire management; and enhancing synergies among multilateral environmental agreements.

Resolutions of the UNEA are political and policy documents through which the international community formally agrees on environmental priorities, directions for collective action, and policy commitments; while not legally binding, they serve as global environmental policy instruments that guide the UNEP and environmental action by the international community.

In addition, the “UNEP Medium Term Strategy (2026–2029),” which presents medium- to long-term vision and programmatic direction of the UNEP, was officially adopted. As the highest-level guiding framework for all UNEP programs and financial investments, the strategy aims to address the triple planetary crisis by 2029 through climate stability^{*}; the restoration of nature and biodiversity; and a pollution-free, healthy environment. To support these goals, it will also prioritize integrated circularity, strengthened science–policy linkages, and the use of digital solutions and AI.

^{*} A state in which net greenhouse gas emissions are reduced to zero and resilience to climate change is achieved.

Meanwhile, with around 100 high-level officials, including environment ministers from 60 countries worldwide, in attendance, Vice Minister Kum Hanseung held bilateral meetings with ministers and vice ministers of environment from key countries such as Mongolia, Kenya, and Oman, creating

opportunities to further expand Korea's climate and environmental cooperation.

First, in a meeting with Minister Batbaatar Bat of Mongolia's Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, the two sides discussed avenues for bilateral cooperation on air quality management and international mitigation projects, and agreed to strengthen cooperation to address environmental issues in the Northeast Asia region.

In addition, during a meeting with Festus K. Ngeno, Principal Secretary of Kenya's Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry, the two sides agreed to expand bilateral cooperation, through policy sharing, people-to-people exchanges, and other means, to address the climate crisis and strengthen waste management.

Vice Minister Kum also held a bilateral meeting with Abdullah Bin Ali Al Am-ri, Chairman of Oman's Environment Authority and President of the UNEA-7, and signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on environmental cooperation between Korea and Oman.

This MOU represents a tangible outcome of sustained bilateral exchanges, including the visit of the Chairman of Oman's Environment Authority to Korea two years ago. Building on this foundation, the two countries plan to actively pursue a wide range of cooperative initiatives across the climate and environmental spectrum, including climate change response, air quality management, and environmental education.

First Vice Minister Kum Hanseung stated, "Achieving a resilient planet requires not only the will of the international community but also concrete means of cooperation to put that will into action." He added, "The MCEE will continue to strengthen solidarity with the international community to address environmental challenges faced by each country and take the lead in driving a global decarbonized green civilization."