



SGI Peace News

Newsletter introducing Soka Gakkai International (SGI)'s activities to promote a culture of peace

March, 2017 (Vol. 16)

[New Exhibition on Human Rights Education Opens at UN Headquarters in Geneva](#)

Geneva, March 8, 2017

A new exhibition entitled "[Transforming Lives: The Power of Human Rights Education,](#)" was launched on March 6 at the Palais des Nations, home of the United Nations Office at Geneva. On display until March 17, the exhibition raised awareness of the role of human rights education in promoting dignity, equality and peace, and preventing human rights violations and abuses.

The exhibition was co-organized by SGI, HRE 2020, the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning, and the states comprising the Platform for Human Rights and Training (Brazil, Costa Rica, Italy, Morocco, the Philippines, Senegal, Slovenia, Switzerland and Thailand), with thanks to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The panels can be viewed [here](#).



At the opening, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations Office at Geneva Ambassador Maria Nazareth Farani Azevêdo commented, "Human rights education and training are critical to achieving a society of peace, tolerance and sustainable development in which the human rights of all are respected, protected and fulfilled."

Hirotsugu Terasaki, SGI Director General of Peace & Global Issues, quoted SGI President Daisaku Ikeda, stating: "It has never been more important to create and solidify a movement for human rights education that will foster the social conditions in which people treasure human diversity and dignity." Further information can be found [here](#).

Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco

Mexico City, February 13-14, 2017

On February 13, an international seminar on the topic of "A world free of nuclear weapons: is it desirable, is it possible? How could it be achieved?" was organized by the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL). The seminar

was held to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco) and took place at the Headquarters of the Inter-American Conference on Social Security (CISS) in Mexico City, Mexico. Furthermore, the 25th Session of the General Conference at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was held the following day.



SGI President Daisaku Ikeda conveyed a message, stating that “the creation of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZ) in Latin America and the Caribbean fifty years ago is a towering achievement for peace in the history of humankind. It is one of the most important and positive legacies that the twentieth century bequeathed to our world.”

The international seminar brought together nuclear disarmament experts, former Secretary Generals of OPANAL and the Member States of OPANAL to discuss topics such as the legitimacy of nuclear weapons and the need for nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and elimination. From civil society, SGI’s Director of Peace and Human Rights Kimiaki Kawai and Nereo Ordaz, General Director of SGI-Mexico participated in these events as.

New Exhibition on the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami

Miyagi, Japan, March 5, 2017

In commemoration of the 6th anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, Soka Gakkai opened the “Tohoku Future Light of Happiness Hall” on March 5 in Miyagi Prefecture, Japan. Its aim is to share broadly and pass down to younger generations the stories of the people of Tohoku—their indomitable spirit, heart-to-heart bonds of encouragement and the path toward reconstruction. The hall exhibits inspiring stories of those who were affected through panels, videos and artifacts both in Japanese and English. Admission is free.



The hall is located next to the Soka Gakkai Tohoku Culture Center which, along with forty-one other Soka Gakkai centers, served as a temporary evacuation center during the disaster in 2011. In total, these centers accommodated 5,000 evacuees. During the recovery phase the Soka Gakkai organized a variety of programs aimed at human-centered emotional recovery such as the music concert series “Building Bonds of Hope” which was performed in major facilities and public spaces in temporary housing sites in the affected areas. In addition, individual members have devoted themselves to helping others despite their own adversities. Those experiences are also presented in the exhibition.

SGI Visit to UNODA & UN Peacebuilding Support Office

New York, March 2, 2017

On March 2, the Youth Division of Soka Gakkai Japan and SGI Office for UN Affairs made a courtesy visit to the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA). They shared the outcome and current initiatives of the Youth Division's peace campaign "Soka Global Action," the three pillars of which are: 1) Building a culture of peace and abolition of nuclear weapons; 2) Building ties of friendship within Asia; 3) Promoting recovery from natural disasters.



At the meeting, five books published by the Youth Division and Soka Gakkai's Prefectural Peace Committees were donated to Mr. John Ennis, UNODA's Chief of Information and Outreach, all of which contain the testimonies of *hibakusha* (A-bomb survivors) and war survivors.

Following the visit, the SGI representatives had a discussion with the UN Peacebuilding Support Office. The office is currently in charge of facilitating the steering committee for [the Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security](#), which is articulated in the Security Council Resolution 2250. The officials and SGI representatives exchanged views on the kinds of contributions young people can make in this field and discussed actual examples that SGI can provide for the study.

[Time for a treaty to bring an end to nuclear danger by Daisaku Ikeda](#)

Japan Times

February 28, 2017

"Last December, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a historic resolution calling for the start of negotiations on a legally binding

instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. The resolution calls for a first conference to be convened at the end of March at U.N. Headquarters in New York, and encourages participating governments to exert their best efforts for the early conclusion of a treaty. It further calls for the participation and contribution of international organizations and civil society representatives.

The Japan Times

We must seize the opportunity to put an end to the era of nuclear weapons. There are still more than 15,000 nuclear warheads in our world today. Efforts in nuclear disarmament have stalled, while plans for modernization of arsenals have progressed. The threat posed by these weapons is, if anything, growing.

I would like to urge constructive discussions at the upcoming U.N. negotiations, as well as the earliest possible holding of a U.S.-Russia summit in order to reinvigorate the nuclear

disarmament process.” Further information can be found [here](#).

CSW61 Parallel Event “Inclusive and Transformative Leadership for Women’s Economic Empowerment”

New York, March 17, 2017

During the United Nations 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), SGI held a parallel event entitled “Inclusive and Transformative Leadership for Women’s Economic Empowerment” with the collaboration of our co-sponsors, Soroptimist International, World YWCA, Graduate Women International, and the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace.



This event addressed women’s leadership in the context of the official CSW priority theme. Speakers included former United Nations Under-Secretary-General Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury and representatives from UN Women and World YWCA. The co-moderators were Ivy Gabbert of SGI and Yvonne Simpson, President of Soroptimist International.

Ambassador Chowdhury emphasized the need for us to raise the alarm on the global pay gap between men and women which now stands at 23%, according to a report released by OXFAM this month. At this rate, it will take 170 years to bridge the gap. Transformative action has to come from the individual, which is what the culture of peace is about.

[Conference on “Faith-Based Approaches to Forced Migration” at Princeton University](#)

New Jersey, March 3-4, 2017

On March 3-4, SGI representatives attended a conference entitled “Seeking Refuge: Faith-Based Approaches to Forced Migration” held by Princeton’s University’s Office of Religious Life and the Community of Sant'Egidio.



The nearly two-hundred participants included academics, U.S. government officials, U.N. agencies, and workers from faith-based organizations and secular NGOs.

In a roundtable conversation, SGI shared unique examples of individual members’ continuing efforts to encourage victims displaced by natural disasters and an interview project with those affected people in the Tohoku region. The project has generated a book titled “March

11, 2011—More Than Survival: Messages to the Future,” which contains ten of their testimonies. In addition, a short film describing how an SGI member’s family in Tohoku struggled with the tragedy was aired in the film. Further information can be found [here](#).

Measuring the impact of the “Seeds of Hope” exhibition in India

India, February, 2017

The SGI is currently carrying out a project with the Center for Environmental Education (CEE) in order to measure the impact of the exhibition “Seeds of Hope—Visions of sustainability, steps toward change” at public schools in three cities: Delhi, Hyderabad and Kolkata.

In each school, some classes, consisting of about 30-40 students, learned only through the exhibition without any other related activities (the control group), while other classes learned through both the exhibition and other related activities such as workshops (the experimental group). A pre-test and post-test for both groups were conducted to evaluate the educational effectiveness of "exhibition" and "exhibition with activities.”



The results and analysis of this project will be available soon.

“Mapiing” photos for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

March 2017

On the occasion of the International Women’s Day (March 8), the “Mapiing” team launched the photo contest based on the SDGs Goal Number 5 (Gender Equality). Congratulations to the three winners whose photos are shown here:

1. Sabrinasinanan: Promoting Gender Equality through Art



2. Indy: Project on Gender Equality for Children



3. Abdulrahman Abdullahi: Say No to Violence Against Women And Girls



This bimonthly SGI Peace News provides recent updates on SGI's public educational activities to help raise awareness on issues such as nuclear disarmament, human rights, sustainable development, interfaith cooperation and humanitarian assistance.

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