

## **Declaration of the SGI Youth Conference for Peace**

### **Preamble**

The twentieth century was an era in which the repeated folly of war and violence gave birth to the most immoral of all inventions—nuclear weapons. The twenty-first century continues to be tormented by this legacy of violence and inhumanity.

In Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the only places in human history that experienced the wartime use of nuclear weapons, the average age of the *hibakusha* (A-bomb survivors) has reached 79 years old. The time remaining for these people to continue the invaluable work of sharing their experiences is limited. At the same time, the memory of war continues to wane with time, with more and more young Japanese people uncertain when the atomic bombs were dropped or when the war ended for Japan. Present realities in the international arena deepen our concern regarding the further proliferation of nuclear weapons; the nuclear-weapon states are not making sufficient efforts to fulfill their commitment to pursue nuclear disarmament in good faith.

What kind of philosophical framework will enable humankind to realize a world free from war and nuclear arms?

On September 8, 1957, the second president of the Soka Gakkai, Josei Toda, made a historic declaration calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons. In it, he stated, “We, the citizens of the world, have an inviolable right to live. Anyone who jeopardizes that right is a devil incarnate, a fiend, a monster. . . I believe it is the mission of every member of the youth division to disseminate this idea throughout the globe.” This was his powerful declaration to the world condemning nuclear weapons—a pressing task he entrusted to the youthful generation.

Soka Gakkai International (SGI) President Daisaku Ikeda has led the way in making his mentor’s vision a reality.

A single individual may indeed seem powerless in the face of such issues as war, nuclear weapons and the enormous power of the state. However, as youth, let us fundamentally challenge that thinking and overcome such feelings of powerlessness. Let us clearly assert our confidence that a change in just one person can transform that person's surroundings, whole communities and societies, and eventually the world. Let us renew our conviction that each person possesses limitless potential to effect meaningful change.

The *hibakusha* throughout the world have toiled to pave the path toward peace by sharing their experiences through oral and written testimonies. One woman from Hiroshima reminds us of the following important truth: “Participating in a movement for peace is not nearly as difficult as people think. All you have to do is to act with kindness to the people around you.” When we see the tenacious struggles of such individuals, we cannot help but feel courage and hope well up from within. Now is the time for young people to stand up and carry on this task.

Youth representatives from 16 countries around the world, all keenly aware of our responsibility to the future, have gathered at the SGI Youth Conference for Peace. In 2015, the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will be held in New York. The year 2015 also marks the 70th year since the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the 40th anniversary of the founding of the SGI.

SGI youth division members, determined to work in solidarity with young people from throughout the world, issue the following declaration calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons towards next year's NPT Review Conference. We strongly hope that these efforts will move the international community to take the next step towards the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons.

We vow to take the following action:

#### Declaration of the SGI Youth Conference for Peace

As youth, we will:

- Uphold the conviction that nuclear weapons are an absolute evil and categorically reject the development, testing, production, stockpiling, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons.
- Work for the holding of a World Youth Summit for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the earliest opportunity, in the hope that many young people from throughout the world will visit these two cities and learn firsthand the realities of the atomic bombings, thus strengthening the momentum for nuclear abolition.
- Confront the ways of thinking that justify nuclear weapons, as well as the sense of defeat and powerlessness that obstructs the path toward nuclear abolition, and actively engage in dialogue to construct the foundations of peace; youth members will promote grassroots activities throughout the world, organizing meetings, peace exhibitions and symposiums where people can learn about the history and experiences of the atomic bombings, thus ensuring that the long-term, widespread and indiscriminate destruction wrought by nuclear weapons never fades from memory.

International Conference Center Hiroshima  
September 7, 2014