

High Time for Sustainable Peace in Northeast Asia
through a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone
by Peace Depot Inc. Japan

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Thank you, Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates, civil society colleagues,

After taking office in May 2017, the ROK (Republic of Korea) President Moon Jae-in called to Mr. Kim Jong-un, head of the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), first in Berlin in July and again in New York in September. Mr. Moon invited the DPRK to participate in the 2018 Winter Olympic Games and to resume South-North dialogues, including the possibility of an inter-Korean summit. Mr. Kim responded positively in his 2018 New Year's Address. Since then, the situation on the Korean Peninsula has been evolving dramatically. Moon and Kim sent their special envoys to the each other's capital. This was followed by Mr. Kim's sudden, historic visit to China to meet President Xi Jinping, marking Mr. Kim's first debut as a diplomat in a foreign country. We are now expecting an inter-Korean summit the day after tomorrow, and the historic first summit between the U.S. and the DPRK by early June. The international community should take advantage of this golden opportunity to overcome historical challenges and build sustainable peace in Northeast Asia.

The term "Denuclearization of the DPRK" is not a proper term to describe the pending issue that we need to solve. The ROK government officially stated on March 6, after the meeting of its special envoy with Mr. Kim Jong-un, "The North side clearly affirmed its commitment to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and said it would have no reason to possess nuclear weapons, should the safety of its regime be guaranteed and military threats against North Korea removed." This means the issue is not only the "Denuclearization of the DPRK," but at least the "Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula," which is linked to broader issues such as extended nuclear deterrence policy of the ROK and negative security assurances by nuclear weapon states concerned. Also, the question of military threats is directly related to the current fragile status of the truce of the Korean War, as well as to the significant US military presence in the ROK and Japan.

We believe that a Nuclear Weapon-Free Korean Peninsula is more sustainable if extended to include Japan, and thereby, establishing a Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (NEA-NWFZ). The possible nuclear armament of Japan has been a

longstanding concern of countries in the region, especially because of Japan's large unaccountable stockpile of plutonium and its consistent adherence to nuclear deterrence. Japan as well as two Koreas would enjoy legally binding security assurances from their perceived nuclear adversaries through a NEA-NWFZ.

A number of academics and researchers, including those from Nautilus Institute and RECNA (Research Center for Nuclear Weapons Abolition, Nagasaki University), have proposed comprehensive approaches to establish a NEA-NWFZ, in which, they argue, a certain set of pending issues are to be solved simultaneously because they are closely interrelated. Among such issues are termination of the Korean War, mutual declaration of no hostile intent, establishment of a NEA-NWFZ, creation of a permanent regional council on security equipped with a verification system and other security initiatives. We believe such proposals should attract more attention than ever given the current diplomatic opportunities in the region.

We have learned abundant lessons from the decades-long history of international efforts to establish a nuclear weapon-free Northeast Asia. In order to make best use of the current positive diplomatic climate, we urge all states concerned not to attribute past failures to others and rather, to make persistent efforts to overcome mutual distrust through innovative and practical measures for peace.

Thank you.

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