



The Government of  
the Republic of Korea

# STRATEGY

FOR A FREE, PEACEFUL,  
AND PROSPEROUS

# INDO-PACIFIC REGION



**STRATEGY**  
FOR A FREE, PEACEFUL,  
AND PROSPEROUS  
**INDO-PACIFIC**  
**REGION**





We are living in the Indo-Pacific era. Home to 65% of the world population, the Indo-Pacific accounts for more than 60% of the world's GDP, and half of global maritime transport. Peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region directly affect our survival and prosperity. That is why I propose fostering a “free, peaceful, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region” through solidarity and cooperation with major countries including ASEAN.

**Remarks by President Yoon Suk Yeol  
at the ROK-ASEAN Summit (November 11, 2022)**

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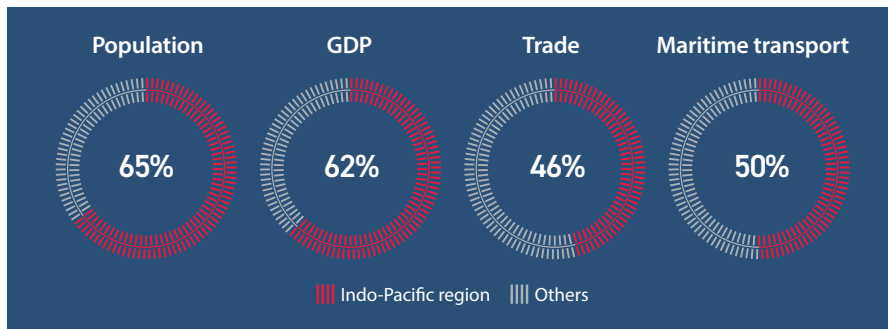
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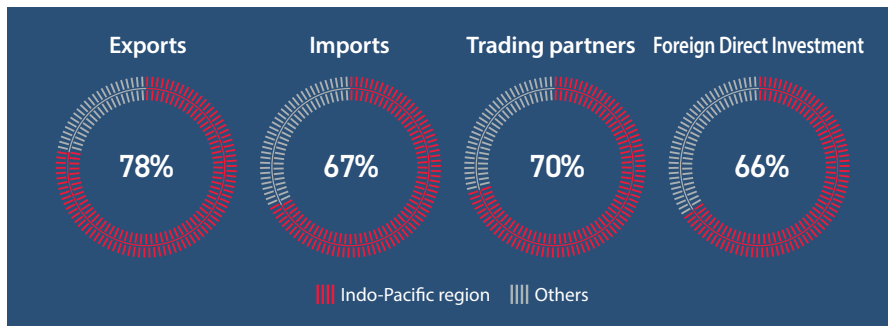
# I BACKGROUND: STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INDO-PACIFIC

The Republic of Korea is an Indo-Pacific nation. Our national interests are directly tied to the stability and prosperity in the region. Home to 65% of the world population, the Indo-Pacific accounts for 62% of the world's GDP, 46% of international trade, and half of global maritime transport. It is also an economically and technologically dynamic region where our key partners of strategic industries such as semiconductors are located.

**STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INDO-PACIFIC** — As of July 2020, Source: Journal of Economic Structures



**KOREA AND THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION** — As of 2022, Source: Export-Import Bank of Korea, Korea Customs Service



In recognition of the strategic importance of the Indo-Pacific, countries around the globe have increased engagement with the region and are putting forth their respective Indo-Pacific strategies. The Republic of Korea began to formulate its own Indo-Pacific Strategy with the inauguration of the Yoon Suk Yeol administration. Korea's comprehensive regional strategy encompassing the realms of the economy and security will enhance the predictability of its foreign policy and expand room for strategic action.

A strong democracy with a developed economy, Korea's next leap forward depends on a peaceful and stable Indo-Pacific. This is because the growth of our open economy relies heavily on exports, as indicated by the fact that foreign trade accounted for approximately 85% of our GDP in 2021. Particularly, the Indo-Pacific represents approximately 78% and 67% of our total exports and total imports, respectively. The fact that the majority of our top 20 trading partners are located in the Indo-Pacific and that 66% of our foreign direct investment is destined for the Indo-Pacific clearly reflect our close ties with the region.

The Indo-Pacific region is also home to many key strategic shipping routes. Most of our trade depends on sea lines of communication, with a significant portion going through the Strait of Hormuz, the Indian Ocean, the Malacca Strait, and the South China Sea. In particular, the South China Sea is a key sea route, accounting for around 64% and 46% of our crude oil transport and natural gas transport, respectively.



Recently, there has been a rise in a combination of challenges that threaten a free, peaceful, and prosperous Indo-Pacific. The stability of the regional order is being increasingly eroded by rising uncertainties in the security environment, and there is growing concern about democratic backsliding and challenges to universal values such as freedom, the rule of law, and human rights.

Rising geopolitical competition involving diplomacy and security, economy and technology, and values and norms have stalled the drive for cooperation among Indo-Pacific nations. The deepening arms race in the region, coupled with a lack of action to build transparency and trust in the military and security domains, is making the region less secure. Furthermore, North Korea's advancement of its nuclear and missile capabilities is a serious threat to peace and stability not only on the Korean Peninsula and in the Indo-Pacific region, but also across the globe.

We are also witnessing a weakening of governance in a globalizing world, including the spread of exclusive protectionism and supply chain disruptions. The fabric of the international free-trade order that previously underpinned a stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific is unraveling, while the region's economic growth engine is losing momentum.

The Republic of Korea is an open trading nation that aspires to contribute to global peace. We are committed to working with other

key nations both within and beyond the region to foster a free and peaceful region. While strengthening the rules-based international order conducive to a stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific, we will work towards a regional order that enables a diverse set of nations to cooperate and prosper together.

The future of the Indo-Pacific will be determined by our collective efforts to find common solutions to a range of complex challenges and build a sustainable and resilient regional order. To do our part, Korea aspires to become a Global Pivotal State that actively seeks out agenda for cooperation and shapes discussions in the region and the wider world. In this sense, our Strategy for a Free, Peaceful, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific will be our blueprint for future-oriented partnerships that serves shared interests across the Indo-Pacific.



## II VISION, PRINCIPLES OF COOPERATION, AND REGIONAL SCOPE

### 1. VISION: A FREE, PEACEFUL, AND PROSPEROUS INDO-PACIFIC

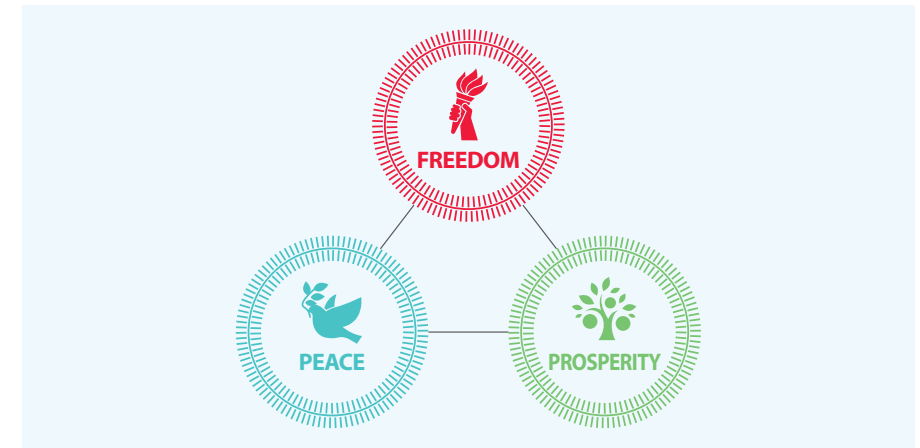
Recognizing Korea’s economic, social, and cultural prowess from semiconductors and batteries to nuclear power and K-pop culture, the international community now expects Korea to match its role and contributions with its elevated stature. In line with such expectations, we are committed to increasing our role in addressing various issues in the region and building a positive regional order. Going forward, we will increase engagement and cooperation with the Indo-Pacific to advance freedom, peace, and prosperity in the region.

First, as a liberal democracy built through struggle and sacrifices, the Republic of Korea supports a free Indo-Pacific. We will uphold international norms and strengthen a rules-based order built on the universal values including freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights.

In solidarity with nations sharing these universal values, we will

actively promote and strengthen a regional order that is shaped not by force or coercion, but by rules and universal values. We oppose unilateral change of status quo by force and pursue a harmonious regional order where nations’ rights are respected, and our shared interests are explored. Solidarity and cooperation amongst nations that promote freedom, human rights, and other common values will foster greater creativity and innovation, and lead to a brighter future for the Indo-Pacific.

#### VISION FOR THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION



Second, we will exert active efforts to prevent disputes and armed conflicts based on rules and ensure that the principle of peaceful resolution through dialogue is respected. Conflicts and tensions can be reduced and regional peace achieved by respecting universally-accepted international laws and norms and promoting stable international relations. To this end, we will bolster comprehensive partnerships that encompass traditional and non-traditional security



domains, including the North Korean and its nuclear issue, non-proliferation, counter-terrorism, maritime security, cyber security, and public health.

The Republic of Korea reaffirms the United Nations' commitment to preserving peace. Accordingly, we support an Indo-Pacific where nations that represent diverse political systems can move forward together peacefully through competition and cooperation based on rules. By contributing to the vitalization of various consultative entities in the region, we will remain strongly committed to the peaceful settlement of disputes based on dialogue and the principles of international law.

Third, we will work towards a prosperous Indo-Pacific for all. Regional prosperity can be achieved when individuals, businesses, and nations engage in economic activities freely in a stable environment. To this end, we will contribute to building an open and fair economic order. We will secure growth engines by enhancing the connectivity and complementarity of trade and investment networks, and work together to build a collaborative, inclusive economic and technological ecosystem. We will also lead regional technological innovation by maintaining and strengthening the competitiveness of cutting-edge industries of the future.

While contributing to building stable and resilient supply chains, we will take the lead in fostering a free and fair economic order. We

will also work with others to prevent the overwhelming dominance of security concerns over economic issues. We will also engage in efforts to close the digital gap among nations and carry out active contributive diplomacy to build resilience and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including responding to climate change and health threats.

For a free, peaceful, and prosperous Indo-Pacific, we will pursue a region in which all nations co-exist harmoniously through inclusive solidarity amongst nations that share universal values and vision for the region.

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## 2. PRINCIPLES OF COOPERATION: INCLUSIVENESS, TRUST, AND RECIPROCITY

To promote our vision of freedom, peace, and prosperity, we will implement our Indo-Pacific Strategy based on three principles of cooperation—inclusiveness, trust, and reciprocity.

First, our inclusive Indo-Pacific Strategy neither targets nor excludes any specific nation. We will work with every partner that is aligned with our vision and principles of cooperation. We will remain open to nations both in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond as we work to achieve the objective of a free, peaceful, and prosperous Indo-Pacific that is in our common interest.







## PRINCIPLES OF COOPERATION

<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>Inclusiveness</b></p> <p>Our <i>Strategy</i> is an inclusive initiative that neither targets nor excludes any particular country.</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Trust</b></p> <p>We seek reliable partnerships based on trust.</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>Reciprocity</b></p> <p>We seek mutually-beneficial cooperation, with the recognition that the most effective engagements are those that benefit all parties.</p>
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Second, our partnerships will be based on strong mutual trust as they are an integral part of how nations address a range of regional and global challenges together and in a sustainable way. By complying with principles and norms, we will be a trusted partner for Indo-Pacific nations and the world.

Third, recognizing that the most sustainable and effective engagements are those that benefit all parties, we seek mutually beneficial cooperation. We will share our experience of economic development and democratization, and tap into our unique technological and cultural strengths to provide practical benefits to our partners, while pursuing partnerships that facilitate people-to-people and cultural exchanges.

## 3. REGIONAL SCOPE

As a Global Pivotal State, the Republic of Korea seeks to expand the geographical scope and breadth of cooperation. As we deepen bilateral partnerships grounded in common interests, our approach will be multi-layered and comprehensive as we pursue partnerships with minilateral groupings that are aligned with our principles of cooperation, as well as regional and international organizations.

Expanding our diplomatic horizon beyond the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia, we will deepen strategic cooperation with key regions in the Indo-Pacific, including Southeast Asia, South Asia, Oceania, and the African Coast of the Indian Ocean, and develop a network of strategic partnerships tailored to each region. We will also work closely with Europe and Latin America to promote a peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

### 1) North Pacific

We will deepen mutually beneficial bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the North Pacific where we are situated. We will also continue to strengthen our alliance with the United States. The linchpin for peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula and in the Indo-Pacific over the last 70 years, the ROK-U.S. Alliance is—based on our shared values of freedom, democracy, human rights, and the







rule of law—evolving into a global comprehensive strategic alliance encompassing not just security but also the economy, cutting-edge technologies, cyber-space, and supply chains.

With our closest neighbor, Japan, we will seek a forward-looking partnership that supports our common interests and values. Improved relations with Japan is essential for fostering cooperation and solidarity among like-minded Indo-Pacific nations; we are thus continuing our diplomatic efforts to restore mutual trust and advance relations. With China, a key partner for achieving prosperity and peace in the Indo-Pacific region, we will nurture a sounder and more mature relationship as we pursue shared interests based on mutual respect and reciprocity, guided by international norms and rules.

We also seek to contribute to resolving global issues and those affecting the Indo-Pacific by working closely with Canada, Mongolia, and other nations in the North Pacific with whom we share values. With Canada, a comprehensive strategic partner with common values, we seek increased cooperation on climate change response, economic security through stabilized supply chains, and a rules-based order based on our respective Indo-Pacific strategies. We also plan to cooperate with Mongolia, a strategic partner, in a mutually beneficial way in the areas of mineral resources and development, in the service of freedom, peace, and prosperity in Northeast Asia.

## 2) Southeast Asia and ASEAN

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is both our second largest trading partner (around USD176.5 billion in 2021) and investment destination (around USD10 billion in 2020). It is also our top travel destination (around 10 million Koreans visited ASEAN in 2019) and largest development cooperation partner (around USD605 million in 2020, accounting for approximately 31% of the total bilateral ODA).

The Republic of Korea views ASEAN as a key partner for building peace and shared prosperity in the Indo-Pacific, and in this context announced the Korea-ASEAN Solidarity Initiative (KASI) as a regional policy tailored to ASEAN within the framework of the Indo-Pacific Strategy. Going forward, we will build on the existing solid partnerships spanning trade and socio-economic cooperation towards fostering a comprehensive and strategic partnership with ASEAN.

Drawing on the Special Strategic Partnership with Indonesia, Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with Viet Nam, Strategic Partnership with Thailand, as well as the steadfast bilateral ties with Mekong countries including Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and with Maritime Southeast Asian countries such as Brunei, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Timor-Leste, the Republic of Korea will also further strengthen bilateral relations with individual Southeast Asian countries with a view to promoting a free, peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific region.





In 2019, ASEAN announced the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), which captures its coordinated position on the Indo-Pacific. The AOIP underscores ASEAN Centrality in promoting cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region under the principles of openness, transparency, and inclusiveness, thereby reaffirming ASEAN's determination to contribute to peace, freedom, and prosperity in East Asia and the Indo-Pacific. In working with ASEAN, the Republic of Korea firmly supports ASEAN Centrality and the AOIP.

We will pursue more mutually beneficial and substantive cooperation by harmonizing ASEAN's needs with our strengths, particularly focusing on digital, climate change and environment, and health. As part of these efforts, we plan to continuously increase the ASEAN-ROK, Mekong-ROK, and other cooperation funds. Furthermore, considering the changing security environment, we will strengthen strategic communication and cooperation with ASEAN not only on the traditional security issues related to the Korean Peninsula and the South China Sea, but also on economic security, maritime security, and other emerging security issues.

Through mutually beneficial and substantive cooperation, we will advance our ties towards a comprehensive strategic partnership with ASEAN, while also taking our bilateral relations with individual ASEAN member states to the next level. The solidarity established through years of political and economic cooperation, as well as people-to-people and cultural exchanges, will serve as a strong foundation from

which the ROK and ASEAN can deepen their collaboration towards their common objectives in the Indo-Pacific.

### 3) South Asia

With 24% of the world's population and situated at the crossroads of East and West Asia, and between land and sea, South Asia is a region with huge potential for growth. The Republic of Korea will increase its engagement with and support for key partners in South Asia.

First, we will advance our special strategic partnership with India, a leading regional partner with shared values. India presents great potential for growth, having the world's second largest population and cutting-edge IT and space technologies. We will increase strategic communication and cooperation through high-level exchanges in foreign affairs and defense, while strengthening the foundation for enhanced economic cooperation by upgrading the ROK-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).

We will also pursue reliable and mutually beneficial economic partnerships with Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and other South Asian countries through increased economic and development cooperation, including in the areas of trade, investment, and development assistance.

We will also contribute to building an open and inclusive regional





architecture in South Asia through substantive cooperation programs with subregional multilaterals, such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA; ROK joined as dialogue partner in 2018) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC; ROK joined as observer in 2006).

#### 4) Oceania

Australia and New Zealand are like-minded partners of the Republic of Korea with shared interests and values. Based on the special bonds forged in the Korean War, we will strengthen our strategic dialogue and cooperation both within the Indo-Pacific region and on the global level.

A comprehensive strategic partner, Australia is our largest trading partner in Oceania with whom we enjoy a complementary economic relationship. We are further deepening our ties by identifying new cooperation agenda in the areas of national defense, defense industry, security, critical minerals, climate change response, and supply chains. With New Zealand, the Republic of Korea will continue to expand cooperation in the economic sphere as the country's fifth largest trading partner. Increased multilateral cooperation involving Australia and New Zealand will provide added momentum for greater regional cooperation in various areas. In these efforts, the ROK will work closely with the two countries towards maintaining and strengthening the rules-based international order in the region.

We are also increasing our engagement with the Pacific Island Countries with whom we share the Pacific Ocean. The challenges of climate change facing the Pacific Island Countries are tasks that humanity must shoulder together. To support the implementation of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, which is a long-term development strategy for the Pacific Island Countries, we will work more extensively with the region to address their needs in the areas of climate change, as well as health, oceans and fisheries, and renewable energy. We will also expand our support for the Pacific Island Countries through the Partners in the Blue Pacific (PBP), an initiative by like-minded partners for cooperation on Pacific Island priorities.

#### 5) African Coast of the Indian Ocean

The geographical scope and partners of our Indo-Pacific Strategy span the coast of the Indian Ocean and Africa. We will bolster mutually beneficial and future-oriented cooperation with countries along the eastern seaboard of Africa who are strategically located as a gateway to Africa and the Middle East. As part of that effort, we will host the Korea-Africa Special Summit in 2024 to elevate and deepen our ties with countries along the eastern seaboard of Africa and the rest of the African Continent.

Since 2009, the Republic of Korea has increased its support for international efforts on maritime safety and counter-terrorism. The deployment of the Cheonghae Unit to the Gulf of Aden is part of



these efforts, and we will continue to explore additional cooperation programs with countries of the Coastal Eastern Africa in the maritime domain. We will also support partners in this region to achieve the SDGs through tailored development cooperation and increase collaboration on transnational challenges of common concern. Programs to share our experience and knowledge on economic and social development will be designed to take into account the different and diverse conditions of each country. We will also bolster our network with the East African countries and others in the Indian Ocean through our dialogue partnership with the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) as well as new partnerships with other regional organizations such as the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC).

## 6) Europe and Latin America

European countries, who are also expanding their engagement with the Indo-Pacific, are important partners in our implementation of the Indo-Pacific Strategy. To realize our vision for a free, peaceful, and prosperous Indo-Pacific, we will heighten substantive cooperation (value diplomacy partnerships) with the European Union (EU) and its member states including France and Germany, as well as the United Kingdom with whom we share the same core values of freedom, democracy, and human rights. Greater linkages and cooperation between the Indo-Pacific and Europe will not only help preserve and strengthen the rules-based international order but could also open discussions into new areas of cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.

In June 2022, President Yoon Suk Yeol attended the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Summit as the first Korean President to do so. At the meeting, President Yoon expressed Korea's commitment to bolster its partnership with NATO based on the shared values of democracy and the rule of law, and contribute to safeguarding the rules-based international order. This partnership will be further developed through the recently-established ROK Mission to NATO.

Latin America is also a major partner as it is home to many countries with whom we have traditional friendly relations. In 2022, our relations with 15 Latin American and Caribbean countries marked a new milestone on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic ties. We will expand partnerships and collaboration not just on matters pertaining to economic security and trade, but also on global issues on the international stage. We will continue to strengthen regional multilateral cooperation networks with Latin American and Caribbean regional communities such as the Pacific Alliance that comprises Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru, Mercosur, SICA and the CARICOM.





# III CORE LINES OF EFFORT

To implement the Strategy for a Free, Peaceful, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific, we will pursue nine core lines of effort:

<p>Build Regional Order Based on Norms and Rules</p> 	<p>Cooperate to Promote Rule of Law and Human Rights</p> 	<p>Strengthen Non-Proliferation and Counter-Terrorism Efforts Across the Region</p> 
<p>Expand Comprehensive Security Cooperation</p> 	<p>Build Economic Security Networks</p> 	<p>Strengthen Cooperation in Critical Domains of Science and Technology and Close Digital Gap</p> 
<p>Lead Regional Cooperation on Climate Change and Energy Security</p> 	<p>Engage in "Contributive Diplomacy" through Tailored Development Cooperation Partnerships</p> 	<p>Promote Mutual Understanding and Exchanges</p> 

## 1. BUILD REGIONAL ORDER BASED ON NORMS AND RULES

In realizing the vision for a free Indo-Pacific, the Republic of Korea is committed to partnering with like-minded countries that share the values of freedom, rule of law, and human rights as well as international norms to contribute to the stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region. We will stand with the international community in condemning and responding firmly to actions that threaten universal values and international norms. We will also play a leading role to strengthen the rules-based international order by respecting and enforcing internationally-agreed rules, and establishing new rules to govern emerging domains based on universal values and norms.

Through comprehensive cooperation on wide-ranging global issues with countries that share our vision and principles, the Republic of Korea aims to serve as a hub for cooperation networks in the Indo-Pacific. We will also engage in and revitalize issue-specific minilateral cooperation which will provide momentum for greater regional coordination and contribute to promoting a rules-based international order in the Indo-Pacific.

Our close cooperation with the United States and Japan, with whom we share the values of liberal democracy and human rights, is a useful trilateral platform of cooperation to address not only North Korea's nuclear and missile threats, but also supply chain disruptions,





cyber-security, climate change, health crisis, and other emerging regional and global issues.

There is also ample potential for trilateral cooperation with the United States and Australia to tackle a range of regional challenges in supply chains, critical minerals, emerging technologies, cyber-security, and climate change. Also, further to the Leaders' Meeting of the four Asia-Pacific Partners (AP4) at the NATO Summit last June, we will continue to bolster solidarity and partnerships to reinforce a regional order based on values and norms in the Indo-Pacific.

We will increase our role in upholding and reinforcing international norms in multilateral fora. We support the role of the United Nations in maintaining the rules-based international order and will continue our positive contribution through active participation in the United Nations General Assembly and other related bodies.

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## 2. COOPERATE TO PROMOTE RULE OF LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Article 1 of the United Nations Charter establishes the maintenance of international peace and security as the primary purpose of the United Nations, and provides that settlement of international disputes shall be brought about by peaceful means and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law. As a model democracy,

the Republic of Korea will remain committed to promoting freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights.

The rule of law underpins the three pillars of the UN system: peace and security, human rights, and development. Korea's democratization and economic development in just half a century can be attributed to the advancement of the rule of law. Based on this experience, we helped capture the significance of the rule of law in the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and are underscoring the importance of domestic and international efforts by all UN member states to promote the rule of law. As an integral part of such regional efforts, we believe each party must adhere to the principles of international law and the covenants adopted by the United Nations as we address conflicts in the Indo-Pacific region. In this regard, Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine is a violation of the United Nations Charter and international law, and is negatively impacting the security and economy of the Indo-Pacific. We will continue to provide humanitarian assistance and participate in reconstruction efforts to end the war and restore peace in Ukraine.

We will also actively engage in regional efforts to promote human rights based on common understanding of and respect for universal values. We will promote the rights of women, children, persons with disabilities, and other socially disadvantaged groups, and support their capacity-building initiatives. We will also continue to support developing countries lay the foundations for democracy in the region





through training and education, and people-to-people exchanges in the field of governance and election management.

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### **3. STRENGTHEN NON-PROLIFERATION AND COUNTER-TERRORISM EFFORTS ACROSS THE REGION**

The Republic of Korea will contribute to preserving peace in the Indo-Pacific by strengthening security cooperation with key partners in the region. Peace on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia is vital for world peace and essential for preserving and expanding freedom in Korea and across the world. Notably, the complete denuclearization of North Korea is critical for maintaining sustainable peace on the Korean Peninsula, in East Asia, and in the world at large. Based on the ROK-U.S. Alliance, we will maintain and strengthen our robust combined defense posture against North Korea's nuclear and missile threats, while expanding ROK-U.S.-Japan trilateral security cooperation to reinforce our capability to safeguard peace.

Given the grave, serious challenge posed by North Korea's nuclear program to the international non-proliferation regime, we must clearly demonstrate that the international community's determination to denuclearize the North will always outweigh the latter's determination to advance its nuclear and missile program. This requires the readiness to muster a strong and united response in cooperation with the United Nations and the international community. We will work more closely

with our partners to ensure that UN Security Council sanctions against North Korea are fully implemented, while preventing North Korea from engaging in sanctions evasion activities in the region. At the same time, we will work closely with the international community to achieve the complete denuclearization of North Korea based on our Audacious Initiative, while leaving the door open for dialogue with Pyongyang.

We will actively contribute to strengthening the non-proliferation norms in the Indo-Pacific by supporting developing countries build their nonproliferation capacity and engaging in minilateral discussions on disarmament and nonproliferation. We will also facilitate regional dialogues to prevent the arms race from overheating and build trust in the region, while actively engaging in multilateral consultations to prevent accidental military incidents and explore a regional crisis management system. In addition, we will strengthen dialogue and cooperation with leading nations in the field of space security, with a view to establishing international norms on the responsible use of space and prevention of an arms race in space.

We will actively engage in UN counter-terrorism activities and support the enhancement of counter-terrorism capacities in the Indo-Pacific. We will bolster the capacity to respond to terrorism and violent extremism by facilitating discussions at the minilateral and regional level, as well as bilateral cooperation with major partners in the region. We will also remain engaged in efforts to establish and implement international standards to prevent money laundering, terrorist







financing, and proliferation financing through the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG).

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#### 4. EXPAND COMPREHENSIVE SECURITY COOPERATION

Addressing complex security challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century requires a multi-dimensional and holistic approach. Accordingly, the Republic of Korea will seek comprehensive regional security cooperation encompassing traditional and non-traditional threats to security.

First, we will deepen maritime security cooperation in the region. The Indo-Pacific is a region inter-connected by oceans, thus rendering it essential that nations work closely together to protect sea lanes, counter piracy, and secure safety of navigation. In this regard, peace, stability, and freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea, which constitutes strategically important sea lines of communication, must be respected. We also reaffirm the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait for the peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula and for the security and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific.

To promote peace and prosperity in the region, we will continue to adhere to the maritime order based on the principles of international law enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982. The ROK government will actively participate in efforts to improve maritime security through implementation

of the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) and deployment of the Cheonghae Unit, among others.

We will facilitate cooperation on real-time maritime monitoring and information sharing through participation in international discussions on the establishment of a maritime domain awareness (MDA) system. We will also participate in the RIMPAC, Pacific Dragon, and other multinational combined exercises hosted or joined by Indo-Pacific nations to enhance our ability for combined operations and improve interoperability, while expanding bilateral and multinational combined exercises to bolster our combined warfighting capability.

We will contribute towards securing free and safe sea lines of communication, including by increasing naval ship transfers and other military logistics support to ASEAN member states and working with the latter to counter maritime terrorism and ensure enforcement of maritime laws. We will continue to reinforce cooperation in maritime security, maritime domain awareness, maritime economy, and maritime environment. Meanwhile, we are also committed to contributing towards building a mechanism for multilateral security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific by taking an active part in strategic discussions of the East Asia Summit (EAS) on regional security issues.

The Republic of Korea will strengthen security cooperation in





cyber, health, and other non-traditional domains. We are actively participating in the discussions at the United Nations to develop norms for a secure cyberspace. We will continue to engage in bilateral cyber discussions with Indo-Pacific nations. We plan to expand cyber threat information sharing, keeping in mind the existing differences in each country's cyber capacity. In addition, given the significant number of cyber threats coming through vulnerable developing countries, we will work with them to improve their cyber security capacity.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the growing importance of partnerships and cooperation in the health sector. We will work with developing countries to improve their health system capacity, with a focus on vaccine and bio-health. As part of this effort, we hosted the Global Health Security Agenda Ministerial Meeting in November 2022. We are also engaged in negotiations for a WHO agreement on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, as well as negotiations to amend the International Health Regulations (IHR) for quicker response to global health risks.

As a “partner across the globe” of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) since 2006, the Republic of Korea has cooperated with NATO on a range of issues, including cyber, counter-terrorism, and non-proliferation. We intend to expand cooperation with NATO to effectively address transnational security challenges, including emerging technologies and climate change.

We also seek to gradually expand nodes of cooperation with the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad). We will first explore cooperation with the Quad in areas that build on our strengths such as infectious disease, climate change, and emerging technologies and will seek to gradually expand the scope of cooperation into other areas. Through this effort, we will contribute to enhancing the region's ability to tackle comprehensive regional security threats and challenges.

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## 5. BUILD ECONOMIC SECURITY NETWORKS

The Republic of Korea will expand regional economic security networks for stable and resilient supply chain management, while promoting free trade and a rules-based economic order in the Indo-Pacific. We will participate actively in multilateral cooperation to establish an early warning system and resilient supply chains of key industries and items. We will also increase bilateral and minilateral communication and cooperation to diversify our economic ties and ensure stable supply chains. In order to stabilize supply chains of strategic resources, we will seek cooperation with partners with whom we share values.

In support of open and free trade, we participated in the launching of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF). We will work closely with our key partners so that the framework evolves into an effective economic forum in the Indo-Pacific. We will also take





a leading part in discussions on a new regional economic and trade order. We will promote free trade and address protectionism through the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and by taking part in discussions on the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), as well as by concluding new trade agreements. By doing so, we will be joining the efforts to create an open and dynamic economic cooperation system in the Indo-Pacific. In addition, we will scale up our investments in sustainable infrastructure development in the region.

The acceleration of digital transformation and contactless economy due to COVID-19 has fueled discussions on digital trade rules, especially in the Indo-Pacific. As an IT power that is at the forefront of the digital transformation, the Republic of Korea will contribute to fair and reciprocal digital trade rules. To do so, we will participate in plurilateral WTO negotiations on e-commerce and seek membership in the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA), while working closely with Singapore, EU, and other key nations at the bilateral level. We are also committed to sharing our knowledge and know-how on digital transformation with Indo-Pacific nations.

We will contribute to the region's stability and prosperity through multilateral regional trade channels. We will work closely with ASEAN within the framework of ASEAN-led mechanisms, including ASEAN+3 and East Asia Summit (EAS), in the areas of economy, finance, and food, and engage in discussions for a robust financial safety net in

East Asia. In addition, as the host of APEC 2025, we will continue cooperation with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation towards free trade and investment, innovation and digital economy, as well as inclusive and sustainable growth.

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## **6. STRENGTHEN COOPERATION IN CRITICAL DOMAINS OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND CLOSE DIGITAL GAP**

As a global leader in science and technology innovation, the Republic of Korea will facilitate regional cooperation in critical domains of science and technology, including semiconductors, artificial intelligence, quantum science, advanced biology, next generation telecommunications and space, and help close the digital gap in the region. Technologies determine a nation's security and competitiveness for the future. Ultimately, they will be conducive to a free and prosperous region when used in the service of fostering cooperative international relations. Accordingly, we will bolster international cooperation in relation to critical and emerging technologies, including research and development, standardization, technology norms, and fostering and protection of technology and human resources. We will engage in collaborative networks with the U.S. and other technology leaders, while expanding technology cooperation with Europe, Canada, and Australia.

We will also help shape international standardization and





international norms in an open and inclusive fashion, including by carrying out joint development of and research in technology standards with digitally-advanced nations. We will also remain engaged in international efforts for open and transparent communications networks, such as the Prague Cyber Security Conference and cooperation in 5G Open-RAN technology with the U.S.

We will support Indo-Pacific nations to develop technologies in compliance with human rights, the rule of law, freedom of expression, and other universal values of the international community. To support developing countries achieve the SDGs, we will also extend support to their human resources development efforts and use technological cooperation as a conduit for increased partnerships in the region. We will also find ways to further catalyze regional cooperation through technology.

We will help close the digital gap among nations and support the digital transformation of developing countries by leveraging our competence in science and information technology as well as digital transformation experience. We will enable enhanced digital access for economically and socially vulnerable groups in developing countries, and make information access centers available for greater digital connectivity in digitally isolated areas. We will also bolster international cooperation to achieve inclusive, sustainable digital transformation in the Indo-Pacific.

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## 7. LEAD REGIONAL COOPERATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY SECURITY

The Republic of Korea will support the region's achievement of SDGs in the areas of climate change response, energy transition, and energy security, and also lead regional efforts to ensure better resilience to transnational challenges. We will contribute to the resolution of regional and global issues by pursuing various forms of minilateral cooperation with countries both in and outside the region.

First, with a view to eventually achieving carbon neutrality, we will contribute to the establishment of a regional cooperation system to support GHG reduction, climate change adaptation, and other technological cooperation in response to climate change. Particularly, we will support reduction of greenhouse gases in the region through cooperation in the areas of regional carbon markets, zero emission vehicles (electric and hydrogen vehicles, etc.), green shipping, and methane emissions reduction. In addition, together with the countries in the region, we will create a blueprint for future cooperation in the areas of electric vehicle infrastructure, technology standardization, and battery recycling.

We seek to contribute to the establishment of infrastructure in the Indo-Pacific region for an effective response to climate change, through multi-layered bilateral and multilateral cooperation with





countries in and around the Indo-Pacific. With ASEAN, through the ROK-ASEAN Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change, we will cooperate on climate change response policies and pursue cooperation to address climate change in the Indo-Pacific region.

The instability in the global energy market caused by the war in Ukraine highlights the need for closer international cooperation to achieve both energy transition and energy security in parallel. Amidst the trend towards strategic weaponization of traditional energy sources such as fossil fuels, stabilizing energy supply through clean energy transition is an urgent task. We seek to strengthen international cooperation on clean energy to achieve decarbonization as well as on the development of a hydrogen economy, while intensifying cooperation to stabilize the Indo-Pacific energy market.

The Republic of Korea will firmly establish a framework for nuclear energy cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. Nuclear energy is the most powerful and efficient source of clean energy currently available, and as such, is critical when dealing with climate change and achieving energy security. With our capacity and know-how in nuclear power generation, which is world-class in terms of safety, efficiency, and commercial value, we will actively participate in the Indo-Pacific nuclear energy market.

Concurrently, we will support regional capacity-building in nuclear energy safety and nuclear security in order to contribute to the safe

and peaceful use of nuclear energy. We will host IAEA international education and training courses at our education and training institutions, and hold an international workshop on safe management of nuclear materials and prevention of nuclear terrorism.

In addition, we will accelerate the development and commercialization of small modular reactors (SMRs) to enable safer and more efficient uses of nuclear energy, and lead discussions on regulations related to the establishment of SMR infrastructure.

The ROK, Japan, and China together account for 20% of the world's population and 25% of the global GDP, and trilateral cooperation among these three countries is indispensable to the establishment of stability and the achievement of prosperity and peace in the Indo-Pacific. By resuming the ROK-Japan-China Trilateral Summit and reinforcing the capacity and structure of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat (TCS), we will seek new opportunities and momentum for regional cooperation in Northeast Asia. In particular, we intend to strengthen the trilateral cooperation system in the areas of green and digital transitions. We seek to contribute to regional peace and stability by harmoniously developing ROK-US-Japan cooperation and ROK-Japan-China cooperation.



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## 8. ENGAGE IN “CONTRIBUTIVE DIPLOMACY” THROUGH TAILORED DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS

As a Global Pivotal State, the ROK will contribute to the economic and social development of the Indo-Pacific through “contributive diplomacy” commensurate with its economic stature, and strengthen the foundation for realizing peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. The ROK is the only country to rise up from being among the world’s poorest country on the receiving end of aid to become an OECD donor country. As such, the ROK is ready to share the experiences and knowledge accumulated thus far, and help meet the aspirations of the countries in the region to achieve national development and economic growth.

Fourteen of our twenty-seven priority development cooperation partners are located in the Indo-Pacific. The ROK, with the goal of increasing the ODA volume to reach the world’s top ten levels, will expand development cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

First, with regard to ASEAN, which accounts for 31% of our bilateral ODA and is our top priority partner, we will increase assistance in areas where our strengths and the needs of our partners coincide, namely digital education, climate change, smart city, and transportation. We will also seek ways for joint cooperation with major donor countries such as the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, the

EU, and the UK in marine environment, climate change, health, and digital and cyber areas.

In South Asia, we will proceed with programs in the areas of health and sanitation, transportation, regional development, and energy, while supporting through green ODA the climate change response and low-carbon energy transition of the Pacific Island countries vulnerable to climate change. In the East African region, we will promote the implementation of SDGs by strengthening assistance in education, agriculture, health, electrical energy, and climate change response.

In order to maximize the effects of development assistance, we will provide customized assistance that meets on-the-ground demand of partner countries, and increase cooperation in areas where our strengths lie, namely health, climate, and environment. In the health sector, we will strengthen the global health system by making an additional contribution of USD300 million to the ‘Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A)’ initiative, which was launched to facilitate the research and development of COVID-19 treatments and vaccines, and by increasing our contribution to the Global Fund. We will also contribute to the strengthening of the Indo-Pacific region’s capacity to respond to infectious diseases, by providing assistance which links the building of health and medical infrastructure with the establishment of health and medical development plans.

In the areas of climate and environment, we will increase the





proportion of our green ODA to exceed OECD DAC average levels by 2025, and support the low-carbon energy transition of Pacific Island Countries in particular and share with them innovative green technologies.

Throughout this process, the ROK will strengthen cooperation not only with the governments of partner countries but also international organizations, businesses, academia, civil societies, and other private sector partners. In addition, we will expand strategic partnerships with major donor countries sharing the strategic importance of the Indo-Pacific region, such as the U.S., the EU, Australia, and New Zealand, so that the various engagements with the Indo-Pacific region to promote common prosperity will result in synergy effects.

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## 9. PROMOTE MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND EXCHANGES

With a view to becoming a Global Pivotal State, the ROK will promote customized two-way exchanges in the Indo-Pacific. In particular, we will make efforts to invigorate exchanges between youths, who are our future. Building mutual trust and friendship between future generations forms the bedrock of healthy and mature relations among countries, and cultural exchange is the most effective and attractive way to connect youths and cultivate shared historical awareness in the Indo-Pacific region. Diverse cultural and people-to-people exchanges will lay the foundation for strong solidarity between the future generations

of the Indo-Pacific region.

The ROK will pursue two-way public diplomacy customized to the needs of individual sub-regions and partner countries. Our public diplomacy initiatives will particularly focus on the digital and cultural domains where we have a competitive edge.

Additionally, we will also pursue cooperative public diplomacy by identifying with the various cultures of the Indo-Pacific region and at the same time promoting exchanges with these cultures. In doing so, we will tap into our soft power that stems from the global popularity of the creative contents of K-culture, including K-pop, Korean movies, dramas and games. With the spread of the contactless economy and digital transition, we need to take note of the formation of cultural understanding through new methods such as the metaverse and OTT media services. Also, with virtual communication becoming routine after COVID-19, we will keep vitalizing our capacity in digital public diplomacy as well as our communication utilizing this capacity. By deepening cultural cooperation with Indo-Pacific countries which have diverse ethnicities, religions, cultures, and histories, we will be able to build solidarity that is sustainable and mutually beneficial in cultural, economic, and social domains.







## IV CONCLUSION

A free, peaceful, and prosperous Indo-Pacific is essential for the future of the global community. In order for the Indo-Pacific region to be free, peaceful, and continuously prosperous, cooperation amongst countries in and outside the region is more keenly needed now than ever before. When the rules-based order which has contributed to the stability and prosperity of the region is strengthened and the regional order based on universal values is realized, the Indo-Pacific will become a region where diverse countries coexist and prosper in harmony.

Aspiring to become a Global Pivotal State, the ROK is willing and able to contribute more and take on a bigger role. The 7.3 million Korean expatriates will also play an important role for the freedom, peace and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific. The ROK will continue to closely cooperate with all nations in and outside the region in order to realize common goals based on universal values, while sharing the goals and principles of cooperation included in the Indo-Pacific strategies, visions and initiatives of various countries.

As we move forward, the relevant ministries of the ROK government will prepare detailed implementation plans based on this Indo-Pacific Strategy to enhance freedom, peace, and prosperity in the region, focusing on these nine priority areas. In addition, policy initiatives for

individual sub-regions such as the Korea-ASEAN Solidarity Initiative will be formulated in detail, to effectively implement the Indo-Pacific Strategy. We hope that these efforts will help enhance the consistency and predictability of ROK's foreign policy as well as expand the horizon of our partnerships.



# STRATEGY

FOR A FREE, PEACEFUL,  
AND PROSPEROUS

# INDO-PACIFIC REGION

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