



# YOUTH PERSPECTIVES on disarmament and non-proliferation in Northeast Asia

DPPA-ODA  
online learning series  
with Northeast Asian  
young leaders,  
April - December 2020

**UN Security Council Resolutions 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018) and 2535 (2020) on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS)** provide a framework for the UN to promote a more meaningful participation of youth in peace and security processes. The adoption by the UN General Assembly of Resolution 74/64 on "Youth, disarmament and non-proliferation", tabled by the Republic of Korea on 21 October 2019 and co-sponsored by 84 Member States, including Japan, China and Mongolia, created another entry point for multilateral policy and confidence-building initiatives with young people in the region.

In 2020, DPPA and the Office for Disarmament Affairs launched a project to bring together a group of Northeast Asian young people to discuss disarmament and non-proliferation issues. Since April, the joint team has worked with eight youth leaders from the Republic of Korea, Japan, the People's Republic of China and Mongolia to train and build their capacity on disarmament, non-proliferation, gender, new technologies and civil society action. The participants underwent a series of trainings and webinars with UN and non-UN actors.

The project also connected youth with senior policy makers from the region. On 2 December, a participant to the project spoke at a youth special session, convened for the first time on the eve of the annual ROK-UN Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Issues, in line with the ambition to build bridges between decision-makers and young people. Members of the group also recorded a podcast about their experience.

Over the months, the young leaders worked in two separate groups on two policy papers, with the goal of sharing their views and recommendations on how to make youth voices better heard in the region.

Their final policy papers are available here:

- Promoting Disarmament and Peacebuilding through a Shared Regional Identity in Northeast Asia by Moe Sasaki, Khishigjargal Enkhbayar, Manjiang He, Gasun Han

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xCv5vbM6NHPbSloWrf2OtPkGyVdpZErV/edit?rtfpof=true>

- Cyber Security in Northeast Asia: young people's participation in the global discussion and the implications raised by new technologies by Marie Yamamoto and Ijun Kim

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1k1ZkQTWES0bq248Q9E1lleXD1QOqV9PC/edit?rtfpof=true>

My interest in peace and security issues in Northeast Asia led me to the participation in this initiative. Through learning about disarmament I realized how important it is to share knowledge and information among citizens. These issues should involve every generation, but we still hardly have the opportunity to understand how much they relate to our lives. Reaching out to young people, even if they are still indifferent to this issue, will help us to adopt a long-term perspective.



Marie Yamamoto,  
Japan

Growing up in a country without a violent conflict, peace was once something I took for granted. Witnessing first-hand hundreds of thousands of Syrians fleeing to Turkey I realized peace does not simply exist by itself unless we fight for it and keep building it with action. As youth, we do need to speak up our concerns about disarmament. Getting our voice heard is the first step to make social change for the public and policy transformation for policymakers. It is only through collective and consistent efforts that we can achieve the goal of disarmament in this region.



He Manjiang,  
People's Republic of China

I wanted to be connected with other youth leaders in Northeast Asia so that we can look for a grassroots movement that empowers the youth in the region to work together for disarmament and peacebuilding. My dream is to live in a place where I don't need to feel unsafe about my surroundings. I wish I could live in a place where my brothers don't need to be trained to defend ourselves from our own neighbors. I believe the true peaceful state comes from peace itself and within, not from being powerful enough to hurt others.



Gasun Han,  
The Republic of Korea

My grandparents underwent horrors throughout the Korean War, which instilled the paramount value of peace in me. I am hopeful that young people like myself can steer positive progress in the contentious issues. Therefore it was inspiring to participate in close-knit, remarkable training from leading UN practitioners in disarmament, peace, and security issues.



Min Seong Kim,  
Republic of Korea  
Founder & President  
of University of Pennsylvania  
Policy Consulting Group

I enjoyed exchanging views on sensitive issues with peers from across the region. Mongolia is the only case of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (NWFZ) that consists of a single country, complementing the other 5 regional NWFZs. I hope more young people can learn about NWFZs and advocate for its establishment in Northeast Asia. I believe young people can play a crucial role in promoting peace in the region through educating themselves about disarmament issues and raising their voices.



Khishigjargal Enkhbayar,  
Mongolia

As a peacebuilder and trainer in peace education, I have always found disarmament education to be one of the most challenging issues to make relevant to youth and civil society. Many issues seem too difficult to conceptualize and the nuances of disarmament, difficult to grasp. Through the project, I have learned to form my own ideas about how disarmament could speak in the language of everyday people in Northeast Asia. I believe youth participation is especially important because youth have the potential to play a central role in advancing regional cooperation and identity building, which is essential to build security that is not just national but regional and global.



Moe Sasaki,  
Japan

My biggest discovery was how tightly interwoven disarmament is in the history and future of Northeast Asia, and for individuals like myself. The online session that introduced emerging technologies became a big inspiration for me and I started developing a strong interest in cyber security issues. I now understand that responsible innovation is mandatory and how a future without it could affect people like me. I believe that the youth equipped with necessary creativity and innovation can shape the future paths of peacebuilding.



Ijun Kim,  
The Republic of Korea



#Youth4Peace  
#Youth4Disarmament



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