



## SGI Peace News

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

September 2017 (Vol. 19)

### Historic Treaty Prohibiting Nuclear Weapons Opens for Signature and SGI President Urges Global Support for the Treaty

New York, USA, September 20, 2017

The world's first legally-binding instrument, Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, officially opened for signature at the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York on September 20.



Prior to the signing ceremony, Daisaku Ikeda, President of Soka Gakkai International (SGI), called for the early entry into force of the treaty [in his article](#) published by InDepthNews (IDN) on September 18.

In it he stressed that “Nuclear weapons can no longer be debated and determined only on the basis of any one country’s security needs. The peace of humankind as a whole and the collective right to life of all the world’s people must be the starting point—the foundation from which we work to eliminate nuclear weapons and develop a new security paradigm for the 21st century.” He also highlighted that “The essence of the issue is not the confrontation between states that possess nuclear weapons and those that do not; it is the confrontation between the threat of nuclear weapons and humanity’s right to life.”

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, adopted on July 7 this year, prohibits the development, testing, production, manufacturing, acquiring, possessing or stockpiling of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, as well as the use of or threat to use these weapons.

SGI representatives attended the signing ceremony of the treaty as one of the civil society delegations invited by the UN, together with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and the hibakusha—survivors of the atomic bomb.

On that day, over 50 countries and regions signed the treaty, which will enter into force 90 days after at least 50 countries have ratified it.

## **SGI Attends the Event Commemorating 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Tlatelolco Treaty**

**Mexico City, Mexico, August 25, 2017**

A showing of the exhibition "Everything You Treasure—For a World Free From Nuclear Weapons" which was created by SGI in cooperation with ICAN, was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) and SGI and SGI-Mexico at the Plaza de las Tres Culturas in Mexico City.

The opening ceremony was attended by Ambassador Luis Javier Campuzano, Director General for the United Nations; Ambassador Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares, Secretary-General of OPANAL; Minoru Harada, President of Soka Gakkai, and Nereo Ordaz, General Director of SGI-Mexico.

As well as the exhibition, the event was also held to unveil a plaque commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco) and to mark the 60th anniversary of the [Declaration Calling for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons](#) made by second Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda in September 1957.

Current Soka Gakkai President Minoru Harada made a courtesy visit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico on the same day to have a meeting with Ambassador Miguel Ruiz Cabañas Izquierdo, Vice Minister for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Further information for the event can be found [here](#).

## **The Exhibition “Everything You Treasure” Held at IPPNW World Congress 2017**

York, UK, September 4-6, 2017

From September 4 to 6 at the University of York, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) and Medact brought together health professionals and peace activists to debate, educate and advocate on conflict and global insecurity at “Health Through Peace 2017”—a whole day event with lots of motivational speakers, educational workshops and poster exhibitions. As part of the congress, the exhibition “Everything You Treasure—For a World Free from Nuclear Weapons” was shown at the main hall where the congress was taking place. The exhibition was created jointly by SGI and ICAN.



The opening event of the exhibition was held on the morning of September 4 with about a hundred participants attending. At this opening, John Loretz, Program Director of IPPNW, made a brief statement in which he stressed that the exhibition not only provided scientific data and information regarding the devastating humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons but also cast the important question of what each of us treasures and the reasons

why we must eliminate such weapons of mass destruction. He was followed by Beatrice Fihn, Executive Director of ICAN, who shared her thoughts on the role of civil society in bringing back the face of humanity to the discourse on nuclear disarmament.

## **New Animation on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**

### **Released**

**September 26, 2017**

A new animation on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons titled [“Reshape history”](#) was released on September 26, International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. It



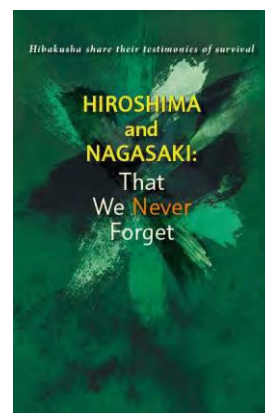
was produced by SGI in cooperation with ICAN to inform people about the dangers of nuclear weapons and the importance of the treaty. It is a 90-sec video being suitable for dissemination. Please watch and share [this video](#) with your friends and networks.

Raising public awareness holds the key to achieving a world free from nuclear weapons. It is reaffirmed in the treaty’s preamble, which underscores the importance of disarmament education. This also helps make the treaty universal—as stipulated in Article 12. This animation aims to inform people that the threats posed by nuclear weapons put us all at risk and the treaty adopted at the UN in July provides a viable solution to the problem.

## New Book “HIROSHIMA and NAGASAKI: That We Never Forget—Hibakusha Share Their Testimonies of Survival” Published

September 8, 2017

With the adoption at the UN of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on July 7, and as the surviving hibakusha become fewer in number, it is important to share their firsthand accounts, and their desire for peace, more widely. With this in mind, and along with a particular need to raise awareness amongst the young people of the world, a new book has now been published.



This new book, [“Hiroshima and Nagasaki: That we Never Forget,”](#) is a compilation of the English language components of four books which were first published in Japanese and English. It contains the testimonies of hibakusha, the victims of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, 1945 respectively. There is one volume each of women’s experiences and of men’s experiences from Hiroshima and one volume from Nagasaki. It also contains a collection of interviews with the hibakusha and their families about the bombing itself and their struggles with radiation-related illnesses.

In total, over 50 hibakusha give vivid testimony of living through the nightmare of those fateful days and the hellish aftermath making the book a unique resource for those engaged in advocacy and education for peace. It demonstrates forcefully the human and humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

Shigeru Nonoyama, who was exposed to the atomic bomb in Hiroshima at the age of 15, shares “Each and every scene was hell itself,” and he affirms that “Human beings do not need atomic bombs.”

Masao Tomonaga, Director Emeritus at The Japanese Red Cross Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Hospital, shares his reflections of the book: “After reading the stories in this book, I am shocked once again by the extent to which the atomic bombing affected every aspect of survivors’ lives. The anxiety they still feel regarding the potential aftereffects emerging in

their own bodies, or the genetic effects emerging in their offspring, is quite beyond imagination...an instantaneous exposure in August 1945 has kept survivors imprisoned by its aftereffects for over 70 years.”

416 pages (English only). [On sale via Amazon](#) from September 1, 2017. Price 1,620 yen (paperback) and US \$3.99 (e-book). Published by Daisanbunmei-sha, 2017. Compiled by the Soka Gakkai Youth Division.

## **Joint Oral Statement Delivered at the Plenary Meeting of the 36th Session of the UN Human Rights Council**

**Geneva, Switzerland, September 25, 2017**

At the 36th session plenary meeting of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on September 25, the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning (NGOWG on HREL) made a joint statement on the assessment of the World Programme for Human Rights Education Third Phase. Elisa Gazzotti from the SGI spoke on behalf of the 16 organizations.



In the statement, the NGO WG on HREL welcomed the midterm progress report on the implementation of the third phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, which gives an overview of the different initiatives taking place at national levels. They also reaffirmed that the implementation of human rights education and training programmes is part of the 2030 Agenda, which specifically includes human rights education under target 4.7, and they underlined the positive cooperative developments taking place between national actors like government, national human rights institutions and NGOs. In addition, they stressed the need to address an evaluation and follow-up of all human rights training processes and encouraged states to share their best practices when they prepare for the final evaluation of the third phase by 2020.

The NGO WG on HREL comprises more than 40 member organizations. Each member organization has its own representative to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

## **Conference on the Future of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe**

**Strasbourg, France, June 20-22, 2017**

From June 20 to 22, 2017, SGI participated in the Conference “Learning to Live Together—a Shared Commitment to Democracy: The Future of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe” organized by the Council of Europe Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation in Strasbourg, France.



Around 300 participants, including representatives of governments, educational institutions and civil society organizations, came together to strengthen the implementation of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) and Human Rights Education (HRE).



The basis for the discussion was the Report on the State of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe compiled from the results of an extensive survey conducted with a wide range of stakeholders, highlighting the charter as an effective tool in the promotion of human rights and democracy through education.

SGI was also selected to participate in the training programme which took place on June 19 and 22—as representatives for the youth, children and civil society sector—to share updates

on the latest developments happening in the fields of EDC and HRE, to enhance advocacy competences in relation to the Council of Europe Charter on EDC and HRE, and to solidify a network of like-minded individuals and organizations.

During the training sessions, the representatives of different organizations discussed the conclusions of the Report on the State of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe, and shared experiences and lessons learned, and proposed recommendations for future action.

## **International Institute on Peace Education Meets in Innsbruck**

**Innsbruck, Austria, August 27, 2017**

The SGI joined the International Institute on Peace Education (IIPE) which brought together 64 experts, practitioners, and activists from nearly 30 countries to Innsbruck, Austria for a week-long program starting on August 27, 2017.

Under the theme of “Aesthetic Peaces: Social, Political & Embodied Learning—Responses for Human & Planetary Survival”, four plenaries and 25 concurrent sessions were held including the one which SGI had co-organized titled “Meditation, Spirituality and Global Community.” Founded in 1982 the IIPE has been held annually in different parts of the world.



The IIPE is a learning community in which the organizers and participants work together to nurture an inclusive, highly interactive learning environment. It is an intensive multicultural and cooperative learning opportunity in which participants learn from and with each other about substantive peace issues and interactive teaching approaches. The IIPE is also an opportunity to network and to build community among those who educate and work for a culture of peace both in the host region and around the world.



## High-Level Forum on the Culture of Peace Held at the United Nations

New York, USA, September 7, 2017

On September 7, the High-Level Forum on “the Culture of Peace” was held at the UN Headquarters. Under the theme of “Sowing the Seeds of the Culture of Peace: Early Childhood Development is the Beginning,” the 1976 Nobel Peace Laureate Dr. Betty Williams delivered the keynote address at the General Assembly Hall,



which was followed by the general debate where 41 governments and UN agencies gave statements.

The High-Level Forum has been held six years consecutively since 2012, convened by the president of the General Assembly in cooperation with the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace—a civil society network launched following the end of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace for the Children of the World in 2010. As a founding member of the Global Movement, the SGI has been taking an active role at the forum since 2012.

## Screening of Film on Teenage Refugees

Kobe, Japan, August 19, 2017

On August 19, the Soka Gakkai Peace Committee held a screening event of the film "[Cast from the Storm](#)" at the Kansai International Culture Center in Japan and supported by Japan for UNHCR. It was held in commemoration of the UN World Humanitarian Day.



The film depicts the difficulties that teenage refugees face in their lives and their growth after they join an after-school theatre group in Australia. It was one of the official films aired

at the Refugee Film Festival in 2016 held by UNHCR and Japan for UNHCR, an affiliated non-profit organization.

At the event, a university student group presented the results of a youth awareness survey that they had conducted on refugees. According to the results, 76 percent of youth agreed with the acceptance of refugees into Japan, but with 92 percent answering however that they were not aware of the Japanese government’s refugee policies.

After the screening Mr. Saburo Takizawa, chairman of Japan for UNHCR and Ms. Yoko Matsuda, a singer and a publicity committee member of Japan for UNHCR, had a talk session on the refugee issue. In the session Mr. Takizawa expressed appreciation for the Soka Gakkai’s year-long-year support for UNHCR. In addition, they both highlighted how ordinary citizens can tackle this issue.

Around 400 citizens including high school students joined the event. One of the students said, “I didn’t know much about refugees before, but I was shocked at the teenagers like me being displaced and suffering a lot. I would like to find out what I can do for them from now.”

### Mapping International Youth Day Photo Contest

August 12, 2017

On International Youth Day (August 12), the Mapping team launched a photo contest to collect pictures of actions that contribute to Goal 16 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals—“Peace, justice and strong institutions”. Congratulations to [the three winners](#), their winning pictures are below.



To download Mapting on iOS or Android go to: <http://www.maptng.org/>

***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, gender equality, sustainable development, interfaith cooperation and humanitarian support.***

Editorial Team, SGI Peace News

<http://www.sgi.org>

<http://www.peoplesdecade.org>

E-mail: [contact@peacesgi.org](mailto:contact@peacesgi.org)

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