The Republic of Korea's Contribution to the Resolution on "United Nations Study on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation" (A/RES/77/52)

Education on disarmament and non-proliferation is one of the top priorities for the Republic of Korea (ROK), which recognizes its pivotal role in fostering global peace and security. Specifically, educating young individuals on these critical topics lays the groundwork for achieving sustainable peace and security worldwide. By equipping the youth with knowledge and skills, we empower them to become tomorrow's leaders, capable of making meaningful contributions to disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

Aligned with the Secretary-General's agenda for disarmament, *Securing Our Common Future*, the ROK government acknowledges the immense potential of the youths to drive positive change and create a safer world for all. In line with this perspective, the ROK has spearheaded Action 38 of the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda, which advocates for establishing a platform for youth engagement to enhance their participation in international discussions on disarmament and non-proliferation.

Since 2019, the ROK has been leading the adoption of biennial resolutions titled "Youth, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation." The latest iteration (A/RES/78/31) underscores the importance of maximizing the potential of the youths through education and capacity-building in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation. Bearing in mind other relevant resolutions including "United Nations Study on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation," these resolutions emphasize education as a fundamental tool for engaging and empowering youths in these critical areas.

In line with the resolutions, the ROK has been organizing various events to educate the public, especially the youths, on disarmament and non-proliferation. In 2022, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the ROK organized the Youth Education Camp for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation. Thirty university students participated in the camp, engaging in lectures and field trips to relevant institutions in Daejeon. Through debates and discussions, they explored topics such as regulating Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) and establishing international norms to prevent an arms race in outer space.

Moreover, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and the British American Security Information Council (BASIC), the ROK
hosted an online side event during the 10th NPT Review Conference in August 2022. This event aimed to advance youth participation in discussions on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, with youth working groups developing recommendations to strengthen the NPT's three pillars and promote equity and diversity among stakeholders. Their recommendations were then directly presented by youth leaders to senior officials in the field, including the President-designate of the 10th NPT Review Conference, the CTBTO Executive Secretary, and the IAEA Director General. The opening session on August 2 and the outcome presentation session on August 11 were attended by around eighty people from diplomatic delegations and youths worldwide. The side event served as an opportunity for the youths to not only learn about nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation but also network with early-career and senior experts.

In 2023, the ROK appointed twenty-six university students as Korean Youth Envoys for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation to promote youth awareness and participation in this area. As their first official activity, the Korean Youth Envoys had a dialogue with Dr. Robert Floyd, CTBTO Executive Secretary, on August 10 during his visit to Seoul. Through the dialogue, they learned the importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty toward a world free of nuclear weapons. They also participated in the Youth Education Camp for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, attending lectures on disarmament and non-proliferation that covered both traditional and emerging issues. The camp included visits to research institutes such as the Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute (KAERI) and the Korea Aerospace Research Institute (KARI).

Based on what they learned during the camp and through their own research, the Korean Youth Envoys created card news, infographics, and short videos, which they then uploaded to the Korean Youth Envoys’ official social media account to raise public awareness on the topics. Two of the Korean Youth Envoys who showed the most excellent performance were given the opportunity to participate in the 22nd ROK-UN Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Issues held in Geneva on 4-5 December 2023. In line with the conference's theme, "Governance of Military Artificial Intelligence (AI)," they expressed their views on the topic as young Koreans who will primarily be using AI in the future and must complete mandatory military service through a special exhibition.

In 2024, the ROK appointed thirty-one university students as the second Korean Youth Envoys for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation. To provide them with education on a regular basis, the Youth Academy for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation was launched in March 2024. The academy consisted of ten lectures that cover nuclear weapons, missiles, space security, LAWS, and AI in the military domain. Along the course, the
Korean Youth Envoys write a team report proposing policies on how the governance of military AI can best be established and what should be included in the international norms.

In addition to organizing diverse events, the ROK has been making financial contributions to various projects of relevant organizations, including the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the UNODA, to support youth education on disarmament and non-proliferation. For instance, the UNIDIR launched the Online Youth Disarmament Orientation Course in December 2022 which consists of six modules on major topics in such fields as arms control, weapons of mass destruction, space and missiles, small arms and light weapons, AI, and cyber security. The ROK also funded the UNIDIR’s Graduate Professional Programme that provided twenty-four young graduate professionals from fifteen countries with practical experience in a research institute as well as with practical skills and expertise.

The ROK also provide financial support for the UNODA’s organization of a side event, titled “Generation Z: Role of Youth in Advancing D.N.A. (Disarmament, Non-proliferation, and Arms Control),” during the 78th UN General Assembly First Committee on 23 October 2023 as a part of Youth4Disarmament project. The side event served as a forum where youth panelists and participants were able to learn the emerging issues in disarmament and non-proliferation, exchange their views and ideas, and raise their voices for expanding engagement in the younger generations from diverse backgrounds.

The ROK will continue and expand its efforts to engage, educate, and empower youths in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation by carrying out various educational activities to promote public awareness on these issues while expanding its partnership with the international community.