We, the participants from youth organizations in China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia and Russia, welcome the Youth Session of the 6th North-East Asian Multi-stakeholder Forum on Sustainable Development Goals. We highly appreciate the UN ESCAP East and North-East Asia (ENEA) Office for supporting this session.

People all over the world are suffering as a result of climate change, and the pandemic, rising militarism, and violations of human rights are exacerbating the situation. Youths today are not inheriting the future we deserve. Yet, at the same time, youth, or those under the age of 30, have yet to be recognized as an independent constituency and lack a voice in many places. That is why this Youth Session was held again to gather the voices of North-East Asian youth. Last year, the youth organizations called on stakeholders to promote gender equality in all fields, including science, politics, and business, to require collaborative work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change and expand and institutionalize opportunities for young leaders to participate in active decision-making.

This year the youth organizations from 5 countries discussed the progress and challenges regarding SDG 6,7,9,11,17 and presented the most successful and efficient youth solutions to accelerate its implementation further. Despite the efforts of various levels of civil society, challenges in access to clean water, affordable energy, and sustainable infrastructure are growing, as most decision-makers are focused on political gains rather than sustainable development.

As the effects of climate change and degradation worsen, future generations are most vulnerable to unprecedented disasters. We will not be able to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals unless we address the agendas for human settlement planning, water-use efficiency, energy efficiency, the environmental impact of cities, climate change mitigation, and support for green innovation. During the 2022 pandemics and natural disasters that affect both the Global South and the Global North, we see that sharing experiences and lessons learned to advance the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda becomes increasingly important for the global community, particularly young people. Given the discussions at the Youth Session, we urge all stakeholders to work together to address the major challenges in the three main sectors listed below.
Topic 1. Promoting Sustainable and Inclusive Urbanization

Current Status

1. In terms of urbanization, it contributes directly to economic growth and influences people's quality of life. Sustainable urbanization is critical because cities now have more than half of the world's population. There are some precedent examples of young people developing sustainable urbanization. The Green Building project in Japan aims to create an environmentally, socially, and ethically sustainable society; the Toranomon-Azabudai Project in Tokyo aims to provide 100% renewable energy with 2.4 ha green space and to remove barriers between facilities such as offices, residences, and playgrounds to promote people's integration and engagement. However, there is still room for improvement in terms of affordable housing and more environmentally friendly cities. Particularly in Japan, it is critical to address an aging society, population centralisation, and a shortage of affordable housing as a result, which is relevant for other youth in the countries of NEA and beyond as well. The youth of Russia and Korea have also expressed their concern about the lack of Green Spaces.

2. Another issue raised in the Forum regarding urbanization was the lack of citizen participation in urban planning. In many cases, architects and civil designers lack sufficient knowledge of citizens' needs, particularly those of disabled people, young people, the elderly, and families with children; sometimes architectural engineers do not respect natural and cultural heritage enough in their project. The youth team from Russia “Urbanpinion” proposed a solution to this issue by developing an online platform that helps city government, development companies, community leaders and researchers transparently collect citizens' opinions, receive in-depth analytics and make informed decisions for city development.

3. Besides, the majority of NEA countries are densely populated metropolitan areas that are also popular tourist destinations. Food waste is common in megacities and cities where the tourism industry is developing. Professional food safety education for youth as a life skill is critical in large polluted cities. SFEH, based in Macao, China, has been expanding and strengthening the roles of food sectors, as well as educating young people on how to maintain food and water safety while increasing water re-use.

4. Finally, there are also numerous other issues that must be addressed. For instance, unwise money allocation in urbanization provokes its fast pace that leads to an increase in slum dwellers, inadequate and congested infrastructure and services, worsening air pollution and unplanned urban sprawl. Moreover, poor planning and a lack of transparency in research complicate the city management process and decelerate the transition to a more sustainable strategy in the countries.
Solutions and Recommendations

Given these challenging situations, we call on all stakeholders including national and local government for actions as follows:

a. to raise awareness of urbanization's sustainable development in the fields of education, urban planning, and local government. This could take the form of a workshop aimed at students to introduce how their cities are being planned to have a lower environmental impact, as well as what new challenges the city is facing or may face in the future.

b. to involve multiple stakeholders in the design and development of cities, particularly the representatives of future generations, in order to make urban cities more sustainable.

c. to increase investments in green buildings and green campuses that can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote renewable energy in urban areas.

d. to allow people actually suffering from a lack of accessible urban environment (e.g. people with reduced mobility) and indigenous people in rural areas to actively participate in human settlement planning, as they understand better how to make cities more comfortable for all.

e. to shift the linear consumption model toward more circular consumption by demonstrating practical projects like upcycling food waste practices and identifying opportunities for circular value creation in every urban community.

Topic 2. Increasing Water-use Efficiency and Energy Efficiency

Current Status

1. We, the Youth of East and North East Asia, have worked to improve the sustainability of water and energy. To some extent, the Youth of Russia, Japan, Korea, China, and Mongolia have contributed to the achievement of their sustainability goals by increasing water-use and energy-use efficiency. The youth session highlighted a number of already implemented solutions, including Russia's "S.M. Art Materials Project," China's "Tusstar" green transformation projects, Japanese UNISC International youth attending the World Youth Parliament for Water, and Korean youth laying the groundwork for the Korea SDGs Youth Ecosystem and Stronghold Campus.

2. Among youth-led actions, SFERRME GROUP LLC from Russia implements the S.M.Art Metals project and solves the problem of resource-efficient recycling of wastes from city and large enterprise groundwater treatment stations. A set of patented technologies allows such waste to be recycled into nano- and micro-sized powders of iron and its compounds. The resulting powders are >8 times less
expensive than analogs and can be used to make magnetic fluids, powders and suspensions for magnetic nondestructive testing, catalysts, and other raw material components.

3. Also, insights from UNISC international showed that international coordination is a requirement to maintain the international sustainable water use. Its members are composed of Japan, China, countries in the Mekong region etc. As part of their activity, the World Youth Parliament for Water took actions as one organization for global water resource issues and shared ideas about water-related sanitation issues in the Asia-Pacific region.

4. An attempt to raise awareness of water use through food literacy is under progress in Primary schools in Macao, as they host workshops with professional food services practitioners, on food safety training.

5. The general concern about water use worldwide was brought up by Mongolian youth. Forecasting our youth goals requires consideration of a number of factors. The proportion of youth in Mongolia is significantly high at 36% of the total population, while China, Japan, Korea and Russia are experiencing a decrease of the youth population. Either way, the future population will be left with a series of issues and responsibilities to deal with, if the current facilities and other solutions to water issues do not backcast the demand and capacities of the future demographics in mind. Therefore, without further advocacy for adaptable changes, our opinion will remain underrepresented, and that current policies will not withstand the future generations. With Mongolian youth motivation, Mongolian Sustainable Development Bridge NGO is trying to raise awareness among them through several activities including climate action, waste issues, sea rising. This is yet to be discussed in an open manner that engages all stakeholders, preventing the root cause from being solved.

6. Based on awareness about the problem in the energy efficiency ecosystem, a consultative group of national youth about SDGs in Korea, YLPF (Youth Level Political Forum) Korea made a suggestion about Green Public Procurement, which became a new policy agenda to the Korean government in 2021. Youth are playing a main role to create a policy-level awareness of energy efficiency.

7. A lack of industrial skills in water and energy, as well as a mechanism to represent technical issues from youth, is one of the concerns for youth in addressing their opinions as a tangible action plan. The relative amount of technical information presented about water demonstrates this, and one major reason appears to be a lack of participation from more mature youth nearing 30 years of age, who are still classified as youth and have a wealth of knowledge to share from their work experience.

8. Finally, although the youth action for sustainable water and energy use is taking place in East and North-East Asia, it is frequently regarded as immature and thus requires support or promotion, as is the case with other SDG-related movements.

Solutions and Recommendations

a. Youth-level partnership in water and energy is required further to;
i. Continue to raise the awareness of this water issue among youth and encourage youth participation and representation at all levels of the decision-making process regarding the water-related ecosystem.

ii. Form a working group that will organize regular workshops for young people in order to facilitate the exchange of technical knowledge, research, and policy recommendations in the field of water and energy use.

b. Efficient and smart use of water and energy and its education should be prioritized to;
   i. Promote sustainable, efficient and smart use of water and energy, as higher literacy will have a significant population-level impact in increasing water use efficiency. For example, Macao regards food as a basic concept of optimizing human health and environmental sustainability, as water is a fundamental resource required for production of all foods. Providing knowledge about virtual water usage and saving is one of the most important solutions on water protection and climate actions.

c. At policy-level, following changes are essential;
   i. To establish a follow-up and monitoring system that will discuss and solve issues over transboundary waters such as rivers and oceans, in the absence of any power dynamics so as to secure a fair and equitable representation
   ii. To redesign the purpose of current measures and policies that only aims to minimize the negative impact on the environment, to those that bring mutual benefits so as to establish a sustainable ecosystem.
   iii. To invest in ESG not just for current decision-making bodies, but for youth personnel to create policies with a glocal perspective. This may consist of group fieldwork and workshops in collaboration with cities facing environment/water security issues, to encourage new ideas for tangible development plans that seek to maximize the local advantage.

**Topic 3. Youth Partnerships for the Goals**

**Current Status**

1. In regard to partnerships for the goals, youth have taken initiative in multiple ways to build up further youth partnerships. In Japan, the SDGs awareness rate recorded over 85% this year (2022) among youths. Japanese youths have expanded their partnerships and have already taken active action. For instance, a youth-led conference, the Youth Climate Conference, was held in 2021 and in 2022 with support from NGOs and academics. It was open to all Japanese youths and more than 100 youth representatives from a variety of backgrounds discussed the climate change issues in Japan. After the conference, they also expanded their partnerships with other stakeholders through the advocacy process.
2. There was an International Hybrid Forum on “Climate change and Youth” that involved 500 participants to express their opinions, mission, values, and solutions on climate issues. Desertification imposes serious concerns as loss of vegetation, expansion of sand areas, water systems drying conditions are increased. Approximately 60-70 percent of Mongolian land desertified in some levels compared to last century. Youth representatives raised their voice on the Climate change forum to find solutions, calling up to decrease the amount of livestock which has already overgrazed from its balanced numbers.

3. The awareness of the significance of domestic and international partnerships between multi-stakeholders has also been raised. Although Korea publishes regular Voluntary Reviews at local and national government levels, an original and independent Voluntary Youth Review by SDSN Youth Korea sets a leading example that re-evaluates the current sustainability from the perspectives of the future generations. Future generations are actively engaged in the decision-making and the implementation process rather than focusing on views only from expertises and high-level officials. In terms of the partnership of international processes, since these attempts and systematization shared in this North-East Asian Multi-stakeholder Forum on Sustainable Development Goals is a great example to show the strong partnership and being a sharing field of solutions between North-East Asian countries.

4. However, there is room for improvement. Young people are the mainstay of the implementation of SDGs. As shared in the forum's youth session, they are the generation facing a more serious climate crisis than anyone else and the generation active in implementing SDGs and establishing companies. Young people are implementing large and small practices and successes, but networking at home and abroad is still lacking.

5. The decision making process is still exclusive and representation tends to be polarized. Therefore, the voices of vulnerable people are not reflected enough.

6. Regarding partnerships beyond the borders particularly, the covid travel restrictions have limited opportunities to interact and to build up cooperative relations with international colleagues. The shortage of the budget for travel to meet colleagues is also a serious issue particularly for youths.

Solutions and Recommendations
Considering the current progress and the challenges discussed above, we call for the following actions:

a. to continue holding the North-East Asia Multi-stakeholder Forum's Youth Session and CSO Session on Sustainable Development Goals in the long run, as well as to strengthen partnerships between North-East Asian Multi-stakeholders

b. to strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships and synergistic cooperation beyond expertise, and to take bottom-up actions to make vulnerable people's voices heard
c. to increase opportunities for youth to collaborate more consistently and actively in order to form a stronger network in order to circulate issues, by outlining that a certain percentage of total budget should be allocated to improve youth representation. This solves the most difficult logistical challenge: securing funding for travel and promotion. For example, a scholarship program could be established to reimburse the costs of travel and living for youths attending a specific conference or organizing an exchange opportunity. This will transform the idea that youth participation is a self-funded and voluntary action that selects for an elite and privileged individual, into an open, engaging, and potentially competitive field that selects for an individual who will work to represent youth voices fairly and equitably.

d. to provide support for young people growing up as the mainstay of climate crisis implementation in the establishment of a youth ecosystem and solid ecosystem through the publication of regular reports designed by and for young people.

In this regard, we reiterate the significance of including the viewpoint and real-world experiences of young people in the implementation of SDGs 6, 7, 11, and 17. We envision a time in the future when young people will be better able to actively contribute to society at large and positively inspire others to join the action.