



SGI Peace News

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

July 2017 (Vol. 18)

Historic United Nations Conference Adopts a Treaty Prohibiting Nuclear Weapons

New York, USA, June 15-July 7, 2017

The second 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 June 15 to July 7. On July 7, the final day of the



conference, the [Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#) was adopted by a vote of 122 in favour, to one against, with one abstention, making it the first multilateral legally binding instrument for nuclear disarmament. The treaty mentions in the preamble “the unacceptable suffering of and harm caused to the victims of the use of nuclear weapons (hibakusha), as well as of those affected by the testing of nuclear weapons” and prohibits a full range of nuclear-weapon-related activities, such as undertaking to develop, test, produce, manufacture, acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, as well as the use of, or threat to use, these weapons.

The SGI submitted the second working paper titled “Comments and Proposals for the Draft Convention on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons” prior to the second session of the conference, circulated as [A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.25](#). During the negotiations, the SGI representatives made statements which put forward proposals to include reference to international human rights law, in particular [the right to life](#), and to strengthen the reference to [disarmament education](#) and to highlight the role of women in promoting peace and security. These points have now been reflected in the newly-adopted treaty.

The SGI also issued [a statement](#) applauding and welcoming the adoption of the treaty in the name of Hirotsugu Terasaki, Director General of Peace and Global Issues. It states that “the existence of nuclear weapons is the greatest threat to the right to life of both the individual and humankind as a whole. For this reason, their total elimination is a desire shared by all people.” It also notes the need to make the significance of the treaty understood and to

ensure broad and solid support going forward, as well as to encourage grassroots action towards the realization of a world free from nuclear weapons.

Faith communities concerned about nuclear weapons – organizations and individuals from diverse faith traditions including the SGI, World Council of Churches (WCC) and Pax Christi International (PCI) – have also released [statements](#) in support of the adoption of the treaty.

The treaty will be opened for signatures from September 20 and enter into force 90 days after it has been ratified by 50 nations.

Amplify Youth Summit for Nuclear Abolition takes place in New York

New York, USA, June 16-21, 2017

Sixteen young people from 13 countries gathered in New York from June 16 through 21 for the 2017 Amplify Youth Summit. Amplify is a global network of young people working for nuclear abolition, which started as a result of the 2015 International Youth Summit for Nuclear Abolition in Hiroshima. The



recent Summit took place in New York to coincide with the UN conference to negotiate a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons. SGI was among the co-sponsors that made this Summit possible.

During the first half of the Summit, youth participants engaged in various activities such as participating in the Women’s March to Ban the Bomb, meeting the Hibakusha, and holding strategic discussions on the future of the youth network. The last three days provided opportunities for youth to actively participate in the negotiations through observing the intergovernmental discussions, delivering an oral statement, and advocating for the inclusion of disarmament education in the Treaty. Youth also held briefing meetings with the President of the Conference Ambassador Elayne Whyte Gómez, UN Under-Secretary-General of Disarmament Affairs, delegations of Austria and Ireland, and ICAN.

The outcome report of the Amplify Youth Summit will be available at a later date on the [Amplify website](#).

Youth, Peace & Security in Asia and the Pacific

Bangkok, Thailand, May 20, 2017

[A regional consultation on youth, peace & security in Asia and the Pacific](#) was held by the United Nations from May 16 to 19 in Bangkok, Thailand. This is part of a global effort to bolster action on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 that calls for a greater role for young people in strengthening peace and security and to help reshape the role of youth in peacebuilding in communities and countries across the regions and worldwide, for a safer tomorrow.



Thirty-eight youth from the region gathered and discussed the challenges that they are facing and explored solutions from their own unique perspectives. Shuichi Minami, a Soka Gakkai Student Division leader, attended the consultation on behalf of SGI. He shared about the peace activities that are being carried out by the Student Division, including interviews with hibakusha and “awareness surveys” around the issue of nuclear weapons.

The participants wrapped up their proposals and then exchanged views with the UN staff. The outcomes from the consultation will feed into a global progress study on the positive contributions that young people are making to peacebuilding, which will be presented to the UN Secretary-General and its member states at the end of 2017.

SGI attends 2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

Cancun, Mexico, May 23, 2017

On May 23, [ACT Alliance](#) and SGI co-organized a pre-conference to the 2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction titled “[Locally-led Disaster Risk Reduction by Faith-Based Organizations \(FBOs\) – Implementing the Sendai Framework](#)”, in Cancun, Mexico.



Following presentations by ACT Alliance and [CADENA](#), a Jewish NGO based in Mexico, Nobuyuki Asai, Program Coordinator of SGI, shared the experiences of SGI in Japan. Asai noted that disaster-preparedness is currently being promoted at each of SGI’s one-

thousand-plus community centers across Japan.

In addition, awareness surveys that had been conducted by local members were reported on. It was shared that these kinds of surveys are highly appreciated by experts because they target young people who are often not connected to their local communities. The overall findings of the surveys showed that young people tended to depend on social media as a main source of information and that they were often unaware of local evacuation venues in emergency situations.

At the Global Platform FBOs released a joint statement which urged states parties to engage FBOs and local faith communities (LFCs) in a meaningful and substantive way in implementing the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*. It emphasized that FBOs and LFCs can complement other aid sectors' activities at the grassroots level.

SGI delivered a [presentation on engaging private citizens in disaster risk reduction \(DRR\)](#) at the Ignite Stage during the Global Platform.

High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in NY

New York, USA, July 10-19, 2017

On the occasion of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development held at the United Nations Headquarters, the SGI co-organized a side event titled [“Can Non-Formal Education Be Measured? – A Case Study on the Use of Exhibitions in School Settings”](#) together with the Center for Environment Education (CEE) and Earth Charter International (ECI) and hosted by the Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the UN on July 12.



With a focus on reorienting education for sustainable actions, non-formal education can be a key driver for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). At the same time, UNESCO's final report on the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development pointed out that “Evidence remains limited on the links between awareness raised and changes made in people's behavior and lifestyles.” To explore this challenge, the SGI and CEE jointly organized a project to measure the impact of non-formal education through the use of exhibitions in school settings.

At this side event, representatives from the SGI and CEE presented the key findings and analyses from the project, followed by a discussion on the role and impact of non-formal education. At the end, the SGI introduced a mobile participatory app named “Maring” which had been produced jointly by the SGI and ECI as a non-formal education tool.

Spirituality & Sustainability Conference in Italy

Assisi, Italy, June 27-July 4, 2017

The 2017 Rome-Assisi Conference on Spirituality & Sustainability brought together sixty representatives from religious and faith-based organizations including the Soka Gakkai International, academic and research institutions, students and youth.



With the three goals of networking centers and movements seeking transformative change, identifying key recommendations for transformative change, and supporting young ecological leaders seeking transformative change, a series of discussion and dialogue was conducted throughout the conference from June 27 to July 4.

A SGI representative was invited to the session on ecological spirituality and its indigenous roots and shared Buddhist perspectives on sustainability as well as SGI’s educational approaches and actual programs and tools. The Mayor of Assisi, Proietti Stefania, joined the conference and warmly greeted the participants who gathered from various parts of the world. The role of spirituality and faith communities on sustainability was reconfirmed, and a shared sense of purpose was fostered among the participants.

Seminar on human rights education in Geneva

Geneva, Switzerland May 30, 2017

In advance of the 35th session of the Human Rights Council on May 30, in Room XXV, Palais de Nations, Geneva, the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning (NGO WG HREL) of which SGI is a part organized a seminar entitled “[How can Human Rights Education and Training be promoted through the Education 2030 Agenda, especially Target 4.7?](#)”, cosponsored by the States Platform on Human Rights Education and Training (States Platform) and the UNESCO Liaison Office in Geneva.

What is Human Rights Education and how is it connected to SDG Target 4.7? What current trends, initiatives and examples can be identified from around the world and what are the

interconnections between them? These questions were the focus of the seminar.

Moderated by Claire de Lavernette, Chair of the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning, the event was opened by H.E. Maurizio Enrico Serra, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Italy, and Abdulaziz Almuzaini, Director of the UNESCO Geneva Liaison Office.



The panel featured Lydia Ruprecht of the Section of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship, UNESCO; Gilberto Duarte Santos, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officer, UNODC; Elena Ippoliti, Human Rights Officer, OHCHR, and Giorgia Magni of IBE-UNESCO.

The diversity of complementary approaches and initiatives shared by the speakers prompted lively discussion on multiple dimensions of human rights education, including the challenges of monitoring progress, the role of civil society in advancing human rights education action in non-formal settings, and the need to promote examples of positive impact and good practice to further multiply synergies and opportunities for learning.

Around 75 participants, including representatives of the permanent missions at the UN of Brazil, Togo, Montenegro, Ireland, Saudi Arabia, Philippines, Jordan, Turkey, Vietnam, Buthan, Spain, Iraq, Namibia, Haiti, Honduras, Colombia, France, Palestine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Estonia, Costa Rica, Slovenia, Slovakia, Malaysia, Morocco, the Holy See, UN agencies such as UNICEF, UNESCO and OHCHR, as well as civil society organizations including Amnesty International, Caritas Internationalis, Graduate Women International, OIDEI, IAW, Soroptimist International, SGI and NGO Hope International attended the event.

“Mmapping” Movement for Achieving SDGs

Paris, France, May 2017

[“Mmapping” was successfully launched in Paris](#) in May while the exhibition “Seeds of Hope”, coproduced by the SGI and ECI, was held at the ACSF Culture Center. Dino De Francesco, ECI’s Digital Communications Specialist, was invited to present Mmapping to thirty young people gathered there to learn more about it.

On “International Biodiversity Day” (May 22), the Mmapping team initiated a photo contest to collect pictures of actions contributing to [SDG Goals 14 & 15](#). We would like to extend our congratulations to the top three winners shown below. They each received a solar lamp kits from LEDsafari.

To download the app, go to www.maping.org.

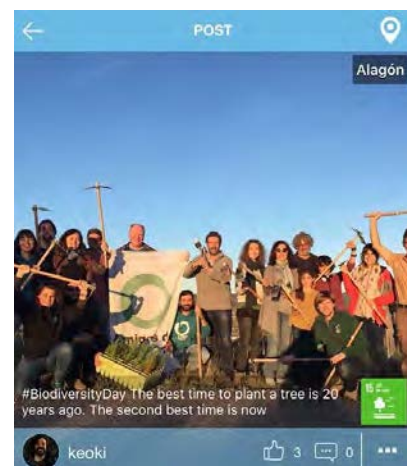
1. Sabrinasinanan from Trinidad and Tobago: "Save the Bees"



2. Fundación CCP from Ciudad de Mexico: "Environmental and maintenance work with 620 volunteers. Friends and families at the Bosque de Chapultepec in Mexico rehabilitating 18,000m²"



3. Earth Charter Young Leader Gracias Jorge Keoki from Spain: "The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago, the second best time is now"



SGI Peace News is published every two months and highlights the public education activities carried out by SGI. These activities help to raise awareness of issues such as nuclear disarmament, human rights, gender equality, sustainable development, interfaith cooperation and humanitarian support.

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