

NORTH-EAST ASIAN YOUTH CONFERENCE:  
“THE WORLD  
WE WANT”



7-9 January 2013 - Korea University

*The World We Want*

**A North-East Asian Youth Vision**

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**This Declaration was handed to His Excellency Kim Sung-hwan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea, in Seoul on 9<sup>th</sup> of January 2013. Minister Kim was acting in his personal capacity as a member of the UN Secretary General’s High Level Panel on the Post-2015 development agenda.**

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We, 51 young people from diverse backgrounds in China, Japan, Korea and Mongolia, came together to take part in the North-East Asian Youth Conference: ‘The World We Want’ at Korea University in Seoul, Republic of Korea from 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> of January 2013.

Building on work before the conference, we discussed the Millennium Development Goals, the progress the world has made in working towards meeting them, the lessons learned from them and the challenges ahead.

North-East Asia has a common cultural heritage. This shared background could be the core of the ties we need to bind us closer together in future. Building on this, we forged a consensus on the vision of the world we want on behalf of young people from China, Japan, Korea and Mongolia.

We made a series of demands for policy-makers for a global development framework post-2015. We expect them to be acted on.

We shared views on the role of the youth in building the world we want and committed to make sure we play our part in bringing the world we and our children want to life.

### **The Millennium Development Goals offer lessons for the future**

**The Millennium Development Goals have helped lift millions out of poverty** and helped boost access to primary education worldwide.

**Since the year 2000, the MDGs have become our common language for development.** They have helped galvanize nations and people.

**We believe that goals are relevant** as they help to keep governments accountable, put peer pressure on countries, help identify where countries need support from the international community and additional capacity and help countries define their national plans.

### **Yet the world today is very different than it was in 2000**

**The development framework post-2015 needs to be achievable.** Goals must evolve to be realistic and reflect the key challenges we are facing today.

**The voice of youth should be heard.** We young people should be involved in the decision making process for the future. The youth should be empowered to raise their voice to change the world as they see fit.

**Young people need jobs.** Youth unemployment must be tackled. The four countries we represent are at different stages of development, yet we all agree that jobs and social mobility are of great importance.

**Access to quality education must be guaranteed.** Quality education is the process where children learn to communicate with their peers and develop individualities within the society.

**Inequalities are on the rise.** In many places, the rich-poor gap, the urban-rural gap and regional gaps are growing. We are concerned about the negative impact on equality of opportunity, human dignity, persistent poverty, human rights and social stability.

**We are concerned about falling birth rates and ageing populations.** With a dwindling number of young people, the economic burden for the young generation must not become too heavy.

**We must work together to ensure sustainable development.** Climate change and environmental degradation must be tackled. Our climate and environment affects all of us. Health problems are on the rise.

**Gender equality was addressed in the MDGs, but much work needs to be done.** We should recognize more gender identities, and discrimination against sexual minorities must end. The wage gap must be closed. Women must be better represented in politics. We must move beyond the rhetoric of equal opportunities and hire on merit.

**All forms of discrimination against vulnerable groups** including but not limited to sexual minorities, persons with disabilities, refugees, and migrant workers, must be tackled.

More international and regional cooperation is needed. North-East Asia is an engine of growth for the world, yet more international cooperation is needed between countries. We must work together to solve territorial disputes, prepare and respond to disasters and work together for mutual benefit.

The challenges we face are all interconnected. They must be tackled in a holistic way.

## The World We Want

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1. A world with peace and security:
  - a. We must settle regional territorial issues including facilitating a resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue.
  - b. Pursue prosperity in North-East Asia
  - c. We need an organization to discuss historical and territorial issues
  - d. We must promote cooperation among the public
  
2. Human development:
  - a. Food security
    - We need a surveillance and monitoring system for food and water safety
    - We must raise awareness of food security among the public
  - b. Education
    - We must encourage our children and parents to respect differences and to support each other in finding their own personal happiness
    - We need a new education system that promotes less competition and gives more opportunities to discover and pursue interests
  - c. Social Protection
    - We need a safe social environment that is free from crime and human trafficking
    - We need a universal health care system
    - We need a safety-net for the elderly, the young and for people with disabilities.

3. A world without discrimination, stigma and inequality where everyone enjoys basic human rights and human dignity
  - a. Regardless of culture, social, sexual and gender identity, disability, migrant status, ethnicity and nationality.
  - b. We need freedom of speech to write, publish and share.
  - c. We need decent work, wages and working conditions (without a gender bias or discrimination against vulnerable groups including, but not limited to, sexual minorities, persons with disabilities, refugees and ethnic minorities)
  - d. We need Independent labour unions that stand up for workers.
  
4. A world that respects a clean and green environment (sustainable development)
  - a. Resilience to natural disasters
    - Share information and cooperate among countries regardless of disputes or tensions
    - Strengthen collaboration among multilateral actors worldwide
    - Work to recover from tsunami and earthquakes
  - b. Resilience against man-made disasters
    - Green energy and sustainable energy use, make good use of smart-grids
    - Strike a balance between economic development and environmental protection
    - Enhance partnerships to boost ownership of recipient countries
  - c. Air pollution
    - Taking full responsibility for mining actions, including environmental recovery, providing compensation for lung cancer sufferers and other diseases and building infrastructure for coal transportation
    - Planting more trees in deserts
  
5. Good governance and accountable leaders
  - a. Public access to government information
  - b. End corruption
  
6. Economic development and stability
  - a. Jobs: talented young people should be able to find employment
  - b. Build more resilience to financial crises, including implementing good monetary policy
  - c. Commit to regional cooperation for economic development

### **Recommendations to policy-makers**

We call on the UN to:

- **Peace and security;** Strengthen international cooperation among states, work closely with governments and all countries as a more neutral actor.
- **Human rights and diversity;** Cooperate with governments to change stereotypes of people and provide education to help people become more open-minded towards diversity. Strengthen the operation of human rights institutions.

- **Sustainable development;** Cooperate more with environmental stakeholders to work toward sustainable development, to implement the international agreements, to provide incentives for the private sector to become more ecological and to facilitate technology transfer to protect the environment and for the private sector and local government to make green cities.
- **Good governance;** Take part as observers in political elections, increase the participation of civil society in the decision making process and provide expertise to governments at all levels to advocate for social welfare systems.
- **Employment;** encourage paid internships at the UN.

We call on Governments to;

- **Peace and security;** Strengthen cooperation among governments, NGOs, INGOs and the private sector for ensure peace and security in the region and promote active cultural interaction.
- **Environment;** Use education to improve awareness of environmental protection, make relevant budget allocations for environmental protection, build resilience against natural disasters and ensure the private sectors is accountable for sustainable development.
- **Human development;** Offer good social protection for all, especially the elderly, children, persons with disabilities and other potentially marginalized groups. Ensure a monitoring system for food security.
- **Education;** Promote education that is relevant and high quality. Reform educational systems, promoting less competition and giving more opportunities to the vulnerable to develop their interests. Invest in public education in rural areas.
- **Human rights and diversity;** Work better to advocate for the rights of diverse minorities, educate the public to improve social awareness and acceptance. Advocate for basic human rights.
- **Good governance and accountable leaders;** Promote democratic government, add political training into the education system to let the people understand what are their rights and how to use them. Develop regional human rights institutions to learn from other regions.
- **Economic development and stability;** create a conducive environment for investment and a supportive employment environment for young people so they can find stable, decent and fairly remunerated employment at all times. Provide training opportunities to young people to boost their employability. Encourage foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the country to develop the renewable energy sector.

We call on NGOs and INGOs to;

- **Peace and Security;** Strengthen collaboration among governments, NGOs, INGOs and the private sector to promote peace and security.

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