



**Ulaanbaatar Process IX  
June 17-19, 2023  
Summary Document**

The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) Northeast Asia regional network, together with the Mongolian NGO Blue Banner, convened the ninth Ulaanbaatar Process civil society dialogue in Mongolia between June 17-19, 2023.

The Ulaanbaatar Process is a unique, local civil society led process, which aims to strengthen the position of civil society and support it to enhance and maintain inclusive and sustainable peace in the Northeast Asian region. While providing a platform for dialogue amongst civil society experts, it also complements official (regional and international) processes and provides recommendations from an all-of-society perspective. Since 2021 the Ulaanbaatar Process is co-funded by the European Union's Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP).

This year, approximately thirty participants gathered from Beijing, California, Hong Kong, Kyoto, Seoul, Siem Reap, Taipei, Tokyo, Ulaanbaatar, Vladivostok, Washington DC, and the GPPAC Global Secretariat (The Hague). Participation from Pyongyang was not possible in person due to ongoing border closures, however written input was provided to the meeting, emphasising that "this meeting is of more importance as the political and military situation in the region has intensified as never before." As well as geographical diversity, participants also represented a broad range of perspectives, coming from feminist organisations, youth-led groups, grassroots civil society organisations, think tanks and academic research institutions, providing for rich and thought-provoking discussions and ideas.

**Context**

This year's dialogue took place within a series of related programmes in Ulaanbaatar during June, 2023. Immediately before, co-convenors of the Process also participated in the Eighth Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on Northeast Asian Security on June 15 and 16, which was attended by more than 180 delegates and government representatives from 30 countries. This served as an important opportunity for discussion and exchange of information between youth, civil society, international organisations and government representatives, and emphasised the

significance of dialogue and cooperation, a critical mechanism in confidence-building measures sorely needed in Northeast Asia.

Prior to this on June 13 and 14, GPPAC partnered with the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia to co-organise the two-day workshop, “Supporting the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Northeast Asia.” The programme focused on taking stock of regional trends and their impact on the participation of women in peacebuilding and preventive diplomacy, as well as an overview and lessons learned from the countries in the region with existing UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans, with a view to encouraging other countries in the region to develop their own plans and related inclusive consultations. The workshop integrated an intergenerational aspect to further explore the nexus between the WPS and Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agendas. Participants included relevant government and UN officials, as well as experts from the GPPAC Northeast Asia network.

The meeting took place at a time when tensions in the region, as well as military expenditures, have continued to rise. Competition between the United States and China is complicating regional relations and stability, and the ongoing war in Ukraine is having ongoing negative impacts for Northeast Asia also. Nuclear powers in the region are increasing the role of nuclear weapons in their security policy despite international efforts in the opposite direction. This leads to dangerous risks including not only of conflict or deliberate acts, but also of miscommunication and miscalculation. These serious issues remind of the urgent need for immediate regional action for conflict prevention, confidence building, and denuclearisation.

Additionally, the situation is further exacerbated by the worsening of emerging threats, such as non-traditional security issues. Particularly, the issue of the climate crisis was emphasised by participants as a risk that poses an existential danger, and measures for which require constructive regional and multilayered cooperation.

### **Overview of discussions**

Within such a context, discussions by participants reinforced the need for all possible platforms for dialogue to be kept open, deepened and expanded. Further, the importance of moving beyond just discussion and words, to concrete cooperation and action, was emphasised throughout.

To this end, during the three days the participants engaged not only in dialogue, but also in a practical simulation exercise. As a preparatory step toward future activities, this lively simulation was a participatory experiment for the network to explore innovative methods for learning and exchange, and how to encourage imagination to be expanded as a tool to

explore new ways to deal with regional peace and security challenges.

In addition, dedicated sessions also explored issues such as perspectives on Northeast Asia as viewed from Washington DC, including prospects for dialogue and the potential role of multilateral efforts in easing tensions and building peace; initiatives regarding a Northeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in light of the evolving regional security situation; the upcoming 70th anniversary of the Korean Armistice agreement; and civil society strategies for locally-led, sustainable peacebuilding. Participants also confirmed the need to look at the climate crisis from the perspective of peace and its connection to armed conflict, and that solutions should be considered inclusively.

### **Looking forward**

Although COVID-19 has been declared over as a public health emergency, its impacts continue to run deeply around the world. In Northeast Asia, mobility within the region remains far from returning to the pre-pandemic situation, and it is not yet possible for all to move freely within the region. In combination with geopolitical challenges and increasing tensions, this led participants to all the more strongly emphasise the need for safe, regular and consistent spaces for dialogue with diverse stakeholders. Efforts to ensure inclusion of voices of those not yet able to participate in person, particularly from the DPRK, were highlighted as a continued priority for the Ulaanbaatar Process, as was the commitment to hold in-person engagements with partners from Pyongyang as soon as logistically possible. In addition, participants confirmed to continue concrete network-led activities, particularly related to civil society capacity development and inclusion, discussing expansion of the work plan and related collaborative activities for the remainder of 2023.