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The Need for Talks to Avoid Escalation of the Crisis on the Korean Peninsula: Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) Statement

November 25, 2010

GPPAC International Steering Group Meeting
Beirut, Lebanon

In response to the artillery exchange which took place on Yeonpyeong Island near the border of the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) on November 23, 2010, the International Steering Group of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)* extends its deepest condolences to the families of all those, including civilians, who lost their lives and to the communities affected by this tragic event.

This exchange of artillery comes as part of an ongoing conflict deeply entrenched in remnant Cold War structures. This situation has repercussions not only on the Korean Peninsula but also throughout the wider Northeast Asian region.

GPPAC strongly calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities to prevent escalation into another tragedy as has been experienced on the Korean Peninsula in the past. Furthermore, as an international civil society peacebuilding network, we advocate non-violent, non-military approaches to find a peaceful solution to this crisis, and emphasise the need for civil society involvement in this process. GPPAC is offering the expertise of its network to contribute to the facilitation of dialogue between the relevant stakeholders.

GPPAC calls for:

1. An immediate cessation of hostilities to be declared.
2. A further investigation to be held into all aspects of the artillery exchange before any judgment or action is made.
3. All sides to refrain from military provocation that could lead to further escalation of tension or violence, including military drills in the area.
4. An emphasis on dialogue, both bilaterally between the DPRK and ROK, and regionally, including the resumption of the Six Party Talks as the only existing framework for dialogue on peace and security in the Northeast Asian region.
5. Civil society participation in dialogue processes related to this conflict.
6. World leaders to build bridges to calm the situation rather than reenact the language and barriers of the past.

** GPPAC is a global civil society-led network which seeks to build an international consensus on peacebuilding and the prevention of violent conflict. It was established in 2003 in response to a call made by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and has since worked to strengthen civil society networks for peace and security by linking local, national, regional, and global levels of action; and to establish effective engagement with governments, the UN system and regional organisations.*