



SGI Peace News

Activities of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI) to Promote a Culture of Peace

May 2017 (Vol. 17)

Historic United Nations' Negotiations to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons

New York, USA, March 27-31, 2017

The first session of the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, was held in New York from March 27 to 31. The conference was convened pursuant to General Assembly resolution A/RES/71/258 and attended by more than 130 states with the participation of international organizations and civil society representatives.



The SGI submitted a working paper titled [“On the Objectives and Significance of Prohibiting Nuclear Weapons”](#) to the conference, circulated as A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.8. The working paper emphasized that greater and more lethal armaments do not bring freedom from fear, but in fact amplify and deepen it, imprinting a sense of powerlessness and resignation in the face of the seeming inevitability of violence. It also argues that challenging the entrenched global pathology of fear and powerlessness is central to the work of this conference.

A diverse group of faith-based organizations also presented a public statement under the name of [“Faith Communities Concerned about Nuclear Weapons.”](#) The statement, which urged governments to make decisive progress toward establishing a framework for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, was read on the second day of the conference. Signatories included more than twenty individuals representing diverse faith groups from PAX, the SGI and the World Council of Churches (WCC), who had taken the lead in drafting the statement.

The second session will take place from June 15 to July 7 when the final text of the treaty is expected to be adopted.

Mapping App Launched in Malaysia

Malaysia, April 8, 2017

The Mapping App was officially launched in Malaysia on April 8 at the opening ceremony of “Hijau III Loving Nature Joint Exhibition—in Conjunction with the Soka Gakkai Malaysia (SGM) Month of Sustainable Development” campaign at the SGM Grand Culture Centre.

SGM also co-organized a youth forum with World Wide Fund for Nature Malaysia (WWF-Malaysia) on April 22 (Earth Day) as part of the campaign.



Attended by about 320 participants, consisting mainly of young people, the event aimed to gather people together to share their thoughts on environmental sustainability. In his opening speech, WWF-Malaysia executive director and chief executive officer, Dato' Dr Dionysius S. K. Sharma, shared a story on the origin of Earth Day and said that “This year, we dedicate Earth Day to the youths because you are the voices of tomorrow.”

Six young people then took to the stage to share their stories. Brian Fam, a member of the SGM Student Division, spoke on Mapping which aims to inform more people about the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to promote sustainable actions.

To celebrate Earth Day the Mapping team held a photographic competition. We congratulate all the participants! Please check out our top three photos below. To see more pictures of positive actions, download our app at www.mapping.org





2. Professors and alumni working together on an Earth Day poster to raise awareness - photo by Laly



1. Installation to share solar energy – photo by 胡晏誠



3. Teaching students to appreciate nature through art lessons – photo by Tcliew

“Seeds of Hope” Exhibition in Ghana and Paris

Accra, Ghana, March 18-19, 2017 & Paris, France, May 3-June 30

The SGI-Ghana held an exhibition titled “Seeds of Hope” at the University of Ghana in Legon, Accra on March 18-19.

His Excellency Tirso Dos Santos, country director of UNESCO Ghana; Ms. Afra Foli, representative of Earth Charter International; Professor Atukwei Okai, Secretary- General of the Pan African Writers’ Association (PAWA) and Dahveed Nelson, representative of the African Hebrew Israelites of Jerusalem, all delivered keynote addresses.

In Paris, the exhibition was launched in collaboration with the SGI and Earth Charter International on May 3. Guests included Dr. Jean-Paul Durand of the Catholic University of Paris (ICP) as well as Ann and Julien and thirty SGI members who participated in the opening ceremony to celebrate the launch. The exhibition is open to the public from May 9-June 30 in the Association Culturelle Soka de France in Paris. Further information on this article can be found [here](#).



Support for the UNHCR

Tokyo, Japan, April-May 2017

On May 15, the Soka Gakkai made a financial donation to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) toward humanitarian assistance for refugees fleeing conflict in South Sudan. Mr. Saburo Takizawa, chairman of the board of the Japan Association for UNHCR, expressed his gratitude to the organization for its continuing support of UNHCR’s refugee assistance programs.

On the same day, in Geneva, UNHCR and its partners launched a major new humanitarian appeal to support the growing needs of the more than 1.8 million South Sudanese people who are seeking refuge in Uganda, Sudan and other neighbouring countries. UN High

Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi called the situation the “largest refugee crisis in Africa” and “one of the greatest tragedies of our time.”

In April 2017 the first refugee student from Myanmar began studying at Soka University in Tokyo. Soka University had joined the UNHCR Refugee Higher Education Program in May 2016, and, under this program, it plans to accommodate more refugee students in the near future.



Photo Credit: (C)UNHCR/David Azia

Faith Groups Deeply Concerned About Nuclear Weapons

Vienna, Austria, May 3, 2017

“We reiterate our shared stance that nuclear weapons are incompatible with the values upheld by our respective faith traditions. We advocate for the right of people to live in security and dignity; we believe in the commands of conscience and justice; we seek to honor our duty to protect the vulnerable and to exercise the stewardship that will safeguard the planet for present and future generations.”



So reads the statement “Faith Communities Concerned about the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons” which calls on faith groups to speak out against nuclear weapons. The statement was presented on May 3 at the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference which was held in Vienna on May 2-12.

It was drafted by a coalition of faith groups; with Soka Gakkai International, the World Council of Churches (WCC), Pax Christi International, and PAX (Netherlands) taking the lead. The statement was delivered by Kimiaki Kawai, Director of Peace and Human Rights at SGI – an organization which has collaborated with faith groups previously to issue interfaith statements that highlight the moral and ethical dimensions of nuclear weapons. The full

statement can be read [here](#).

SGI Peace News is a bimonthly publication highlighting the public education activities carried out by SGI. These activities help to raise awareness of issues such as nuclear disarmament, human rights, sustainable development, interfaith cooperation and humanitarian support.

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