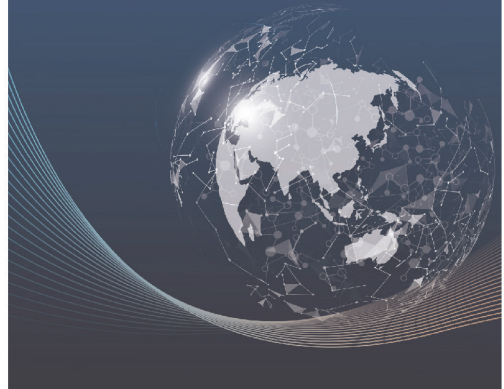


2023 Progress Report
of the ROK's
Indo-Pacific Strategy



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Key Developments



Institutionalized ROK-U.S.-Japan Trilateral Cooperation



Elevated ASEAN to a key strategic partner in realizing freedom, peace, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific



Strengthened solidarity with countries sharing values, including freedom, human rights, and rule of law



Expanded the geographical scope of cooperation to the Pacific Islands and bolstered responsible "contributive diplomacy"

On December 28, 2022, the Government of the Republic of Korea (ROK) announced the Strategy for a Free, Peaceful, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific (hereinafter referred to as the "Indo-Pacific Strategy"). With major regional and global powers recognizing the geopolitical and geoeconomic significance of the Indo-Pacific region and expanding their engagement therein, it is only natural that the ROK, as a nation with a vital interest in the stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region, formulates a comprehensive regional strategy that extends beyond the Korean peninsula and Northeast Asia and covers the entire region.

As a liberal democracy with an open economy, the ROK firmly upholds the fundamental values of freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. The ROK recognizes that peace and stability along the sea lanes that connect the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, all the way from the Strait of Hormuz to the South China Sea, are crucial in safeguarding national interests.

Given the evolving complexities that challenge the established norms- and rules-based international order, which has underpinned the ROK's development and prosperity, upholding a peaceful and stable regional order is an integral part of the ROK's national interest. The Indo-Pacific Strategy presents a roadmap for an integrated regional diplomacy that would enable the ROK

to contribute more to regional and global peace and stability. To achieve this goal, the ROK is strategically prioritizing the reinforcement of the norms- and rule-based order and enhancing cooperation and solidarity with like-minded countries.

- President Yoon Suk Yeol, after co-hosting the second Summit for Democracy with the governments of the United States and other nations in March 2023, visited Lithuania in July to attend the NATO Summit for the second consecutive year along with leaders of Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, and participated in the United Nations General Assembly, also two years in a row. Through these engagements, the ROK sought to strengthen solidarity with nations sharing core values and commitment to freedom, human rights, and the rule of law, while emphasizing the importance of an international order based on norms and rules in realizing the vision of a “free, peaceful, and prosperous Indo-Pacific.”
- Furthermore, on August 18, 2023, the leaders of the ROK, the United States, and Japan held the first stand-alone trilateral summit at Camp David. The summit served as a historic milestone in institutionalizing cooperation at a higher level and broadening the scope of cooperation among the three countries, while fostering trilateral cooperation into a comprehensive regional partnership contributing to the promotion of freedom, peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific. The annual Trilateral Indo-Pacific Dialogue was launched to strengthen practical cooperation in the region.

The Indo-Pacific Strategy provides a set of guiding principles for achieving comprehensive regional engagement not only in terms of geographical scope but also in the range of cooperation areas. The ROK aims to expand its diplomatic horizon from the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia to the greater Indo-Pacific region. The Indo-Pacific Strategy involves enhancing communication and cooperation with partners who share the vision of ensuring freedom, peace, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. The ROK’s Indo-Pacific Strategy surpasses the limitations of traditional diplomatic policies, which tended to be confined to specific sectors or regions. It serves as a comprehensive foreign policy framework that integrates both economic and security aspects.

This integrated approach is notably evident in the growing breadth and depth of the ROK’s partnership and cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Through the Indo-Pacific Strategy, the ROK has elevated ASEAN to a key strategic partner in realizing freedom, peace, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region.

Furthermore, recognizing the growing geopolitical importance and development potential, the ROK hosted the first-ever Korea-Pacific Islands Summit and unveiled the Action Plan for Freedom, Peace and Prosperity in the Pacific, successfully broadening its diplomatic horizon.

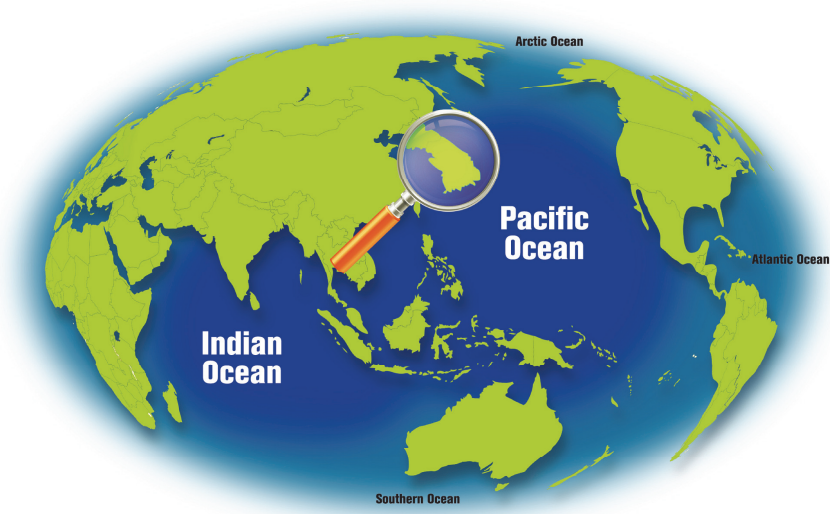
- Following the launch of the Korea-ASEAN Solidarity Initiative (KASI) alongside the Indo-Pacific Strategy at the 23rd ASEAN-ROK Summit in November 2022, the ROK government officially presented eight core lines of effort to implement KASI on April 11, 2023. The ROK is now focusing on enhancing comprehensive cooperation with ASEAN in areas such as security, defense, and the defense industry, in addition to the existing economic and social sectors. Also, in the run up to the 35th anniversary of the dialogue partnership between the ROK and ASEAN, efforts are underway to establish an ASEAN-ROK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership next year.
- On May 29-30, 2023, the Korea-Pacific Islands Summit took place in Seoul and Busan, and it was the first face-to-face international summit since the inauguration of the Yoon Suk Yeol administration. During the summit, President Yoon reaffirmed the ROK's commitment to actively engage in and contribute to addressing the climate crisis faced by the Pacific Islands. This summit served as a pivotal moment in expanding the ROK's diplomatic horizon into the Indo-Pacific and bolstering responsible diplomacy through enhanced contributions, signaling a milestone in the implementation of the Indo-Pacific Strategy.

The Indo-Pacific Strategy also presents a blueprint for the ROK's vision of becoming a "global pivotal state." Given the increasing influence and heightened expectations from the international community for the ROK to assume a larger role in the region, the Korean government aims to substantially enhance both the scale and scope of its Official Development Assistance (ODA), carrying out tailored development projects in each region.

- The ROK allocated 4.5 trillion won to its 2023 ODA budget, a 21.3% increase from the previous year. To continue this positive momentum, efforts are underway at the government level to achieve a substantial leap in the ODA budget, aiming for 6.5 trillion won in 2024. Through the expansion of its ODA budget, the government intends to create an environment in which the ROK can expand its role and contribution to peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region.

Since the announcement of the Indo-Pacific Strategy in 2022, the ROK government has laid the groundwork for the implementation of the strategy across all levels and sectors, showcasing an unprecedented level of diplomatic engagement. Notably, through summit meetings with key regional partners and strategic dialogues at various levels, the ROK has sought to expand its involvement in the Indo-Pacific region. At the same time, the ROK has sent out a principled and coherent message on the importance of a rules-based international order, clearly articulating its core values and foreign policy direction to the world.

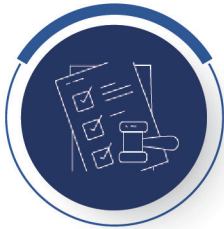
I Free, Peaceful, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific





Major Progress in each of Nine Core Lines of Effort

■ Nine Core Lines of Effort



Build Regional Order
Based on Norms
and Rules



Cooperate to Promote
Rule of Law and
Human Rights



Strengthen Non-Proliferation
and Counter-Terrorism
Efforts across the Region



Expand Comprehensive
Security Cooperation



Build Economic
Security Networks



Strengthen Cooperation in
Critical Domains of Science
and Technology and
Close Digital Gap



Lead Regional Cooperation
on Climate Change and
Energy Security



Engage in
"Contributive Diplomacy"
through Tailored
Development
Cooperation Partnerships



Promote Mutual
Understanding and
Exchanges

01 Build a Regional Order Based on Norms and Rules

1. Expanded Minilateral Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Region

Recognizing that solidarity and cooperation among nations sharing core values are imperative for establishing a rules-based order, the ROK has strengthened its collaboration with like-minded countries that share universal values and international norms, notably enhancing regional minilateral partnerships. President Yoon participated in the NATO Asia-Pacific Partners (AP4: the ROK, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand) Leaders' Meeting in July 2023 two years in a row since 2022. Meanwhile, the 1st Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs engaged in three AP4 Vice Ministerial-Level Talks since December 2022.

In addition, the ROK launched and expanded minilateral consultation mechanisms to cater to the specific characteristics of each issue in the Indo-Pacific region, examples of which are the ROK-U.S.-Australia Director-General-Level Regional Strategy Dialogue; the ROK-U.S.-Mongolia Director-General-Level Meeting; and the Workshop on Maritime Cooperation on the AOIP, which was co-hosted by the ROK, Japan and Australia. Furthermore, the ROK has held active consultations at various levels, including summits and foreign ministers' meetings, to promote cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region with North Pacific countries including Canada.

2. Institutionalized the ROK-U.S.-Japan Trilateral Cooperation

On August 18, 2023, the leaders of the ROK, the United States, and Japan, countries that share core values of freedom, the rule of law, and human rights, held the historic first-ever trilateral summit at Camp David. The three outcome documents—namely, (1) The Spirit of Camp David (Joint Statement), (2) Camp David Principles, and (3) Commitment to Consult—institutionalized trilateral cooperation at the highest level and broadened the scope of cooperation to encompass economic security, cutting-edge technology, and people-to-people exchanges. Notably, the leaders pledged to hold trilateral meetings between leaders, foreign ministers, defense ministers, industry ministers, and national security advisors at least annually. They also established the annual Trilateral Indo-Pacific Dialogue, the Development and Humanitarian Assistance Policy Dialogue, and the Working Group on Countering North Korea's Illicit Cyber Activities.

In addition, the National Security Advisors of the ROK, the United States, and Japan met in Seoul on December 9. They reviewed the progress in a wide range of trilateral initiatives after the Camp David summit in August and extensively discussed ways to enhance trilateral cooperation

on various fronts including regional security, economic security, and cutting-edge technology.

3. Strengthened the ROK-U.S. alliance

In commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the ROK-U.S. alliance this year, the two countries held frequent exchanges at all levels. On the occasion of President Yoon's historic state visit to the United States in April, the two leaders presented a vision for the future of the alliance as a "global comprehensive strategic alliance." The two leaders issued a total of seven outcome documents, including the Joint Statement and the Washington Declaration. They also significantly strengthened extended deterrence and deepened cooperation in the areas of economic security, advanced technology, and people-to-people exchanges. In addition, the two countries held three foreign ministers' meetings, including Foreign Minister Park Jin's visit to the United States in February and Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to the ROK in November. The ministers explored ways to coordinate on North Korea issues, economic security, advanced technology cooperation, and other major regional and global issues. Moreover, the ROK government organized various events throughout the year, engaging citizens from both countries, to reflect upon the achievements of the ROK-U.S. alliance and enhance the understanding of both nations' citizens about the future vision of the alliance.

4. Fortified support for the UN's Role in Safeguarding the International Order

In June, the ROK was elected as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the third time, following its previous terms as a non-permanent member in 1996-1997 and 2013-2014. During its 2024-2025 tenure, the ROK intends to strengthen its role as a responsible member of the international community that defends the rules-based international order and universal values enshrined in the UN Charter.

The ROK is also serving as a member of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, another key UN body, for the term of 2023-25. In September, President Yoon attended the UN General Assembly for the second consecutive year, delivering his statement before the 78th Session of the UN General Assembly and meeting with the UN Secretary-General, thereby demonstrating the ROK's commitment to contributing to global freedom, peace, and prosperity and showcasing its determination to enhance collaboration with the UN.

5. Strengthened Communication in and Beyond the Region for the Stability of the Indo-Pacific Regional Order

In order to strengthen the Indo-Pacific order based on norms and rules, the ROK maintained close communication not only with regional partners such as the United States, Canada, Australia, Japan, and India, but also with external partners such as Europe and Latin America. Continuing high-level exchanges with countries including the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, and the EU, the ROK attended the second EU-Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum in Stockholm, Sweden in May. In addition to government-to-government consultations during his visits to Italy, France, and the United Kingdom, Foreign Minister Park has been stepping up multidimensional communication by holding roundtables with leading think-tanks. Meanwhile, the ROK government had opportunities to introduce the Strategy beyond the region and facilitate inter-regional communication and cooperation by hosting a symposium jointly with the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI) in June and participating in OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group Conference in November.

02 Cooperate to Promote Rule of Law and Human Rights

1. Contributed to the Promotion of the Rule of Law in the Region

Over the past year, the ROK has contributed to the formation of international norms by strengthening cooperation with international organizations on international law. This engagement included participation in written and oral proceedings regarding advisory opinions from the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) related to climate change and oceanic environments. The ROK also actively participated in the drafting process of the Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, contributing to the adoption of the first global multilateral treaty on the protection of the environment and biodiversity in the high seas at the United Nations. Furthermore, a Korean national was elected as a judge of ITLOS in June, making this the third consecutive term in which a Korean national has been elected as a judge. This underscores the expanding role and responsibilities undertaken by the ROK within the realm of international maritime law.

Along with this, a Korean candidate was elected as a judge of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in December. This is the fourth consecutive term that a Korean national has been elected as an ICC judge. Korean nationals have been serving as judges for the ICC during the last 20 years since its establishment. The election results highlight the ROK's position as a strong supporter of international law.

2. Strengthened Cooperation on Democracy and Governance

On March 30, 2023, the Indo-Pacific Regional Meeting of the Second Summit for Democracy was held in Seoul. The ROK co-chaired the summit on March 29 with the United States, Costa Rica, the Netherlands, and Zambia and independently hosted the Indo-Pacific Regional Meeting as a leading democracy in the region on March 30. At the meeting, the Seoul Joint Declaration on Challenges and Progress in Addressing Corruption was adopted. The ROK is set to host the third Summit for Democracy in 2024, aiming to strengthen solidarity and cooperation for advancing democracy.

In order to promote democracy in the Indo-Pacific, the ROK's Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission (ACRC) is strengthening its anti-corruption cooperation with partners in the region. It has signed a memorandum of understanding on anti-corruption cooperation with Indonesia and held anti-corruption cooperation meetings with Viet Nam and Malaysia. In addition, the ACRC is providing anti-corruption capacity-building training to countries in the Indo-Pacific region, contributing to the improvement of governance in the region. In May, it invited officials of the Sri Lankan Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption to Seoul and provided policy training. In September, it invited twelve officials from anti-corruption agencies in six countries, including the Philippines, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Cambodia, and Tanzania, to Seoul to share the ROK's anti-corruption policies and systems.

3. Expanded Humanitarian Aid to Ukraine

President Yoon visited Ukraine on the occasion of the NATO summit in July 2023 and announced the Ukraine Peace and Solidarity Initiative, which encompasses humanitarian, security, and reconstruction assistance to Ukraine. In particular, following a \$100 million humanitarian assistance to Ukraine in 2022, he pledged to provide \$150 million to Ukraine in 2023. In addition, at the G20 summit in September 2023, President Yoon emphasized the ROK's contribution to freedom, peace, and prosperity and announced that the ROK would provide more than \$2.3 billion in support for Ukraine's reconstruction in the following year.

Strengthen Non-Proliferation and Counter-Terrorism Efforts across the Region

1. Pursued the Complete Denuclearization of North Korea based on the Audacious Initiative

Based on the Audacious Initiative announced by President Yoon in his speech celebrating the 77th National Liberation Day in August 2022, the ROK has deepened cooperation with the United States and Japan at all levels, including leaders, foreign ministers, and special representatives for North Korean nuclear affairs. Additionally, by holding bilateral and multilateral meetings, briefings, and roundtables, the ROK has made rigorous outreach efforts regarding North Korea policy, including the Audacious Initiative, policies on unification, and human rights in North Korea. In September 2023, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted Reflecting COI's 10 Years: North Korean Human Rights and Pathways to Progress, an international forum to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This forum contributed to strengthening cooperation with the international community and civil society on the issue of human rights in North Korea.

2. Strengthened ROK-U.S. and ROK-U.S.-Japan Security Cooperation

In April, President Yoon Suk Yeol's state visit to the United States culminated in the adoption of the Washington Declaration, marking a pivotal step toward bolstering extended deterrence and a new paradigm shift for making the ROK-U.S. alliance into an alliance anchored in nuclear capabilities. Subsequent to this declaration, the ROK-U.S. Nuclear Consultative Group was established in July, a U.S. ballistic missile submarine docked on a port on the Korean Peninsula for the first time in 40 years, and a B-52H strategic bomber made a landing on the peninsula for the first time ever, all of which speak to the markedly enhanced visibility of U.S. strategic assets in the region. Moreover, persistent efforts have been underway, including hosting the 4th ROK-U.S. High-Level Extended Deterrence Strategy and Consultative Group Meeting in September for the first time in Seoul. These endeavors aim at elevating bilateral extended deterrence cooperation to unprecedented levels. In addition to strengthening extended deterrence, other ongoing initiatives include the normalization of ROK-U.S. joint military exercises to bolster a robust combined defense posture and extending the scope of ROK-U.S. security cooperation by announcing that the ROK-U.S. alliance also applies to the domains of space and cyberspace.

In the midst of North Korea's ever-growing and overt nuclear and missile threats, the trilateral

security cooperation alliance between the ROK, the U.S., and Japan has been strengthened to ensure regional peace and stability. At the Camp David summit, the three leaders agreed to operationalize real-time sharing of North Korea missile warning data by the end of this year. Further commitments were made to resume, regularize, and expand trilateral exercises among the ROK, the U.S., and Japan, adhering to a systematic multi-year plan. Simultaneously, the agreement to resume trilateral discussions on space security led to the convening of the ROK-U.S.-Japan Trilateral Dialogue on Space Security in Seoul in November, in alignment with the leaders' shared vision for a collaborative advancement of space security. At the ROK-U.S.-Japan defense ministerial meetings in June and November, a trilateral agreement was reached on the operationalization of real-time sharing of missile warning data and the pre-establishment of multi-year trilateral exercise plans, all of which underscore the importance of strengthened trilateral security cooperation in the face of North Korea's evolving nuclear and missile threats.

3. Activated Regional Discussions and Activities for Non-Proliferation

In commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the inception of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), the ROK convened a high-level conference and hosted the Asia-Pacific Maritime Exercise (code-name: Eastern Endeavor 23) this May. The aim of these initiatives was to further deepen cooperation among key regional partners and reinforce collaboration with PSI partner countries. Of particular significance during the Asia-Pacific Exercise Rotation was the participation of combined forces and personnel, including from the ROK, the U.S., Japan, Australia, and Canada. These joint efforts focused on conducting interception and boarding exercises against suspected vessels carrying weapons of mass destruction in the waters of the southeastern region of Jeju and beyond. Additionally, in conjunction with the PSI high-level conference, the 16th ROK-Japan Arms Control and Non-Proliferation Dialogue was convened after a five-year hiatus starting in 2018. The agenda was centered around strengthening bilateral and multilateral cooperation in areas concerning nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, export controls, and addressing the North Korean nuclear and missile programs. These engagements underscore our unwavering commitment to enhancing regional security and fortifying multilateral efforts in non-proliferation, export control, and disarmament matters.

1. Expanded Bilateral and Multilateral Joint Exercises and Strengthened Maritime Security Cooperation

The ROK participated in major regional joint exercises including Cobra Gold (Thailand, February), Komodo (Indonesia, June), Talisman Sabre (Australia, July), and Kamandag (the Philippines, November) to enhance interoperability and joint operational capabilities with regional countries and deepen maritime security cooperation in the region. Furthermore, in an effort to bolster maritime security cooperation with ASEAN nations, the ROK organized naval-to-naval meetings with countries such as Viet Nam, Thailand, and Indonesia. In February, the ROK participated in the maritime security working group meeting of the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus, the members of which are the 10 ASEAN countries and the ROK, as well as the United States, China, Japan, Russia, Australia, New Zealand, and India, and conducted maritime security exercises to strengthen regional cooperation in the field of maritime security.

2. Deepened Coordination for the Enforcement of Maritime Law and Response to Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing

Over the past year, there has been a notable expansion in exchanges between maritime law enforcement agencies in the ROK and ASEAN countries. Beginning in March, coast guard commanders from Singapore, Viet Nam, and Indonesia visited the ROK to discuss maritime law enforcement, and in August and September a training program was conducted, to which officials from ASEAN member states' maritime security agencies were invited for specialized training. When an oil spill occurred off the island of Mindoro, the Philippines in February this year, the Korea Coast Guard dispatched an emergency response team in order to assist with the clean-up activities on the coast and provide relevant materials. It was the first time that the Korean Coast Guard sent an emergency response team abroad. Meanwhile, at the second ROK-Philippines maritime dialogue held in Manila in October, the two countries discussed ways to deepen cooperation on the ocean economy, the marine environment, and maritime security and safety, as well as ways to enhance prosperity, peace, and stability in the region.

In addition, as the first Asian country to join the IUU Fishing Action Alliance, which is led by the United States and the United Kingdom, the ROK has led negotiations to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing with the U.S. in various international fora including regional fisheries management organizations over the past year. In addition, at the management board

meeting held in Singapore in March this year, it was proposed that the ROK host a workshop to enhance response capabilities for anti-piracy in 2024 to implement the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia. In December, the ROK re-dispatched a liaison officer to actively participate in anti-piracy activities and strengthen maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region.

3. Strengthened Bilateral and Multilateral Cybersecurity Cooperation

Throughout the past year, the ROK has significantly strengthened cybersecurity cooperation with key countries including the United States. Marking the 70th anniversary of the ROK-US alliance, the leaders announced the ROK-US Strategic Cybersecurity Cooperation Framework in April. This announcement underscored the extension of the ROK-U.S. alliance into the cyber domain, aligning with the trends of the era. Furthermore, a senior steering group was launched officially under the auspices of the NSC of the two countries in order to jointly respond to cybersecurity issues, and the group's first meeting was held in June. In addition, bilateral cybersecurity policy consultations were held with the United Kingdom and the Netherlands in February and March, respectively, and cybersecurity cooperation working-level meetings were also held on the same occasion. In November, during the state visit of the President of the ROK to the United Kingdom, the ROK-UK Strategic Cybersecurity Partnership was announced, expanding the scope of cybersecurity cooperation with like-minded countries in addressing the contemporary cybersecurity challenges.

On the multilateral level, the ROK participated in the multinational Cyber Flag exercise, which was hosted by the U.S. Cyber Command in July to enhance its cyber operations capabilities. In October, the ROK hosted the 8th Cyber Working Group on the occasion of the Seoul Security Dialogue under the theme of strengthening national cyberdefense security in the context of accelerating digital transformation. In November, as the co-chair of the Cyber Security Working Group of the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus, the ROK hosted the Cyber Training Exercise, otherwise known as CYTREX. It is an international exercise participated by a total of 17 member countries to strengthen joint response to transnational cyber threats.

4. Expanded Cooperation with NATO on Transnational Security Issues

President Yoon attended the NATO summit for the second consecutive year in July 2023, following his attendance in 2022. In April, the 2nd Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs attended the NATO foreign ministers' meeting. These participations reaffirmed the ROK's role as a "global pivotal state" and

its solidarity with the international community in addressing North Korea's unlawful actions while actively engaging in discussions on global security challenges, notably the Ukraine situation. In addition, on the occasion of the NATO summit, the ROK and NATO signed the Individually Tailored Partnership Programme, which laid the foundation for systematizing ROK-NATO cooperation in 11 areas, including non-proliferation, cyber defense, and emerging technologies. As part of the efforts to strengthen cooperation between the two sides, the ROK military participated for the first time in NATO's Cyber Coalition 2023, the world's largest cyber defense coalition.

5. Strengthened Regional Security Capabilities

The ROK is contributing to the enhancement of security capabilities of countries in the Indo-Pacific region by expanding the scope of its defense network through mutually beneficial defense cooperation in the form of joint defense research and development, industrial cooperation, and acquisition of weapons systems. In December, a Korean company was awarded a contract to deliver infantry fighting vehicles to the Australian Army, expanding the ROK's strategic defense cooperation with Australia. In May, during the talks between the defense ministers of the ROK and Malaysia, the two sides signed a contract on exporting FA-50 light combat aircrafts to Malaysia, providing an opportunity to further elevate defense cooperation between the two countries. Also, India's procurement of the second batch of K9, the ROK's independently developed self-propelled howitzer also known as "Vajra" (thunder in Hindi), is underway.

In addition, the ROK is handing over decommissioned vessels of its Navy and the Korea Coast Guard to Southeast Asian nations, including the Philippines, Viet Nam, and Indonesia. For example, in October 2023, Viet Nam received two high-speed boats and two water motorcycles as part of this initiative.

05 Build Economic Security Networks

1. Expanded Regional Economic Security Networks

The ROK is expanding its regional economic security networks to promote supply chain resilience and protect critical and emerging technologies. The ROK-U.S. Economic Security Dialogue was established last year, and it was expanded to include Japan with the launch of the ROK-U.S.-Japan Economic Security Dialogue in February this year. Since the ROK and Japan agreed in March to establish the ROK-Japan Economic Security Dialogue, the two nations have had three extensive

meetings by November. Furthermore, the ROK and Canada launched the ROK-Canada 2+2 High-Level Economic Security Dialogue in May to strengthen coordination between the two countries in areas such as clean energy and critical minerals. In addition, since the launch of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity, the ROK has actively participated in the negotiations and related discussions, thereby constructively contributing to the successful conclusion of the negotiations on the three pillars—the Supply Chain Agreement, the Clean Economy Agreement, and the Fair Economy Agreement—in November, just one and a half years after the launch of the framework.

In the realm of food security, President Yoon Suk Yeol announced during the expanded session of the G7 summit in May that the ROK would strengthen both short-term and long-term support for nations facing food crises. This commitment involves doubling the size of aid provided to developing countries from the current 50,000 tons to 100,000 tons and expanding the ASEAN+3 Emergency Rice Reserve. Additionally, through the long-term K-Rice Belt initiative, the ROK pledges to share its experience in achieving self-sufficiency in rice production with African nations. Once a recipient of food aid, the ROK is now a donor and a contributor to global food security, a transformation enabled by agricultural advancement over the past half-century.

2. Cooperated for the Stabilization of Supply Chains of Critical Minerals

Over the past year, the ROK has bolstered its ties with resource-rich nations like Viet Nam, Mongolia, and Canada to stabilize critical mineral supply chains. In June, during the ROK-Viet Nam summit, the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding to establish a Korea-Viet Nam Critical Mineral Supply Chain Center. In June, the ROK, the United States, and Mongolia launched a trilateral dialogue on critical minerals, thereby fostering discussions on the possibility of mineral sample analysis among the three nations and exploring the potential cooperation in the development of critical minerals for batteries, such as rare earth elements and lithium. In addition, the summit in May between the ROK and Canada resulted in the signing of the MOU on Cooperation in Critical Mineral Supply Chains, the Clean Energy Transition, and Energy Security, which contributed to strengthening the ROK's procurement capabilities of critical minerals in the automobile and battery industries.

In addition, the ROK and the United States conducted a pilot project to link the early warning systems of their overseas missions from August to December this year. This project aims to strengthen the monitoring system by sharing information related to supply chains in the host countries and to lay the groundwork for a supply chain cooperation mechanism. Along with the

U.S., the ROK is actively participating in the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP). In line with the MSP Principles for Responsible Critical Mineral Supply Chains adopted in February 2023, the ROK has sought to identify strategic projects that meet the MSP goals and principles and explore policy support measures, contributing to the global efforts in stabilizing and diversifying critical mineral supply chains.

3. Took Leadership in Digital Economic Norms

The ROK's first bilateral digital trade agreement, the Korea-Singapore Digital Partnership Agreement, entered into force in January this year. Moreover, as the first accession candidate to the plurilateral Digital Economy Partnership Agreement, the ROK, with the other parties, announced in June the substantive conclusion of the accession negotiations and is currently proceeding with the domestic procedures required to complete the accession.

4. Expanded Cooperation in Constructing Infrastructure Network

Through the K-City Network project, the ROK supported the construction of urban safety network platforms in the cities of Indonesia (Nusantara, Banyumas), Bangladesh (Rangpur), and Viet Nam (Haiphong) by implementing Korean smart city technologies. In November, the ROK and ASEAN announced the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Cooperation for Smart Mobility, agreeing to strengthen cooperation in mobility by sharing world-class Korean-style smart mobility technologies such as electric and hydrogen cars and eco-friendly public transportation systems and by working together on related projects.

06 Strengthen Cooperation in the Critical Domains of Science and Technology and Close the Digital Gap

1. Joined Networks of Leading Nations in Advanced Science and Technology

The ROK has been strengthening bilateral cooperation with countries leading the development of critical and emerging technologies related to space, quantum, and artificial intelligence, while actively participating in the discussions in the multilateral fora. On the occasion of President Yoon's state visit to the United States in April, the ROK and the U.S. agreed to establish the ROK-U.S. Next-Generation Critical and Emerging Technologies Dialogue led by national security advisors in order to institutionalize cooperation on advanced science and technology. In the area of space, following a statement from the leaders of the ROK and the U.S. that the alliance also applies

to space, the ROK-U.S. Space Forum was held in Seoul in November to discuss ways to strengthen comprehensive space cooperation between the two countries in areas such as space diplomacy, security, exploration, and economy. In the area of quantum science and technology, the ROK signed the Joint Statement on Cooperation in Quantum Information Science and Technologies with the U.S. in April and newly joined the International Roundtable on Pursuing Quantum Information Together (2^Nvs2N).

In the area of artificial intelligence, the ROK president attended the AI Safety Summit hosted by the United Kingdom in November. In February, the ROK co-hosted with the Netherlands the inaugural Responsible AI in the Military Domain Summit in the Hague. The ROK also announced that it would host the second summit in 2024 in Seoul. Additionally, in October, a nominee from the ROK was appointed as a member of the UN High-Level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence, showcasing the ROK's active engagement in the global discussions on AI governance as well as its leadership in shaping international discourse on AI matters.

2. Strengthened Regional Technology Cooperation, including International R&D Collaboration

Over the past year, the ROK has deepened its scientific and technological exchanges not only with the United States but also with various countries such as France and the United Kingdom, holding joint science and technology committee meetings. In January, the Korea-Viet Nam Institute of Science and Technology was established to further promote bilateral cooperation on technology transfer and collaborative research on industrial and economic growth of Viet Nam. Concurrently, the ROK and the UAE amended the MOU on cooperation in the exploration and use of space for peaceful purposes and organized the Dubai Future Forum. These initiatives aimed to expand foreign investments and facilitate market access in the ICT sector between the two countries.

3. Strengthened International Cooperation for Digital Transformation

The Korea Customs Service chose Madagascar as one of the recipients of its program for the modernization of electronic customs clearance systems, which started in April this year. The program's goal is to establish a data warehouse that integrates internal information, laying the groundwork for a comprehensive risk management system adept at identifying illicit trade goods effectively. In addition, the Korea Customs Service aims to equip the Malagasy customs authorities, which currently manage 1,200 personnel manually, with an advanced personnel management system that incorporates the latest IT technology. This program is designed not only to improve

organizational efficiency but also to facilitate Madagascar's digital transformation.

The Ministry of National Defense is promoting the creation of an environment for digital transformation for UN troop-contributing countries in the region by proposing a standard model for UN smart camps that combines the ROK's advanced scientific and technological capabilities with the UN's digital transformation strategy. The ministry plans to present a smart camp model that integrates advanced IT technology to manage troops, equipment, and facilities at UN peacekeeping missions. The model will be piloted and then expanded to all UN missions.

07 Lead Regional Cooperation on Climate Change and Energy Security

1. Collaborated on Regional Climate Change Initiatives for Carbon Neutrality

President Yoon made the announcement to join the Climate Club at the expanded session of the G7 summit in May. This demonstrated the ROK's commitment to engage in global decarbonization efforts actively, cooperating with G7 countries in areas like mitigation policies and industrial transformation. The president also pledged to expand green ODA on various occasions, including at the Davos World Economic Forum in January and the UN General Assembly in September. Furthermore, during the G20 summit in September, the president committed to making a \$300 million contribution for the second replenishment of the Green Climate Fund. As the host country of several international organizations like the Green Climate Fund and the Global Green Growth Institute, the ROK is expanding its contributions across multiple fronts, including financial and technological support, for climate change response and green growth in developing nations.

2. Enhanced Coordination to Stabilize the Energy Market in the Indo-Pacific

In March, the ROK hosted the 9th ROK-U.S. Energy Security Dialogue, in which participants discussed energy security, clean energy transition, and stabilization of critical mineral supply chain, etc. In addition, the Global Conference on Battery Recycling and Critical Minerals was held in November, strengthening the ROK's strategic cooperation with Viet Nam, Indonesia, Australia, and other major suppliers of critical minerals that are vital for clean energy transition.

3. Strengthened Multi-Layered Cooperation on Climate Change

The 3rd ROK-ASEAN Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change in August, as well as the ROK-Viet Nam Environmental Ministerial Meeting and the 1st ROK-Malaysia Climate Change Dialogue in October, were focused on assessing achievements and identifying joint projects for environmental cooperation and climate change response between the ROK and ASEAN nations. Additionally, in June, at the 5th ROK-China Environment Ministers' Meeting, participants discussed cooperative measures to address climate change. In November, the ROK government participated in the 24th ROK-Japan-China Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting, primarily aimed at collectively evaluating the progress in climate change initiatives among the three nations. At the 10th ROK-Japan-China Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Busan at the end of November, the three countries agreed to pursue collaborative projects on climate change response that can provide tangible benefits to their people.

4. Supported Building Regional Capacity for Nuclear Safety and Security in collaboration with the International community including IAEA

In April, the ROK initiated a collaborative research project with ASEAN on nuclear convergence and fusion technology through the Daejeon regional office of the Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology for Asia and the Pacific. This intergovernmental agreement, facilitated by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), focuses on cooperation in the field of nuclear science and technology. In June, the ROK hosted an international nuclear security education program targeting nuclear cooperation nations, involving nations newly utilizing nuclear energy, such as Indonesia, the Philippines, the Czech Republic, and Poland. Through collaboration with international entities like the IAEA, the ROK is actively contributing to reinforcing nuclear safety and security capacities within the region, ensuring the peaceful and secure utilization of nuclear energy.

5. Established an Ecosystem for Entering the Indo-Pacific Nuclear Energy Market

The ROK is actively carrying out economic diplomacy to achieve its goal of exporting 10 nuclear power plants by 2030 and building a nuclear cooperation framework with Indo-Pacific countries to provide a foundation for the overseas expansion of Korean nuclear power plant companies. In June, the Korea Hydro & Nuclear Power signed a MOU with the Viet Nam Atomic Energy Institute. The ROK government is also enhancing cooperation with regard to the Bataan nuclear power plant with the Philippines and small modular reactors with Indonesia.

Engage in “Contributive Diplomacy” through Tailored Development Cooperation Partnerships

1. Expanded Development Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific

At the recent Korea-Pacific Islands Summit in May, President Yoon pledged a progressive increase in the size of the ROK-Pacific Islands Forum Cooperation Fund. The government is making an active effort to allocate the budget of the upcoming fiscal year in a way that can fulfill this commitment. During the 23rd ROK-ASEAN Summit in November last year, President Yoon pledged to double the size of the three ASEAN-related cooperation funds by 2027. There has been a surge of over 20% in the size of these funds this year, reaching \$29.62 million, and plans are underway to secure \$40 million for next year, approaching the five-year target of nearly \$48 million. Additionally, efforts are being made to sign a \$4 billion cap agreement with India with regard to the Economic Development Cooperation Fund.

2. Elevated its ODA to the World’s Top Ten Level

The volume of the ROK’s official development assistance in 2023 was approximately 4.7 trillion won, marking a significant increase of 21.3% compared to the previous year. This increase highlights the ROK’s ongoing commitment to enhancing its global contributions as a “global pivotal state.” In line with this commitment, the government plans to allocate 6.5 trillion won for ODA next year, an effort aimed at increasing the ODA volume by approximately 45%. Simultaneously, the ROK is actively identifying key cooperation areas grounded on real-time demands such as digital transformation, education, and climate change, a strategic move intended to fortify both the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of ODA. The ROK is expanding support for ASEAN countries in five key areas (digital, education, climate change, smart cities, and transportation) as a way to combine the demands of partners and its own strengths. Additionally, the ROK aims to double the ODA volume for Pacific Island countries by 2027. President Yoon has pledged to allocate \$100 million during the next three years to support development cooperation projects that bolster democracy in the region. Cognizant of the potential of economic cooperation with nations in the Indo-Pacific region, the ROK selected seven Indo-Pacific countries as priority recipients of Economic Development Promotion Facility support in the latter half of 2022. From March of this year, the ROK has been engaging in collaborative efforts with countries such as Bangladesh and Viet Nam, aimed at expanding project exploration and enlarging support.

3. Enhanced Strategic Cooperation with Major Donor Countries

The ROK has not only agreed to regularize the ROK-U.S.-Japan Trilateral Development and Humanitarian Assistance Policy Dialogue this year but also has been strengthening its development cooperation partnerships with major donor countries by holding policy consultations with the United States, Japan, the EU, and Canada respectively. These efforts aim to prevent overlaps among and omissions in each country's development cooperation policies and enhance the efficiency of aid. Notably, in November, the ROK and the UK have established the ROK-UK Strategic Development Partnership, focusing on key cooperation areas such as digital transformation, climate, the environment, and healthcare. This partnership aims to bolster both grant and loan assistance cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region in these priority sectors.

09

Promote Mutual Understanding and Exchanges

1. Deepened Exchanges of the Future Generation

During the ROK-U.S. summit in April, the leaders agreed to extend the Work, English Study, Travel program, or WEST in short, for university students until 2028, expanding the maximum number of annual participants from 2,000 to 2,500 individuals. Additionally, the launch of the ROK-U.S. Education Exchange Initiative for Youth in STEM enabled each country to select 2,023 students for exchange, with a joint investment of \$60 million for this initiative. Furthermore, on the occasion of the Canadian prime minister's visit in May, the ROK and Canada amended the bilateral MOU on working holidays and signed the MOU on ROK-Canada Youth Mobility Arrangement. This agreement aims to broaden and relax the criteria for the working holiday program between the two countries, expanding the scope and scale of youth exchanges between the ROK and Canada.

2. Strengthened Academic Exchanges and Promoted Mutual Understanding in the Region

From June to September this year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited eight major countries in the Indo-Pacific region, including Southeast Asia, India, and Oceania, to conduct track 1.5 consultations with local government and private experts, with the aim of identifying implementation cooperation projects in the region. Additionally, the Korea National Diplomatic Academy has established and operated a policy dialogue platform with major think-tanks across the 10 ASEAN member states. In November, it hosted the 5th ASEAN-ROK Think Tank Strategic Dialogue. The

Korea National Diplomatic Academy also enhanced bilateral exchanges within the Indo-Pacific region by conducting policy dialogues with the Viet Nam Academy of Social Sciences and the Diplomatic Academy of Viet Nam at track 2 level, further strengthening cooperation between the two nations.

3. Expanded Mutual Communication through Diversification of Cultural Exchanges and Digital Public Diplomacy

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the Korea Forest Service and UNICEF Korea, launched a global metaverse campaign titled “Plant Our Planet” in April, aiming to address the climate crisis. This initiative allows users in the metaverse to plant virtual trees, contributing to the real-world forestation efforts both domestically and internationally. With over 200 million participants worldwide, approximately 5,000 trees were planted in locations including Korea, Mongolia, Indonesia, Viet Nam, Tajikistan, and Paraguay. Meanwhile, on the occasion of the 2023 Korea-Pacific Islands Summit in May, an exhibition titled “Weaving Blue” was held in Seoul to showcase photographs and handcrafted items depicting the lives of Pacific Island citizens. This exhibition provided an opportunity to introduce the culture of Pacific Island countries, which had not been well known to the Korean people thus far.

4. Strengthened Diplomatic Infrastructure

On the occasion of the 2023 Korea-Pacific Islands Summit in May, the ROK established diplomatic ties with Niue, finally having diplomatic relations with all 14 Pacific Island countries. After President Yoon’s announcement to increase the number of diplomatic missions in the region, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, within five months, revealed plans to open a new embassy in the Marshall Islands by 2024. Such establishment of diplomatic relations and opening of new embassies will contribute to the substantial expansion of the ROK’s engagement and contributions to the Pacific region.

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