

**GPPAC Northeast Asia Statement:
Overcoming Divisions and Building Peace Through Civil Society Initiatives
Seoul, 6 March 2006**

We, members of the Northeast Asia conflict prevention network of GPPAC¹, come together to reaffirm our commitment to conflict prevention and peacebuilding in this region. Through discussion and interaction at Mt. Kumgang, North Korea and in Seoul, South Korea, we reaffirmed the principles and tasks of the GPPAC Northeast Asia Regional Action Agenda of February 2005.

Northeast Asia remains a volatile and divided region where tension and mistrust still prevails among some neighboring peoples. Mt. Kumgang is a living testimony to the hopes for peace and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula. Its development came about through the initiatives of visionary civil society actors, and it provides a genuine space for promoting interaction for citizens of North and South Korea. It also symbolizes the spirit of the Declaration of the June 2000 Summit of North and South Korea, which reaffirmed the principles of peaceful coexistence and reunification of the Peninsula.

We believe that civil society can and should take a proactive role in easing tensions and building confidence among peoples. We agree that the key priority of our joint actions includes the following:

- Encourage the Six-Party Talks process and promote normalization of the relations between the DPRK and Japan, and between the DPRK and the USA;
- Take concrete steps to help create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Northeast Asia for conflict prevention and institution building;
- Promote fact-based common understanding of history, including past colonization and the war of aggression, to achieve reconciliation among peoples;
- Preserve Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, and encourage the roles of peace constitutions to promote demilitarization in the world;
- Promote inter-civil society dialogue to build confidence over challenges such as: the issue across the Taiwan Strait, and the territorial disputes including Kuril Islands/Northern territories and Senkaku/Diaoyu/Tiaoyutai Islands;
- Encourage the governments to shift their budgets for military spending to social welfare problems through disarmament.

We commit ourselves to working hand-in-hand to achieve our agreed tasks and in doing so, developing the conflict prevention network of civil society organizations in Northeast Asia. We also seek to work in partnership with the UN, governments and peoples striving for peace in neighboring regions, and thereby create a regional mechanism for peace.

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¹ Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict: www.gppac.net