

Statement from Republic of Korea

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Thank you chair, for giving me the floor.

I would like to commend FAO for leading the Green Cities Initiative and recognize the efforts to promote sustainable green cities. With 92% of its population residing in urban areas, the Republic of Korea has experienced significant challenges due to rapid urbanization, which prompt us to recognize the importance of urban forests.

In particular, issues like air pollution and urban heat islands escalated by climate change underline the need for urban forestry initiatives.

As a result of consistent policy efforts and investments under this acknowledgement, the area of urban forests per capita available to Korea's urban population has significantly expanded. In 2011, it was less than 8 square meters per person, whereas by 2021, it had increased to around 11.5 square meters per person, nearly a 50% increase.

Furthermore, in 2017, in collaboration with FAO, the Korea Forest Service and the Seoul Metropolitan Government successfully hosted the 2nd Asia-Pacific Urban Forestry Meeting, adopting the Seoul Action Plan. This achievement was carried into the Mantova Action Plan at the 1st World Forum on Urban Forests in 2018, establishing a global framework for urban forests and forestry.

For our health, well-being, and resilience against climate change, I believe it's crucial not only for people to go to forests but also to bring forests to the city where people live. Through innovative technologies and policies, I hope that more people can enjoy more urban forests in the future and the Republic of Korea is committed to leading efforts towards this goal.

I thank you.