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Water, Energy and AI Shape the Future of Water Management as Korea International Water Week 2026 Opens

- High-level officials and water-sector experts from around 50 countries to participate from September 9 to 11
- Water-energy-AI integration proposed as the future direction for water management in response to the climate crisis and the growth of advanced industries

The Ministry of Climate, Energy and Environment (MCEE, Minister Kim Sungwhan) announced that it will host the ‘Korea International Water Week (KIWW) 2026’ from September 9 to 11 at EXCO in Buk-gu, Daegu.

About 10,000 participants from approximately 50 countries, including Korea, are expected to attend this year’s Korea International Water Week.

Korea International Water Week, launched in 2016 to carry forward the achievements of the 7th World Water Forum held in Korea in 2015, is the country’s largest international event dedicated to the water sector. It is jointly hosted by the MCEE, Daegu Metropolitan City, Korea Water Resources Corporation, Korea Environment Corporation, and Korea Hydro & Nuclear Power (KHNP), and organized by the Korea Water Forum.

In particular, KHNP joined the event as a co-host for the first time this year to promote discussions on the interconnection between water and energy.

The event will bring together senior government officials from around the world, including Cambodian Deputy Minister of Water Resources and Meteorology Sachak Ponh, Tanzanian Deputy Minister of Water Resources Kundo Mathew, and Chairperson of the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi Shaikha Salem Al Dhaheri, as well as senior figures from leading water-sector organizations such as the World Water Council, International Water Association, and American Water Works Association.

According to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), 84% of climate-related disasters over the past 50 years (1970–2021) were water-related disasters, including floods, droughts, and heavy rainfall.

This demonstrates that the climate crisis is increasingly affecting humanity in the form of water-related disasters. With the growth of the semiconductor industry driven by the AI transformation, the importance of ensuring a stable supply of water and energy has also become greater than ever.

Against this backdrop, this year's event, under the theme “Water, Energy, AI: Securing Our Future,” will feature around 50 programs, including high-level meetings, academic and policy sessions, and business meetings. The programs will focus on two key areas: fostering collaboration among water, energy, and AI so that they can move beyond their individual domains and mutually support one another, while creating synergies.

① Water and energy infrastructure supporting the AI and advanced industries era

First, the sessions will discuss infrastructure systems for the efficient and stable supply of the water and energy essential to the operation of advanced industries such as AI and semiconductors. Topics will include “Water-Energy-AI: Enabling the Future of the Semiconductor Industry,” “Water-Energy-AI: Digital Transformation of Hydropower,” and

“Pumped-Storage Hydropower & Renewable Energy.” The sessions will also address water-related issues associated with semiconductor manufacturing, focusing on ultrapure water and industrial wastewater reuse.

② **AI-powered intelligent management of water and energy**

In addition, sessions on topics such as “AI-driven Smart Wastewater Treatment and the Water-Energy Nexus,” “Safe Agricultural Water Supply and Disaster Response Using AI,” and “Reducing Non-Revenue Water through Technology and International Cooperation” will explore how AI can analyze and predict vast amounts of water data and energy consumption patterns in real time, serving as a key driver of advanced water resource management and optimized energy efficiency.

At the “Water Leaders’ Round Table,” where high-level officials from around the world will gather to discuss ways to address global water challenges, an “Action Declaration” expressing their commitment to implementation is expected to be adopted.

The event will also provide a platform for strengthening international cooperation to address global water challenges, including the “Global Partnership Forum: Development Cooperation for Water Security,” where Korea will share the achievements of its development cooperation policies in the water sector and explore directions for further development.

Sessions addressing water safety issues closely tied to people’s daily lives will also be held. These will include “Integrated Climate-Resilient Solutions for Urban Flood Mitigation” and “Advancing Climate-Resilient Urban Flood Management,” which will focus on flood response, as well as “Prevention of Manhole Accidents and Ground Subsidence” to prevent accidents in urban areas and “Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Treatment Process,” which will discuss processes for removing PFAS.

In addition, practical business programs will be offered, including export consultations with international buyers, public procurement consultations, and exhibitions to showcase innovative technologies developed by Korean water companies to the global market.

The exhibition will also feature a showcase of water management practices and the latest technologies from leading Korean semiconductor companies, including Samsung Electronics and SK hynix.

In addition, a “Semiconductor Pavilion” featuring materials, parts, and equipment companies will showcase technologies and products such as ultrapure water filters for semiconductor manufacturing, wastewater treatment systems, and precision analysis and measurement equipment.

In addition, a newly introduced “New Technology Showcase” this year will showcase new water-industry technologies developed by Korean companies, including an AI-based robotic solution for long-distance, precision diagnostics of water supply networks and seismic-isolated water tanks designed to maintain water supply even during earthquakes.

The event will give young people a voice in water management through a “Youth Short-Form Video Contest,” where teenagers can freely express their perspectives on the importance of integrating water, energy, and AI, as well as programs and sessions such as the “Global Youth Program,” “Youth Proposals for the Future of Water Resources in the AI Era,” and “Youth Perspectives on Climate Resilience: Water, Gender, and Urban Futures .”

A variety of public events will also be held, including a video fountain show at Suseongmot Lake and street performances, offering opportunities for

the public to participate and enjoy the festivities.

Kum Hanseung, First Vice Minister of the MCEE, said, “The integration of water and energy policies, made possible by the launch of the MCEE last October, will become an even more powerful capability for responding to the climate crisis through AI.” He added, “We will proactively respond to the new water and energy demands of advanced industries and provide active support to help Korean companies lead overseas markets.”