

Universal Respect for Human Dignity: The Great Path to Peace

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This year marks the thirty-fifth year since the Soka Gakkai International (SGI) began activities in support of the United Nations as an accredited nongovernmental organization (NGO). Born of the searing experience of two world wars, the UN declared as its objective the building of a world free from the scourge of war, where human rights are respected and discrimination and oppression eliminated. This vision is deeply compatible with the core values of peace, equality and compassion that we, as Buddhists, uphold.

All people have the right to live in happiness. The prime objective of our movement is to forge an expanding solidarity of ordinary citizens committed to protecting that right and, in this way, to rid the world of needless suffering. Our activities in support of the UN are a natural and necessary expression of this.

Our world today is beset by crises that present a dire threat to the lives and dignity of vast numbers of people. There has been an explosion in the number of refugees and internally displaced persons around the world, especially in the Middle East where the Syrian conflict continues unabated. Globally, as many as 60 million people have now been driven from their homes by armed conflict and persecution. [\[1\]](#)

Further, a series of natural disasters has, in the course of less than a year, impacted the lives of more than 100 million people. Of these, almost 90 percent were climate-related disasters such as floods or violent storms, generating concern about the growing impact of global warming. [\[2\]](#)

Against this backdrop, the World Humanitarian Summit, the first such conference to be organized by the UN, will be held in Istanbul, Turkey, in May. Consultations leading up to the summit have been marked by a growing sense of alarm at the unprecedented scale and extent of the humanitarian challenge. In addition to realizing an early cessation of armed hostilities, it is crucial to find a path to improving the conditions that confront so many people.

Humanitarian crises such as forced displacement due to conflict and natural disaster have long been an area of concern and engagement for the SGI. Our representatives will be participating in the Istanbul summit, where we hope to help further debate on the role of faith-based organizations (FBOs) in humanitarian relief efforts and on ways of building solidarity within civil society.

The SGI began its activities as an NGO with consultative status with the UN Department of Public Information (DPI) in 1981 and was registered as an Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) NGO in 1983, the year I issued the first of these peace proposals. Since then, our activities have focused on the areas of peace and disarmament, humanitarian relief, human rights education and sustainable development.

Here, I would like to reflect on the fundamental elements of the approach we have taken in supporting the UN's efforts and to offer some thoughts and perspectives on the role of civil society in grappling with global issues, including humanitarian crises.

The deep current of humanity

In September 2015, the United Nations adopted a successor framework to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were adopted in 2000 and aimed at alleviating such problems as poverty and hunger. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are set out in *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

In addition to continuing the work initiated under the MDGs, the new goals seek to develop comprehensive responses to critical issues such as climate change and disaster risk reduction during the years to 2030. Perhaps most striking is the clear enunciation of the determination to leave no one behind, as epitomized by the very first goal, "End poverty in all its forms everywhere." This represents a significant advance on the MDGs, which successfully halved extreme poverty, by declaring that no one can be abandoned to their fate.

The 2030 Agenda draws attention to and stresses the importance of empowering particularly vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, people with disabilities, refugees and migrants. It calls for the strengthening of support tailored to the special needs of the vulnerable as well as the amelioration of the conditions confronting people living in areas affected by humanitarian emergencies or by terrorism.

I am particularly pleased that the principle of leaving no one behind has been given central importance in the SDGs, something for which I have been calling. I have also urged that the SDGs include the protection of the dignity and fundamental human rights of displaced persons and international migrants. In light of the burgeoning number of refugees in the world, we cannot move into a better future without directly confronting the challenges that these vulnerable people face. In this sense, one of the first opportunities to push implementation of the SDGs will be the World Humanitarian Summit, where issues such as the refugee crisis will be the focus of debate.

In the five years since the start of the Syrian conflict, more than 200,000 people have lost their lives and almost half the population has been driven from their homes and communities. The ravages of war have spared nothing: Homes and businesses, hospitals and schools have been devastated; places of refuge have been attacked; highways have been closed, increasing the difficulty of obtaining foodstuffs and delivering relief supplies. As a result, the people of Syria, who before the war had themselves been among the most welcoming of refugees into their country, now find themselves forced into refugee status in great numbers. Fleeing a conflict that shows no sign of abating, large numbers of people have crossed borders, where they are again exposed to various dangers. Many children have been separated from their families, while unusually cold weather in the Middle East and failed attempts to navigate the Mediterranean in fragile boats have claimed countless lives.

"Life as a refugee is like being stuck in quicksand--every time you move, you sink down further." [\[3\]](#) Former UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres cited these words of one father who had fled from Syria to illustrate the dire conditions in which many refugee families find themselves. For untold numbers of people, flight brings no real security, and they are forced to live in conditions of extreme deprivation and uncertainty.

Countries in both Africa and Asia have also seen a relentless increase in the size of their refugee and internally displaced populations. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has taken the lead in coordinating relief activities, but even so there are large numbers of people in desperate need of support if they are to survive.

The Courage to Remember

"The Courage to Remember" exhibition was first shown at the Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre in October 2015. As well as covering the Holocaust and the heroism of Anne Frank and Chiune Sugihara, it featured a section on current human rights issues with the message that every individual has a role to play.

Co-organizers were Soka University and the Simon Wiesenthal Center. Supporters were the Embassies of France, Germany, Israel, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland and the United States, as well as the Delegation of the European Union, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan, Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education, the UN Information Centre and the NPO Chiune Sugihara Visas For Life. The exhibition was organized in cooperation with the Soka Gakkai Peace Committee.

As large numbers of refugees and migrants reach Europe, they have been met with a range of reactions. I was moved by the following words of a resident of one Italian port city as reported by Inter Press Service (IPS):

They are made of flesh and blood, just like us. We simply can't let them drown. [\[4\]](#)

Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution." Even more essential, however, is the kind of empathy expressed by that Italian citizen; this empathy, which exists independent of any codified norms of human rights, is the light of humanity that can shine brightly in any place or situation.

This was the focus of "The Courage To Remember: The Holocaust 1939-1945--The Bravery of Anne Frank and Chiune Sugihara," an exhibition that was organized in cooperation with the Soka Gakkai Peace Committee and shown in Tokyo last October.

The exhibition portrayed the lives and struggles of Anne Frank (1929-45), the young Jewish girl who refused to abandon hope even while living in hiding from the Nazis in Amsterdam, and the Japanese diplomat Chiune Sugihara (1900-86), who disregarded the orders of the Japanese Foreign Ministry and issued transit visas to as many as 6,000 Jewish refugees. As the historical record shows, amidst intensifying persecution of Jews

in Europe, diplomats from a number of countries, often at variance with official policy, obeyed the dictates of conscience to help refugees find safety.

Likewise, there were many individuals, such as the women who risked their lives to support the Frank family while they were in hiding, who together created a network for the protection of Jewish refugees. I believe these unrecognized efforts of ordinary people in many countries represent another expression of the true luster of our humanity that persists unbroken far below the surface events of history.

In our world today, there are people who greet the sudden appearance of refugees in their communities with a deep empathy for all that they have endured, who spontaneously extend the hand of support and welcome. For people who have been forced to flee their homes, each such act is an important source of encouragement, an irreplaceable lifeline.

Even a seemingly small gesture can have a significant, perhaps decisive impact on the person to whom it is offered. In regard to critical voices asserting that it is impossible to save everyone, Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) told his grandson:

On those occasions, it's a matter of whether one touches the life of an individual. We can't look after thousands of people. But if we can touch one person's life and save that life, that is the great change that we can effect. [5]

The basis of altruistic action

Gandhi's conviction resonates with the spirit that has animated not only the SGI's religious practice but also our support for the UN and other socially engaged activities--the determination to treasure each individual.

The foundation of Buddhism is a belief in the inherent dignity of all people. But this is something which, as the following passage from Shakyamuni's teachings indicates, is to be awakened through a process of self-reflection and self-awareness:

All tremble at violence; life is dear to all. Putting oneself in the place of another, one should not kill nor cause another to kill. [6]

In other words, Buddhism takes as its starting point the universal human impulse to avoid suffering or harm and the undeniable sense of the unique value of our own being. It then leads us to the realization that others must feel the same. To the degree that we can put ourselves in the place of another, we gain a tangible sense of the reality of their suffering. Shakyamuni called upon us to view the world through such empathetic eyes and thus commit ourselves to a way of life that will protect all people from violence and discrimination.

The altruism taught in Buddhism does not arise from a negation of the self. An awareness of the unavoidable pain of our own existence and the attachment we feel to the path in life that has brought us to this point can open us to the universality of human anguish, beyond all differences of nationality and ethnicity. It is our refusal to dismiss any form of suffering as unrelated to us that brings our humanity to its true luster.

According to the German philosopher Karl Jaspers (1883-1969) in his portrait of Shakyamuni, when the Buddha declared, "In a world grown dark I will beat the deathless drum," [7] he was motivated by the confidence that "to speak to all is to speak to each individual." [8]

As present-day heirs to this spirit, the members of the SGI have worked to empathetically share the sufferings and joys of the people in our lives and to advance together with them in a growing network of life-to-life bonds.

The Buddhist spirit of treasuring each individual can be supplemented by an additional perspective: the conviction that each person, whatever their path of life or their current condition, has the capacity to illuminate the place where they find themselves right now. We strive to avoid judging a person's worth or potential on the basis of present appearance and instead focus on the inherent dignity of each individual. In this way, we seek to inspire in each other the confidence to live with hope from this day forward, bathed in the light of that dignity.

Buddhism encourages us to draw lessons and strengths from the challenges we have met in life so that we can achieve personal happiness while inspiring courage in those around us and in society as a whole. Nichiren (1222-82), the thirteenth-century Buddhist priest whose teachings underpin the activities of the SGI, emphasized that the principle that all living beings can attain Buddhahood--that all people possess an inner dignity and can realize limitless possibilities--constitutes the essence of Shakyamuni's Lotus Sutra and lies at the very heart of the Buddhist teachings.

The Lotus Sutra illustrates this through a series of dramatic scenes involving Shakyamuni and others. For example, it is said of Shariputra, a disciple known for his intellectual understanding of Shakyamuni's teachings, that his "mind danced with joy" [9] when he fully sensed the dignity of his own life. In the same way, moved by the sight of Shariputra joyfully voicing his vow and Shakyamuni's warm encouragement of him, four other disciples were likewise filled with joy. They expressed this and their delight at having found this limitless jewel--"something unsought that came of itself" [10]--by recounting the Parable of the Wealthy Man and His Poor Son.

As these dramatic narratives unfolded, great numbers of bodhisattvas joined their voices together and pledged to overcome all difficulties in order to work for the happiness of people. Finally, as the focus of the Lotus Sutra's narrative shifted to the question of who would carry on the practice of Buddhism after Shakyamuni's passing, a vast assembly of bodhisattvas emerged from the earth and pledged to do this in all places and at all times.

These scenes culminate in a chorus of pledges, as the Buddha's disciples joyfully awaken to the ultimate dignity of their own lives through their encounter with his teachings. Recognizing this same dignity in others, they vow, one after another, to bring forth the inner light of their own and others' lives, and in this way illuminate human society.

The most famous example of this is a young girl, the Dragon King's daughter, who vows to save others from suffering through the teachings of the Lotus Sutra. Her actions, which perfectly accord with her vow, draw forth rejoicing and astonished praise in the hearts of all who witness them. In the midst of this vortex of joy, limitless numbers of people are awakened to the ultimate value and dignity that exists inherently within them. By faithfully carrying out her pledge, this young girl, who according to the popular conception of the time was considered to be among the most estranged from the possibility of enlightenment, set off a chain reaction of joy, offering inspiring proof of the principle that all living beings can attain the Buddha way. With this in mind, Nichiren encouraged female disciples who were struggling to meet the challenges of life to "follow in the footsteps of the Dragon King's daughter." [11]

Thirteenth-century Japan was a place afflicted by natural disasters and military conflict. In his efforts to save the common people from suffering, Nichiren remonstrated with the authorities, an act that brought repeated persecution. Even in exile, he continued to write letters of encouragement to his followers and warmly embraced those who traveled great distances to see him. He also urged his disciples to read his letters together and lend each other support in the struggle to confront and overcome various trials.

This kind of proactive commitment, joy and mutual support is alive today in the small-group discussion meetings that have been a tradition within the Soka Gakkai since its founding in 1930. Participants in such meetings come to understand that they are not alone in their problems; they can derive courage from the example of their fellow members bravely striving to overcome their own challenges. In turn, the example of one's own renewed determination can powerfully ignite the flame of courage in others.

Encouraging and being encouraged. . . Through this back and forth, the pledge made by one person inspires another's pledge, arousing the power of hope that enables people to remain unbowed even in the face of great difficulty. This life-to-life catalyzation is at the heart of the SGI discussion meeting.

Today, our discussion meetings are held in countries throughout the world. People from all walks of life across differences of age and gender, social standing and circumstance, gather as residents of a community to listen to each individual's unique life story and expressions of deeply held feeling. Together, participants renew their sense of determination and commitment.

The discussion meeting is central to the SGI's efforts for empowerment by, for and of the people; it is an embodiment of our sense of mission within society. Through it, we seek to revive awareness of the weightiness and unlimited possibilities of each person's life, something that is all too often obscured amidst the expanding and increasingly complex threats facing our world.

Parable of the Wealthy Man and His Poor Son

In Buddhism, individuals who seek enlightenment and carry out altruistic practices are known as bodhisattvas, characterized by the key virtues of compassion and commitment to the attainment of wisdom. The Lotus Sutra reveals that all people possess the potential to attain enlightenment, expressing this revolutionary teaching in the form of parables recounted by leading bodhisattvas to help awaken people to the great potential of their Buddha nature.

One such parable tells of a wealthy man's son who runs away from his father and lives in poverty. Fifty years later, he encounters his wealthy father but fails to recognize him and flees. However, the father sends a servant to offer the son a humble job, which he accepts and carries out for many years. Eventually the son is given greater responsibilities until finally the father reveals his true identity and the son inherits all his father's riches.

The poor son represents ordinary people who "wander about" in the threefold world, and the rich man represents the Buddha, whose only desire is to enable all people to enjoy the same enlightened state as his own.

This is the source of energy driving our activities for peace and in support of the UN, giving form to the continuity between religious practice and social engagement. Through these twin efforts, we continuously reaffirm our pledge never to seek happiness at the expense of others and to enable those who have suffered most to realize their right to happiness, and in this way bring into being a world in which the human dignity of all people can truly flourish.

The courage of application

In our activities in support of the United Nations, we have focused on a learning-centered approach, one that emphasizes the practice of dialogue.

Here, I would like to examine two important functions of learning. The first is to enable people to accurately assess the impact of their actions and to empower them to effect positive change for themselves and those around them.

The founding president of the Soka Gakkai, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871-1944), was a pioneer of humanistic education. In his 1930 work *Soka kyoikugaku taikai* (The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy)--a work of germinal importance to the SGI--he describes three different ways of life as human beings: dependent, independent and contributive.

In a dependent way of life, a person is typically unable to sense their own potential, giving up on any real possibility of transforming their current situation and instead passively accommodating themselves to others and their immediate surroundings or to the larger trends in society. In an independent way of life, people have the desire to find their own way forward but tend to have little interest in those with whom they are not directly involved. They are quick to assume that however trying the circumstances of another person, it is up to that person to find a solution through their own efforts.

Makiguchi used to illustrate the problematic nature of such a way of life with the following example. Suppose someone has placed a large stone on a railroad track. Needless to say, this is an evil act. But if, despite knowing it is there, one fails to remove the stone, a train will be derailed.

In other words, if one recognizes a danger but does nothing about it because it has no direct impact upon oneself, this failure to do good will produce an evil outcome.

Everyone speaks of the wrongfulness of an evil act, but inexplicably no one is held accountable for the wrongfulness of failure to do good. And thus, fundamental social evils remain unresolved. [\[12\]](#)

Any doubt that failure to do good is equivalent to actively doing evil is dispelled when we imagine ourselves aboard the train heading toward disaster.

In politics, economics and other areas of contemporary thought, we see a tacit acceptance of the sacrifice of certain people's interests in the pursuit of the greatest happiness for the greatest number. The pitfalls of this way of thinking are illustrated by the climate crisis. A willingness to accept other people's sacrifice can erode the foundations for humanity's survival; even if one is not at risk at present, over the long run no part of Earth is likely to remain unaffected.

The American political philosopher Martha C. Nussbaum has warned of the dangers of pursuing short-term interests and calls for efforts to foster an awareness of global citizenship.

More than at any time in the past, we all depend on people we have never seen, and they depend on us. . .

Nor do any of us stand outside this global interdependency. [\[13\]](#)

Fostering imaginative capacities through education and learning expands grassroots solidarity and action for the resolution of global issues.

For his part, Makiguchi asserted that the way of life to strive for is a contributive one. "Authentic happiness cannot be realized except through sharing the joys and sufferings of the masses as a member of society." [\[14\]](#) Today, we need to expand such awareness to encompass the entire world: Nothing is more crucial.

Buddhism views the world as a web of relationality in which nothing can be completely disassociated from anything else. Moment by moment, the world is formed and shaped through this mutual relatedness. When we understand this and can sense in the depths of our being the fact that we live--that our existence is made possible--within this web of relatedness, we see clearly that there is no happiness that only we enjoy, no suffering that afflicts only others.

In this sense, we ourselves--in the place where we are at this moment--become the starting point for a chain reaction of positive transformation. We are able not only to resolve our personal challenges but also to make a contribution to moving our immediate environment and even human society in a better direction.

This palpable awareness of interdependence provides a framework or set of coordinates by which to reconsider the relationship between self and other and between ourselves and society as a whole. This is the approach that Buddhism urges us to adopt.

Here, education is vital as it enables us to populate this field of coordinates with the actual experience of empathy felt when encountering the pain of others. Our perceptive capacities are honed by learning about the background and underlying causes of such issues as environmental degradation or human inequality, and this in turn clarifies and strengthens the system of ethical coordinates within which we strive to address these issues.

The second function of learning is to bring forth the courage to persevere in the face of adversity.

The challenges that confront humankind, such as poverty or natural disasters, manifest themselves uniquely depending on location and circumstance. And as I mentioned with reference to climate change, the impacts of different threats are such that they can affect anyone, anywhere, at any time. That is why day-to-day efforts are needed in each locality to enhance resilience--the capacity to prevent crises or their escalation and the ability to act with wisdom to respond flexibly and energetically to difficult conditions in the aftermath of disaster.

As an educator, Makiguchi focused on enhancing learners' capacity to grasp the import of events in their environment and to respond proactively, something he termed "the courage of application." [\[15\]](#) For him, the authentic objective of education is to foster the habit of discovering opportunities to apply the knowledge gained through education and to do so to maximum effect through concrete action.

To this end, what is needed, much more than simply providing students with the right answer, is "to point children to those areas where opportunities to apply what they have learned abound, and to focus their attention on this." [\[16\]](#)

Makiguchi stressed the importance of bringing forth the courage of application--the capacity to resolve problems through one's own efforts--based on the insights into the nature of those problems gained through learning. Such courage is what enables us to avoid being overwhelmed by our circumstances and to be able instead to create the kind of future we desire.

For example, the exact contours of the sustainable global society that the SDGs seek to realize are not something clearly established or known from the outset. Just as various crises and threats manifest themselves differently in different settings, there is no universally applicable formula for sustainability. Even as the pursuit of sustainability through efforts to integrate the economic, social and environmental dimensions produces positive results, no one outcome should be taken as final.

Recent years have seen a growing focus on the value of resilience as the ability to respond to an ever-changing reality. As Andrew Zolli and Ann Marie Healy have stated, "the goal ought to be healthy dynamism, not a dipped-in-amber stasis." [\[17\]](#) This is an approach that resonates deeply with the Buddhist worldview of reality as a web of relationality.

The clear outlines of a sustainable global society will come into view as each of us takes an inventory of the things we feel to be of irreplaceable value and acts with wisdom to protect and pass them on to the future. Herein lies the significance of the effort to create value in the place where we are now, through the words and actions to which we alone can give rise.

Makiguchi's use of "the courage of application" as opposed to a more formalistic phrase such as "the act of application" expresses his faith in the inherent human capacity to remain undefeated in the face of adversity and his commitment to the unbounded worth of each individual.

From this perspective, the words of a seventeen-year-old young woman from Zimbabwe who spoke at a panel organized by UN Women at UN Headquarters in February last year ring a powerful chord:

We are 860 million young women and girls living in developing nations.
We are more than a statistic. We are 860 million dreams, 860 million
voices and we have the power to make a difference! [\[18\]](#)

Faced with ever more daunting threats and crises, it becomes easy to lose sight of the weightiness of people's lives as individuals and their truly unlimited potential. The magnitude of the challenges can submerge the unique narrative of each individual's life, their dreams, their unvoiced feelings and their ability to initiate a process of transformation within their immediate circumstances. Through our educational activities the SGI has sought to spark an awareness of the rich possibilities of each individual, the capacity to respond effectively to the realities around us.

Specifically, starting with the exhibition "Nuclear Arms: Threat to Our World" launched at UN Headquarters in New York in 1982, we have placed education for global citizenship at the center of our grassroots activities for the resolution of global issues.

Through education for global citizenship, which embodies the two functions of education that I have been discussing, we have worked to encourage the following four intertwined processes:

- Learning and understanding the issues of the society in which one lives and the challenges facing the world as a whole;
- Orienting ourselves with the system of coordinates developed through this learning in order to engage in a daily process of reflection on one's way of life;
- Becoming empowered to the unbounded potentialities existing within one's life; and
- Exercising transformative leadership for a new era through concrete actions taken in the community in which one lives.

Heartened by the fact that the new SDGs make explicit reference to the importance of education for global citizenship, we will further accelerate our activities with a focus on these four processes.

Dialogue as a path to empathy

In addition to this learning-based approach, we have stressed the importance of dialogue as the foundation for our activities. It is my personal conviction that dialogue is essential if we are to build a world in which no one is left behind.

To successfully meet the challenges facing humankind, it is vital to continually revisit such questions as what it is that we must protect, who is going to protect it, and how. We must start from the perspective of those most severely impacted and work with them to find paths toward resolution. Dialogue provides the framework for this.

Against the backdrop of a series of natural disasters and extreme weather events, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction was adopted at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) held in Sendai, Japan, last March, establishing such shared goals as greatly reducing the number of people affected by disaster by the year 2030.

I was struck by the attention devoted to the principle of "Build Back Better." This refers to the idea that recovery efforts should take into account and seek to ameliorate the specific challenges that had affected a community prior to the disaster. For example, even if the seismic resistance of homes of the elderly living alone is improved as part of DRR activities, that could still leave a range of problems unresolved, such as the day-to-day difficulty of accessing medical facilities or shops. Efforts to build back better seek to address critical issues that existed prior to the disaster through the recovery process.

Here, I am reminded of the following Buddhist parable: Once, a man saw a magnificent three-story house belonging to a wealthy person and decided that he must have one for himself. Returning home, he immediately commissioned a carpenter to build such a house, and the carpenter began work on the foundation and then the first and second stories. Unable to understand this, the man pressed the carpenter, saying, "I don't need the first and second stories." To which the carpenter replied in exasperation, "I'm afraid that's impossible. How do you expect me to build the second story without the first, or the third story without the second?"

In a similar way, responses to humanitarian crises must have a bedrock focus on the dignity of each individual. Recovery efforts should not be limited to physical reconstruction, but must include scrupulous attention to the more basic questions of how to make life better for individual members of the community and how to deepen the bonds of mutual communication and support among residents. Without this, they will not produce optimal outcomes.

To this end, it is vital to heed the voices of those most grievously impacted and engage in dialogue with them in order to find solutions together. The irony of humanitarian crises is that the deeper the gravity of people's plight, the harder it is to make themselves heard. Through dialogue, we come face to face with their experiences and can bring to light each of the elements necessary to ensure that recovery efforts leave no one behind. Most crucially, those who have experienced the greatest suffering have invaluable lessons and capacities to share.

The Sendai Framework lists the sharing of knowledge and experience as among the roles that citizens and civil society organizations can contribute as one aspect of their active engagement. In this context, the experiences of people in afflicted regions are of crucial significance.

This was on display following the earthquake and tsunami disaster that struck northeastern Japan on March 11, 2011. Many people who had themselves been impacted by that disaster were able to encourage and support other victims, in this way becoming effective agents of recovery. Through the SGI's ongoing support of recovery efforts, we have had the opportunity to learn in depth from these invaluable experiences and have stressed the critical importance of the voices and capacities of disaster victims to the process of recovery at subsequent international conferences.

The same applies to efforts to achieve the SDGs. Governments, international organizations and NGOs need to listen to the voices of people in challenging circumstances in order to determine what steps to take and how to ensure their success.

Reflecting on a world that is full of challenges and conflict, where good news is in short supply, Amina J. Mohammed, who served as the UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Post-2015 Development Planning, has stressed that the key to strengthening the unity of international society is "finding a place for our humanity again . . . reclaiming the values that I think that we've lost along the way." [\[19\]](#) Dialogue is indeed something that any of us, anywhere, and at any time can initiate to recover our collective humanity.

In times of heightened tension and conflict, there is another important role that dialogue can play: It can provide the impetus for renewing the connections between oneself and others and oneself and the world. As such, it can serve as the source of the creative energy to transform the era.

As a result of globalization--one of the defining trends of the twenty-first century--an unprecedented number of people are living outside their country of origin for short-term work or educational opportunities or have chosen to settle in a new location. Many countries have seen an influx of people from diverse cultural backgrounds, providing new opportunities for interaction and exchange. At the same time, however, there has been an increased incidence of racism and xenophobia.

Four Views of the Sal Grove

The Sal Grove refers to a grove of sal trees located in the northern part of Kushinagara, India, where Shakyamuni died. It is said that different people will perceive the same grove of trees in different ways according to their state of life, and their different perceptions are described using the names of the four kinds of lands from the doctrine of the T'ien-t'ai school of Buddhism. Some consider the Sal Grove as the Land of Sages and Common Mortals, for some it is the Land of Transition, while others consider it as the Land of Actual Reward or as the Land of Eternally Tranquil Light.

In the peace proposal I wrote last year, I warned of the dangers of hate speech, noting that, regardless of whom it is directed at, it is a human rights violation that cannot be ignored. It is crucial that this recognition be established throughout international society. In order to construct societies that are resistant to xenophobia and incitement to hatred, people need to be exposed to and reminded of different perspectives. Face-to-face dialogue can play a crucial role in this.

The Buddhist teaching of the Four Views of the Sal Grove illustrates the way that differences in people's mental or spiritual state cause them to see the same thing in completely different ways. For example, the sight of the same river might inspire different people to be moved by the beauty of its pure waters, to wonder what kind of fish might be found there, or to worry about it flooding. What is particularly significant is that these are not simply differences in subjective perception; they can give rise to actions that will actually alter that landscape.

An example of this is to be found in the life story of my dear friend, the late Dr. Wangari Maathai (1940-2011).

The people in the Kenyan village where she was born viewed fig trees with reverence, contributing to the protection of the local ecology. Returning to Kenya from the United States where she had completed her studies, a shocking sight awaited her. A fig tree that she had loved since childhood had been felled by the new owner of the land to make space to grow tea. This had not

only changed the landscape, but, as the pattern was repeated elsewhere, landslides were becoming more frequent and sources of potable water more scarce. [20]

This is a poignant example of how something that was treasured by one person may appear to another as nothing more than an impediment. The problems arising from such differences in awareness are not limited to relations between individuals but also affect relations among groups of differing cultural or ethnic backgrounds. The things that do not impinge upon our consciousness cease to exist in our version of the world.

While we as humans may be adept at understanding the feelings of those with whom we have a close relationship, geographical and cultural distances can result in psychological distancing. Accelerating processes of globalization seem to exacerbate this, with modern means of communication at times amplifying the tendency to stereotype and hate. As a result, people end up avoiding interaction with those who are different, including those living in the same community, viewing them through a filter of discriminatory preconception. Society as a whole has seen a lessening of our capacity to appreciate others--as they are and for who they are. I believe that the surest way to change this is by carefully attending to the stories of each other's lives through one-on-one dialogue.

Last year, for World Refugee Day, UNHCR launched a public education campaign that introduces the life stories of people who have become refugees, urging viewers to share these stories with their friends and acquaintances. They are each introduced by name and through easily recognized attributes that bear no relation to nationality--"Gardener. Mother. Nature lover." "Student. Brother. Poet." [21]--and describe their stories and their feelings about their current situation. Encountering the experience and life story of an individual in such real and familiar terms can enable people to see beyond a faceless classification as "refugees."

When I met with Professor Ved Nanda of the University of Denver in the United States, he recounted to me his experience at age twelve of being forced from his home as a result of the 1947 partition of India and of walking for days with his mother in search of safety. He went on to study international law and became a leading expert on human rights and refugee issues. As he later wrote:

There is no doubt that my early childhood experiences had a deep, lasting influence on my life. I will remember until the last day of my life the grief I felt at being forced from my homeland. [22]

As UNHCR's effort to show the human face of refugees suggests, our awareness of people belonging to different religions or ethnicities can be transformed through direct contact and conversation with even one member of that group. Such an encounter can bring into view an entirely new and different "landscape." By engaging in open and frank dialogue, we are able to see things that had been hidden from view, and the world begins to appear in a warmer, more human light.

In September 1974, in the midst of heightened Cold War tensions, I decided to ignore the voices of criticism and opposition in order to visit the Soviet Union for the first time. The belief that motivated me was this: We don't need to fear the Soviet Union so much as we need to fear our ignorance of the Soviet Union.

Conflict and tension do not in themselves render dialogue impossible; what builds the walls between us is our willingness to remain ignorant of others. This is why it is crucial to be the one to initiate dialogue. Everything starts from there.

At a welcoming dinner the evening I arrived in Moscow, I gave voice to my feelings:

People sense a human warmth, the warmth of the heart, in the light that spills from windows in the beautiful Siberian winter. In this way, we promise to treasure the light of the human heart, regardless of differences in our social systems.

The same sentiment prompted my visit to Cuba several decades later, in June 1996. This was just four months after two American civilian aircraft had been shot down by the Cuban Air Force, but I was convinced that a shared will for peace has the power to surmount the most formidable obstacles. And with this determination, I engaged in an unrestrained exchange of views with then President Fidel Castro.

When I delivered a commemorative lecture at the University of Havana, I stressed that education is our hope-filled bridge to the future. We have subsequently engaged in educational and cultural exchanges that continue to this day. I was thus truly delighted when, in July last year, the United States and Cuba restored diplomatic relations after a fifty-four-year hiatus.

While diplomatic relations are of course crucial, even more vital is dialogue and exchange at the grassroots level, the active embrace of the reality and richness of another person's existence. This is something that is too easily obscured by stereotyped approaches to other peoples and religions.

I am convinced that when we, as individuals, use friendship and empathy to recast the world map in our hearts, the world around us will also begin to change.

My mentor Josei Toda (1900-58), the second president of the Soka Gakkai, frequently warned of the danger of allowing the lens of national or other group affiliation to shape our responses to problems. He noted that whereas individuals of different nationalities seek to live alongside each other in a civilized manner, relations between states are marked by "the constant exercise of force behind a veneer of culture." [23]

He also lamented the fact that ideological differences were giving rise to political and economic conflict; he expressed his concern that the logic of collective identity was blinding us to our common humanity. Further, he called for a broad-based solidarity of humanity united by a shared yearning for peace, a "global nationalism" based on the desire that "the word 'misery' no longer be used to describe the world, any country, any individual."

In 1996, I founded the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research as a means of perpetuating the legacy of my mentor. In February, the Institute will organize a conference in Tokyo on the potential of the world's religions to contribute to the creation of peace. Bringing together researchers and thinkers with backgrounds in Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism, the conference will focus on the capacity of religion to bring forth the positive aspects of humanity. Participants will explore ways to turn the world of the twenty-first century away from violence and hatred, generating instead a new current of peace and humane values.

Jacques Maritain (1882-1973), the French philosopher who participated in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, once called for a "geology of the conscience" [24] that would dig down to the indispensable commonalities of human action beyond ideological and philosophical differences. Through its activities under the theme of "Dialogue of Civilizations for Global Citizenship," the Toda Institute, which will mark its twentieth anniversary on February 11, is actively engaged with this challenge.

The power to move people at the deepest level is not found in formulaic assertions or dogma, but in words that issue from a person's experience and carry the weight of that lived reality. Exchanges conducted in such language can mine the rich veins of our common humanity, bringing back to the surface glistening spiritual riches that will illuminate human society. This is the conviction that has supported me over the years as I have conducted dialogue with people of different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds.

It is indeed in the encounter between people whose paths in life have differed that our eyes are opened to vistas that would not otherwise have been visible. It is in the resonance of people encountering each other in the fullness of their humanity that the melodies of a new creative energy unfold.

This is the true significance of dialogue: It can serve as a treasure house of possibilities, a dynamo for the creation of history.

Sharing time and space together in dialogue. . . The friendship and trust nurtured through the committed pursuit of this process can form the basis for a solidarity of ordinary citizens working to resolve global issues and bring into being a peaceful world.

Toward a more humane world

Next, I would like to offer ideas on three areas that require prompt and coordinated action by governments and civil society:

- Humanitarian aid and human rights protection;
- Ecological integrity and disaster risk reduction; and
- Disarmament and the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

These proposals are oriented toward the ideal of a world in which no one is left behind, as articulated in the SDGs.

The first of these key areas is humanitarian aid and the protection and promotion of human rights. Specifically, I would like to offer two concrete proposals for the World Humanitarian Summit set to take place in Istanbul this May.

First, I call on all participants at the summit to reaffirm the principle that our response to the worsening refugee crisis must first and foremost be based on international human rights law, and I urge them to express a clear commitment to the primacy of protecting the lives and rights of refugee children.

The number of displaced people seeking refuge in foreign lands is at a post-World War II high. Within the receiving countries there are increasing concerns about the spread of social instability, the increase in government outlays on humanitarian assistance and the possibility of infiltration by terrorists under the guise of asylum-seekers. While each country may need to take measures related to these concerns, any response to the refugee crisis must be based on the commitment to protect human life and dignity that constitutes the very core of international human rights law.

In ways that parallel the situation of people who have lost their homes in natural disasters and have been forced to live in temporary shelters, conflict and war uproot in an instant the lives of countless people, robbing them of all sense of hope. More than anything, we must remember that the greatest victims of armed conflict are the children who constitute more than half of all refugees.

Last year marked the tenth anniversary of Resolution 1612, the UN Security Council's measure regarding the protection of children affected by armed conflict. In addition to safeguarding children from being exposed to violence or exploitation in the midst of armed conflict, there is an urgent need to provide protection to children who have fled the ravages of war.

In the SDGs, children head the list of those who are vulnerable to and will be most seriously affected by various threats. UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake has stated: "Every child has the right to the quiet blessing of a normal childhood." [\[25\]](#) Protecting the right of children to enjoy this blessing should be the cornerstone of international support for displaced persons.

Humanitarian emergencies can only be said to have been resolved when the children whose lives were impacted can move beyond those bitter experiences to advance with hope in their hearts. For people who have been forced to flee their homes and are working to rebuild their lives in a new land, the presence of smiling, hope-filled children will serve as a source of inspiration and strength.

My second appeal to the World Humanitarian Summit is to come to an agreement to strengthen UN programs in support of host countries taking in refugees in the Middle East, and to prioritize a similar approach in other regions of Asia and Africa.

UN statistics show that almost nine out of ten refugees have sought safety in regions and countries considered less economically developed. [\[26\]](#) The overwhelming number of displaced people has put these already vulnerable host communities under great strain, to the point that they are having difficulty providing access to safe water and other public services. Many of them are unable to sustain their support of refugees without international cooperation.

The Preamble of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees refers to the fact that granting asylum may place "unduly heavy burdens" on certain countries, and states that a satisfactory solution cannot be achieved without international cooperation. I believe that it is vital for the global community to keep in mind the spirit of international cooperation that imbues the Convention in addressing the needs of refugees and internally displaced persons.

In my peace proposal last year, I called for the development of regional joint empowerment programs in which educational and employment assistance projects would embrace both the refugee and local populations, especially youth and women in recipient countries.

Currently, a UN initiative that combines refugee relief operations with support for recipient communities is being implemented in five countries in the Middle East. This new aid architecture, the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), is designed to provide direct support to Syrian refugees as well as to host country populations by improving quality of life and employment opportunities through upgrading the local social infrastructure. It aims to build a framework of international cooperation to help stabilize the region and ease the burdens faced by Turkey and Lebanon, which have each accepted more than one million refugees, as well as the pressures on neighboring Jordan, Iraq and Egypt, where a large number of Syrians have sought refuge. To date, the 3RP has contributed to improvements in the supply of food and safe drinking water as well as in health care and other areas. Basic policy and concrete targets for the future of these initiatives were announced in December last year.

I encourage the participants in the World Humanitarian Summit to discuss and reflect on the 3RP in order to share best practices and challenges, and to express their commitment to work in solidarity to facilitate such activities going forward, including cooperation on funding. I also urge the Japanese government to draw on its experience of extending humanitarian aid to Syria and the region as it expands its assistance for refugees, focusing especially on securing a better future for refugee children.

In Turkey, Lebanon and elsewhere, it has become possible for children to attend local public schools or temporary education centers, but more than half of displaced Syrian children still lack access to schools. The UN has instituted plans to expand educational opportunities for refugee children. The European Union has been working with UNICEF to support education for displaced children in Syria and neighboring countries; it is my fervent hope that the Japanese government will also play a substantive role in this field.

In partnership with UNHCR, several Japanese universities have instituted a Refugee Higher Education Program offering degree courses for refugees. A wide range of such educational opportunities should be made available for the younger generation.

It is important for civil society to collaborate in responding to humanitarian imperatives such as the refugee crisis. Toward the same goal of creating a world where all people's dignity is respected, the SGI will redouble our efforts to promote human rights education.

This year marks the fifth year since the adoption of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, by which UN member states for the first time agreed to international standards for human rights education.

Given the global rise in incidents of racial discrimination and xenophobia, especially prejudice and hatred toward refugees, displaced people and migrants, I think the following two aspects in the Declaration are particularly salient:

- Promoting the development of the individual as a responsible member of a free, peaceful, pluralist and inclusive society;
- Contributing to the prevention of human rights violations and abuses and to the combating and eradication of all forms of discrimination, racism, stereotyping and incitement to hatred, and the harmful attitudes and prejudices that underlie them. [\[27\]](#)

The point here is that it is not enough simply to refrain from discriminatory behavior. Rather, it is imperative to establish an ethos that clearly rejects all forms of human rights violation rooted in prejudice and hatred--in other words, to help a universal culture of human rights take root so as to construct authentically inclusive societies.

Earlier, I referred to first Soka Gakkai president Makiguchi's admonition that failure to do good is the equivalent of doing evil. With regard to the undertaking of building a universal culture of human rights, something in which the behavior and actions of each individual play a key role, we must renew our awareness of the gravity of failing to do good.

The Declaration does not limit itself to the acquisition of knowledge about human rights or the deepening of understanding, but explicitly includes the development of attitudes and behaviors. It further defines human rights education and training as "a lifelong process that concerns all ages." [\[28\]](#) This points to the elements that are indispensable to bringing about a rich flowering of a culture of human rights.

As a civil society organization, the SGI supported this important UN Declaration from the drafting stage. Since its adoption by the General Assembly in December 2011, we have supported its objectives by holding awareness-raising exhibitions and through the jointly produced documentary *A Path to Dignity: The Power of Human Rights Education*.

In 2013, Amnesty International, Human Rights Education Associates and the SGI launched Human Rights Education 2020 (HRE 2020), a global civil society coalition for human rights education. To support and promote the Declaration and the World Programme for Human Rights Education, HRE 2020 has published *Human Rights Education Indicator Framework*, a resource intended for use as a guidebook to enhance the quality of human rights education and training in different national settings.

Marking the fifth anniversary of the Declaration's adoption, the SGI and other organizations working together through HRE 2020 are advancing preparations for a new human rights exhibition, which will explore the respective themes of the new SDGs from the perspective of human rights. I hope this new exhibition will inspire renewed commitment to the kind of action that will help bring into being a world in which the dignity of all people is respected.

Ecological integrity and disaster risk reduction

Next, I would like to offer some thoughts on current environmental issues and disaster risk reduction.

The first theme I would like to focus on is reducing emissions of the greenhouse gases that cause global warming. The 21st Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), held from November 30 to December 11 last year, adopted the Paris Agreement as the new international framework for efforts to tackle global warming.

The adoption of the Paris Agreement is groundbreaking in that 195 countries came together to commit themselves to take action under a shared framework. They have done so against the backdrop of growing concerns that humanity will face grave consequences unless the increase in the global average temperature is kept below 2°C compared to preindustrial levels. Each government has set a target, and although these are not legally binding, they have agreed to implement policy measures for their achievement.

While combating global warming is a daunting challenge, the near-universal participation of the world's governments should be recognized as the great strength of the Paris Agreement, and this should help give rise to the kind of cooperation by which each country makes proactive contributions with an eye to the global public good.

Asia is one region that has been facing an increasing incidence of extreme weather events. In light of this, I would like to call for cooperation among China, Japan and South Korea--which together account for one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions [29]--in pursuit of ambitious and groundbreaking initiatives.

In November last year, the Sixth Trilateral Summit among China, Japan and Korea was held in Seoul, after a lapse of three and a half years. Having urged in past proposals and elsewhere the need to overcome political tensions and reconvene these trilateral summits, I am particularly pleased by the declaration that cooperation has been completely restored and by the agreement to hold summits on a regular basis.

It was work in the field of ecological integrity that provided the impetus and has remained at the heart of trilateral cooperation. The Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting (TEMM) has expressed the understanding that Northeast Asia is "one environmental community." [30] Annual meetings of the environment ministers have continued to contribute to cooperation on environmental issues even at times of heightened political tensions.

Hoping to encourage further collaboration on the environment, last year I called for the three countries to work toward a formal agreement to make the region a model of sustainability. If, in addition to such fields as reducing atmospheric pollution and tackling the problem of dust and sandstorms, there could be increased regional cooperation on combating climate change, this would be a crucial vehicle for the achievement of the targets set by each country in the Paris Agreement.

Concretely, there should be sharing of knowledge and best practices in the fields of energy efficiency, renewable energy and efforts to minimize the resource footprint of economic activities. Such synergies among the three countries could accelerate the transition to a low-carbon future.

This year, the Trilateral Summit is to be held in Japan. This will be accompanied by a Trilateral Youth Summit, which will provide an opportunity for young representatives to discuss cooperation for peace and ecological integrity in Northeast Asia. I urge the leaders of the three countries to adopt a China-Japan-Korea environmental pledge focused on regional cooperation to counter climate change toward 2030, the target year of the Paris Agreement.

I also hope that the Youth Summit will generate outcomes along the lines of establishing a platform for the sharing of creative ideas and best practices and supporting youth exchanges for cooperation on ambitious undertakings proposed by young people.

Next, in addition to such intergovernmental cooperation, I would like to propose that the world's cities work together in paving the way toward promoting the goals set out in the Paris Agreement. Although the world's cities only occupy 2 percent of the Earth's land area, they account for 75 percent of carbon emissions and more than 60 percent of energy consumption. [31] While this means that cities' environmental footprint is disproportionately large, it also reflects the reality that if cities change, the world will change.

Certainly, the density of urban populations means that problems are concentrated in one place, as is the ecological burden. By the same token, however, this density can facilitate the effective implementation of energy efficiency measures and the adoption of renewable energy sources in the shift toward a low-carbon society.

Launched in 2014 at the United Nations Climate Summit, the Compact of Mayors, which now encompasses more than 400 cities worldwide, enables each city to publicly commit to their mitigation plans and targets.

As cities initiate action and efforts begin to bear fruit, local citizens will be able to gain a palpable sense of achievement. This will provide conviction and pride that will further inspire individuals to take part in the endeavor, building greater momentum toward a sustainable society. I believe that cities can generate ripple effects that can propel each nation's efforts to meet their Paris Agreement targets.

Prior to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) held in 2012--which initiated the process of concrete deliberation toward the SDGs--I expressed my hope that the post-2015 goals would be such that people would take them up as a personal commitment and be inspired to work together toward their achievement.

One of the goals listed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is sustainable cities. Because the accumulation of efforts undertaken in one's immediate surroundings can generate important positive impacts on the global environment, this theme of sustainable cities can demonstrate to people that their efforts are important and thus stimulate a sense of accomplishment and pride.

The United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) is slated to be held in Quito, Ecuador, in October this year. At this meeting, in addition to representatives of national governments, people speaking for subnational entities will be able to express their views and share best practices, building global solidarity for the goal of sustainable cities.

Environmental activist Wangari Maathai recalled her experience at the 1976 Habitat I Conference held in Vancouver, Canada, as her inspiration for founding the Green Belt Movement in Kenya:

The beautiful surroundings of British Columbia and the engaging with people who shared my evolving concern for the environment were just the tonic I needed. . . I returned to Kenya reenergized and determined to make my idea work. [\[32\]](#)

Regardless of the country or community where we reside, I believe people share the desire to leave behind a better environment for our children and grandchildren.

Earlier I called for cooperation on the national level between China, Japan and Korea, and here I would like to propose that a forum for tripartite environmental cooperation be held in conjunction with Habitat III with the participation of representatives of subnational governments and NGOs active in the environmental field.

As a side event at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai in March last year, the SGI sponsored a symposium with representatives of civil society organizations involved in DRR from China, Japan and Korea. Chen Feng, deputy secretary-general of the intergovernmental Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat which supported the symposium, stated that, as close neighbors, a disaster in one country will also cause pain to the other two, and that for this reason cooperation in DRR must always be a priority. [\[33\]](#) The same can be said of environmental issues.

At present, more than 600 localities in China, Japan and Korea have established sister-city relationships. Trilateral efforts can help build an invaluable heritage of friendship for the future by developing through these sister-city relationships a deepened understanding that the cities, towns and villages we live in are all part of a shared environmental community.

The second theme I would like to discuss is Ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction (Eco-DRR). Around 800 million people in the world today are suffering from hunger and malnutrition. Moreover, approximately 30 percent of the world's soil resources, the foundation for global food production, are experiencing some degree of degradation. [\[34\]](#)

Healthy soil plays an important role in the carbon cycle, as well as the storing and filtering of water, thus making it a crucial component in the ecosystem. But for all too long it has not been accorded the attention it deserves. Once degraded, soil does not recover easily--it can take more than a hundred years for even one centimeter to form.

Although the pace of net global deforestation has slowed, 13 million hectares of forest are still being lost each year, causing grave concern about such environmental impacts as loss of biodiversity. [\[35\]](#)

One of the SDGs articulates the importance of halting and reversing land degradation and sustainable management of the world's forests. These are urgent challenges both in terms of protecting the ecological integrity of our planet and enhancing carbon sequestration.

In recent years, the role that efforts to protect the environment can play in disaster risk reduction has attracted growing attention. Awareness of this was greatly heightened by the experience of the Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004. Studies found that coastal villages where mangrove forests served as bioshields endured significantly less damage than coastal areas where this protection was absent.

Examples of Eco-DRR projects include restorative planting to stabilize sand dunes, the use of wetlands to mitigate storm surges and the greenification of cities in stormwater management.

Of particular note is the value that arises from the active and sustained engagement of the people living in a community. In regions afflicted by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami disaster in northeastern Japan, children are among those actively involved in efforts to plant saplings to revive the protective coastal forests. Such activities deepen a shared sense of the importance of the local ecosystem and invite an expanding cadre of participants to imagine how the trees they are planting now might protect the lives of people in the future.

When those involved pass through this place of their labors in future years, they will look upon that landscape with an even more poignant sense of its value. People will feel the essential yet ineffable importance of local ecosystems to their daily lives as well as the invaluable nature of their own engagement in supporting that environment and disaster risk reduction efforts within it. This awareness will grow along with the trees they have planted, setting down the deep roots of a truly resilient community. In this way, people's efforts to protect their local ecology have the direct effect of nurturing a hopeful future for that community.

Recently, the Global Action Programme for ESD has been launched as a follow-up to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). The engagement of young people is listed as one of the program's priorities, and in this context I would like to wholeheartedly encourage young people and children everywhere to participate actively in Eco-DRR, such as tree-planting campaigns.

The Sendai Framework adopted at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction last March stresses that DRR "requires an all-of-society engagement and partnership" [\[36\]](#) and identifies children and youth as "agents of change" [\[37\]](#) who should be empowered to contribute to DRR.

Since the SGI together with other NGOs proposed the establishment of the DESD in 2002, we have shown the awareness-raising exhibitions "Seeds of Change: The Earth Charter and Human Potential" and "Seeds of Hope: Visions of sustainability, steps toward change" around the world. Over the years, large numbers of students, from elementary to high school, have visited the exhibitions, making them an effective tool for environmental education.

One of the reasons that the SGI has placed great importance on ESD is to encourage learning about the indissoluble links between human beings and their environment and to promote a groundswell of people of all ages who can muster the "courage of application" that Soka Gakkai founding president Makiguchi cited as a crucial goal of education. We hope that this will encourage them to take determined action in their respective communities. I believe that such sustained activities at the local level can pave a secure and effective path toward protecting the global environment.

Disarmament and the prohibition of nuclear weapons

Lastly, I would like to offer proposals regarding disarmament and the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

The first of these relates to strengthening the institutional framework to prevent the proliferation of conventional weapons, which exacerbate humanitarian crises and contribute to incidents of terrorism around the world.

Each year, an unconscionable number of lives are lost due to the influx of small arms into conflict areas.

The Arms Trade Treaty, which entered into force on December 24, 2014, seeks to regulate the trade in conventional weapons ranging from small arms--often referred to as "the real weapons of mass destruction"--to tanks and missiles. It has only been ratified by seventy-nine states so far, however, and no agreement has been reached on key issues such as a reporting mechanism on international arms transfers.

The First Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty was held in Cancún, Mexico, in August 2015. The participants failed to reach consensus on core questions such as whether to make reports available to the public and which arms should be subject to reporting.

I have repeatedly called for the regulation of the arms trade, starting with my 1999 peace proposal, because I view it as an essential challenge in the effort to build a peaceful world in this century.

The deepening refugee crisis illustrates the urgent need to use the Arms Trade Treaty to put an end to the proliferation of conventional weapons. Their widespread availability contributes to the entrenchment and prolongation of conflict, driving large numbers of people from their homes. Even after fighting has ceased, the danger that conflicts will reignite remains, deterring people from returning home.

In particular, small arms can be easily carried and operated, facilitating the forced enlistment of children as combatants. There are estimated to be over 300,000 child soldiers around the world, facing physical injury, psychological trauma and death. [\[38\]](#)

Further, it is imperative that the international trade in conventional weapons be strictly regulated in order to prevent the spread of terrorism. The global response to terrorism can be strengthened significantly through synergies between the Arms Trade Treaty and the numerous antiterrorism conventions that have been established to date.

Given all the harmful impacts of the proliferation of small arms, it is urgent that the international community use the Arms Trade Treaty to disrupt the cycles of hatred and violence around the world.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development counts illicit financial and arms flows among factors giving rise to violence, insecurity and injustice; significantly reducing them by 2030 is one of the targets. I urge states to promptly ratify the Arms Trade Treaty as evidence of their commitment to this goal.

Full public disclosure, including the volume of arms transactions, would contribute to enhanced transparency and the more effective functioning of the Treaty.

The second area of disarmament I would like to address concerns the prohibition and abolition of nuclear weapons.

Last year--the seventieth anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki--the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was held at UN Headquarters in New York, but closed without reaching consensus.

Since the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference referenced the inhumane nature of any use of nuclear weapons and the need to comply with International Humanitarian Law, there has been a global rise of concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, and three international conferences on this subject have been held.

This makes it all the more regrettable that the chasm between the nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon states could not be bridged at the 2015 Review Conference, and that the NPT member states were unable to reach a consensus at this historic juncture.

Hope still remains, however, thanks to a number of noteworthy developments. These include:

- A growing number of countries endorsing the Humanitarian Pledge, a commitment to work together for the resolution of the nuclear arms issue;
- The adoption in December 2015 by the UN General Assembly of several ambitious resolutions calling for a breakthrough; and
- The extensive efforts of faith-based organizations and the engagement of youth against the backdrop of rising calls from civil society for the prohibition and abolition of nuclear weapons.

We must leverage these new developments to create roadmaps to a world without nuclear weapons and to initiate concrete action toward its realization.

On January 6 this year, North Korea conducted a nuclear test, further heightening concerns within the international community about the threat of nuclear proliferation.

If nuclear weapons were to be used in a hostile exchange in any corner of the world, the impact--whether in terms of the number of lives lost or the number of people who would suffer aftereffects--stagger the imagination.

In the world today, there are more than 15,000 nuclear weapons. Their use could render meaningless in an instant all of humankind's efforts to resolve global problems.

Taking the example of the refugee crisis, the consequences of a nuclear explosion would cross national borders, in all likelihood creating a humanitarian crisis of far greater proportion than the current 60 million refugees. Hundreds of millions of people might find themselves fleeing for safety. Likewise, no matter how much effort people may put into preventing soil degradation, a nuclear explosion would pollute the soil--one centimeter of which might take as much as a thousand years to form--over vast expanses of Earth.

Recent research warns of the devastating impact of even a geographically limited nuclear exchange on the global ecology; the impact on the world's climate would undermine food production, resulting in a "nuclear famine."

To date, efforts to fight poverty and improve public health through the MDGs have rendered meaningful achievements, and this work will be carried on through the follow-up framework, the SDGs, in such areas as disaster risk reduction and sustainable cities. The existence of nuclear weapons threatens to negate all of this.

What then is the point of national security guaranteed by nuclear weapons, the use of which would inevitably produce catastrophic consequences and result in immense suffering and sacrifice throughout the world? What exactly is it that is protected by a security regime premised on the possibility of inflicting irreparable damage and devastation on vast numbers of people? Is this not a system in which the true objective of national security--protecting people and their lives--has in fact been forsaken?

In 1903, at the outset of the phase of global military competition that continues to this day, Soka Gakkai founding president Makiguchi argued that when a given mode of competition has proven ineffectual in achieving its ends, this drives a transformation in the form and nature of human competition.

When hostilities continue for a long period of time, various aspects of domestic life are affected, leading inevitably to the exhaustion of national strength. Such losses cannot be compensated by what is gained through war. [\[39\]](#)

The limitations of military competition that Makiguchi noted have become undeniably evident over the course of two world wars and in the nuclear competition that started during the Cold War and persists even today.

As the humanitarian impact and the limited military effectiveness of nuclear weapons have become more apparent, so has the fact that they are essentially unusable. Having reached the limits of military competition, we can now see signs of the emergence of a new mode of international competition, one centered around mutual striving toward humanitarian objectives.

One example of this can be found in the various contributions made by the International Monitoring System (IMS) established with the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996. The CTBT has yet to be ratified by eight of the countries whose ratification is required for it to enter into force, but the IMS, launched by the CTBTO Preparatory Commission to detect any nuclear explosion worldwide, is already in operation.

Its core function was again demonstrated in the rapid detection of the seismic waves and radiation from the recent North Korean nuclear test. In addition, the global IMS network has been used to gather data about natural disasters and the impact of climate change. Examples of this include: providing information on undersea earthquakes to tsunami early-warning centers; real-time surveillance of volcanic eruptions to enable civil aviation authorities to issue timely warnings; and tracking large-scale weather events and the collapse of ice shelves. The system has been compared to a giant Earth stethoscope.

As UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has noted, "Even before entering into force, the CTBT is saving lives." [\[40\]](#) Indeed, the Treaty and its verification regime, originally designed to restrain the nuclear arms race and nuclear proliferation, have become essential humanitarian safeguards, protecting the lives of large numbers of people.

It has been twenty years since this Treaty was adopted. I call on the remaining eight states to ratify the CTBT as soon as possible in order to enhance its effectiveness and ensure that nuclear weapons are never again tested on our planet.

We must of course accelerate efforts toward nuclear disarmament and abolition. At the same time, we must further develop the kind of activities that have grown from the CTBT in order to build momentum toward a world that gives highest priority to humanitarian objectives.

In September 1957, amidst deepening Cold War antagonism and the escalation of the nuclear arms race, my mentor Josei Toda issued a declaration calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons:

Although a movement calling for a ban on the testing of atomic or nuclear weapons has arisen around the world, it is my wish to go further, to attack the problem at its root. I want to expose and rip out the claws that lie hidden in the very depths of such weapons. [\[41\]](#)

Even as he expressed his sympathy with the earnest voices of people around the world calling for a ban on nuclear testing, Toda went further and stressed that a genuine solution is only possible when we overcome the disregard for life that underlies a system of national security premised on the suffering and sacrifice of countless ordinary citizens.

What my mentor referred to as the "claws" hidden in the depths of nuclear weapons is the toxic way of thinking that permeates contemporary civilization: namely, the pursuit of one's objectives by any means, of one's security and national interest at the expense of the people of other countries, and of one's immediate goals in disregard of the impact on future generations. With his words echoing in my heart, I have worked toward resolving the nuclear arms issue, believing that success in this challenge can set the world in a new and more humane direction.

The nuclear-weapon states and their allies adhere to the idea that they have no choice but to maintain a nuclear deterrent as long as these weapons exist. They might believe that possessing a nuclear deterrent puts them in control. Yet the truth is that the dangers of an accidental detonation or launch multiply in proportion to the number of nuclear weapons and states possessing them. Seen from this perspective, the nuclear weapons possessed by a state actually hold the fate of not only that country but of all humankind in their grasp.

Twenty years have passed since the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued an Advisory Opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons. Citing Article VI of the NPT, it states:

There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. [\[42\]](#)

However, good faith negotiations involving all the nuclear-weapon states have not even begun, leaving no prospect of nuclear disarmament being achieved for the foreseeable future. This is an intolerable state of affairs.

In an attempt to break this deadlock, the Humanitarian Pledge was submitted to the 2015 NPT Review Conference. Well more than half of the UN member states--121 countries--have so far added their voices to the call to cooperate with all relevant stakeholders, international organizations and civil society, in "efforts to stigmatise, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons." It also urges all states, as an immediate priority, to "identify and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons." [\[43\]](#)

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) prohibits all nuclear weapon test explosions or other nuclear explosions. In order to verify compliance with its provisions, the Treaty establishes a global network of monitoring facilities and allows for on-site inspections of suspicious events. The Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) was set up in 1996 with its headquarters in Vienna, Austria. It is an interim organization tasked with building up the CTBT verification regime in preparation for the Treaty's entry into force, as well as encouraging all countries to sign and ratify the Treaty.

One hundred and eighty-three countries have signed the Treaty, of which 164 have also ratified it, including three of the nuclear-weapon states: France, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom. But forty-four specified countries that possess nuclear technology must sign and ratify before the CTBT can enter into force. Of these, eight are still missing: China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan and the USA. India, North Korea and Pakistan have yet to sign the CTBT.

Last autumn, following the submission of several resolutions calling for such effective measures, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution setting up an Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) to engage in substantive deliberations in pursuit of this. The resolution states that the OEWG will convene in Geneva this year "with the participation and contribution of international organizations and civil society representatives" and that participants should "make their best endeavours to reach general agreement." [\[44\]](#)

The Humanitarian Pledge

The immediate, mid- and long-term consequences of any explosion of a nuclear weapon are now known to be significantly graver than was understood in the past. Use of nuclear weapons would have regional or even global effects, potentially threatening the survival of humanity, so all states share the responsibility to prevent any use of nuclear weapons. Yet these weapons of mass annihilation are not prohibited under International Law; the Humanitarian Pledge is a commitment to fill this unacceptable legal gap.

The Humanitarian Pledge was issued as the Austrian Pledge on December 9, 2014, at the conclusion of the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. This document, now signed by 121 states, seeks to provide an impetus for the start of negotiations on a treaty that would comprehensively outlaw nuclear weapons.

Read the full text at: www.icanw.org/pledge/

I strongly hope that the OEWG will succeed in breaking the deadlock that has plagued the NPT Review Conference and fulfill the obligation set out in the Advisory Opinion of the ICJ to "pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament."

In view of the humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, I call on the OEWG to consider the following three items as they attend to the concerns and integrate the voices of civil society in their deliberations:

- Removal of nuclear retaliatory forces from high-alert status;
- Withdrawal from the nuclear umbrella; and
- A halt to the modernization of nuclear weapons.

The first two should be implemented in all haste given the current situation where the unusable nature of nuclear weapons has become evident in light of their humanitarian consequences and military ineffectiveness.

Here, we should remind ourselves about the way the use of biological and chemical weapons--which were developed in a climate of intense competition over the course of two world wars--is now considered impermissible due to their humanitarian consequences.

As former UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Angela Kane strikingly put it:

How many states today boast that they are "biological weapon states" or "chemical weapons states"? Who is arguing now that bubonic plague or polio are legitimate to use as weapons under any circumstance, whether in an attack or in retaliation? Who speaks of a bio-weapon umbrella?

[\[45\]](#)

Most notably, the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference called upon the nuclear-weapon states to promptly "diminish the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies." [\[46\]](#)

In that sense, it is noteworthy that a group of states including Brazil submitted to the General Assembly in October 2015 a resolution encouraging "all States that are part of regional alliances that include nuclear-weapon States to further promote a diminishing role for nuclear weapons." [\[47\]](#)

Another resolution submitted during the same session, whose lead sponsors included Japan, "Calls upon States concerned to continue to review their military and security concepts, doctrines and policies, with a view to reducing further the role and significance of nuclear weapons therein." [\[48\]](#) I believe that Japan should take the lead in transforming its security regime, which is currently reliant on the extended deterrence of the US nuclear umbrella.

In the lead-up to the G7 Summit scheduled for May this year, the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting will be held in April in Hiroshima. I hope that the inhumane nature of nuclear weapons will be part of the agenda, along with nonproliferation issues such as the North Korean nuclear program and diminishing the role of nuclear weapons as a step toward the denuclearization of Northeast Asia.

The third item, the modernization of nuclear weapons, is something I warned against in last year's peace proposal. By continuing to spend more than US\$100 billion per year to maintain these weapons, we risk permanently entrenching the grotesque inequalities of our world.

A resolution proposed to the UN General Assembly by South Africa and other states in October 2015 notes that, "in a world where basic human needs have not yet been met, the vast resources allocated to the modernization of nuclear weapons arsenals could instead be redirected to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals." [\[49\]](#)

If modernization of nuclear weapons continues at its current pace, it will ensure that for at least the next several generations humanity will be forced to live under the threat of nuclear weapons. Even assuming that nuclear weapons are not used, the diversion of resources will be a severe impediment to the achievement of the SDGs and to the meaningful amelioration of the inequality that afflicts global society.

In the words of the South African representative, "Nuclear disarmament is not only an international legal obligation, but also a moral and ethical imperative." [\[50\]](#) I think that these words give potent expression to the feelings of the survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki who have undergone indescribable suffering and of other hibakusha severely affected by nuclear weapons development and testing in other parts of the world. They also resonate with the governments that have endorsed the Humanitarian Pledge as well as all of the peace-loving people of the world.

Generation of change

At the 2015 NPT Review Conference, together with representatives of the Christian, Jewish, Muslim and other faith traditions, the SGI submitted a Joint Statement entitled "Faith Communities Concerned about the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons." It reads in part:

Nuclear weapons are incompatible with the values upheld by our respective faith traditions--the right of people to live in security and dignity; the commands of conscience and justice; the duty to protect the vulnerable and to exercise the stewardship that will safeguard the planet for future generations. . .

[We] call for the early commencement of negotiations by states on a new legal instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons in a forum open to all states and blockable by none. [\[51\]](#)

Earlier I referenced founding Soka Gakkai president Makiguchi's analysis of the evolution of competition. Surely the time has come to acknowledge the bankruptcy of the logic underlying nuclear--and, in fact, all--arms competition, both from a purely military standpoint and in terms of the severe burdens it continues to impose on our world.

I strongly hope that the OEWG, when it convenes this year in Geneva, will engage in constructive debate to draw up a road map identifying effective measures necessary for "the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons" [\[52\]](#) as the joint undertaking of all UN member states. I hope that the work of the OEWG will be conducted with the UN high-level conference on nuclear disarmament--to be held no later than 2018--clearly in sight, and that it will lead to the start of negotiations on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons.

Next year will mark the sixtieth anniversary of second Soka Gakkai president Toda's declaration calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons. It is from this declaration that the SGI draws inspiration in our ongoing efforts to build broad public support for a world without nuclear weapons. It is our determination to achieve the prohibition and abolition of these weapons as an initiative of the world's peoples--what might be called an international people's law--that would be established by many state and civil society actors working together.

Hibakusha

Survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, their children and grandchildren are referred to in Japanese as hibakusha, literally "explosion-affected-people." According to the Atomic Bomb Survivors Relief Law in Japan, there are certain recognized categories of hibakusha: people exposed directly to the nuclear bombings; people exposed within a 2-km radius of the hypocenter within two weeks of the explosion; people exposed to radioactive fallout generally; and those exposed in utero.

However, the term hibakusha has recently also been taken to apply to people anywhere in the world who have been exposed to radiation. Its common usage has spread to encompass any person exposed to radiation from the nuclear fuel chain, through the use and production of nuclear weapons, especially through nuclear weapons tests, as well as the processes that create and produce nuclear energy.

The International Youth Summit for Nuclear Abolition, held in Hiroshima in August last year, issued a pledge that declared:

Nuclear weapons are a symbol of a bygone age; a symbol that poses eminent threat to our present reality and has no place in the future we are creating. [\[53\]](#)

Jointly organized by six groups including the SGI, the Summit was attended by young people from twenty-three countries as well as the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth Ahmad Alhendawi. The participants pledged to convey to the world and the future the experiences of the hibakusha, raise awareness among their peers and take other forms of action to protect the shared future of humankind.

Then in October in New York, the work and outcome of the Youth Summit were presented at a side event of the General Assembly First Committee, which deals with disarmament and international security. The event focused on the actions the younger generation can take, both at the UN and in their respective communities, to help clear the path toward a world free from nuclear weapons.

Working with like-minded individuals and groups, we wish to support the continued holding of such summits for nuclear abolition going forward. To quote the Youth Pledge again:

Abolishing nuclear weapons is our responsibility; it is our right and we will no longer sit by while the opportunity of nuclear abolition is squandered. We, youth in all our diversity and in deep solidarity pledge to realize this goal. We are the Generation of Change. [\[54\]](#)

If this pledge, given voice in Hiroshima by youth from throughout the world, can take root in the hearts of people globally, there is no barrier that cannot be surmounted, no goal that cannot be achieved.

More than anything, it is the depth and intensity of the commitment and pledge that lives in the hearts of the younger generation that will transform the world from one where nuclear weapons threaten the lives and dignity of people to one in which all people can live in peace and fully manifest their inherent dignity.

It is the firm pledge of the SGI to offer our unflinching support for the abolition of nuclear weapons and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals based on the solidarity of youth, the generation of change. In this way we will continue to work for a world, a global society, in which no one is left behind.

Notes

- 1 See UNHCR, "UNHCR Mid-Year Trends 2015," 3.
- 2 See IFRC, "New IFRC Report."
- 3 UNHCR, "Refugees Endure Worsening Conditions."
- 4 Giannelli, "Migrants Between Scylla and Charybdis."
- 5 (trans. from) Shioda, *Ganji o tsuide*, 201.
- 6 Buddharakkhita, trans., *The Dhammapada*, 10:130:2.
- 7 Jaspers, *Socrates, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus*, 24.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 35.
- 9 Watson, trans., *The Lotus Sutra*, 82.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 118.
- 11 (trans. from) Nichiren, *Nichiren Daishonin gosho zenshu*, 1262.
- 12 (trans. from) Makiguchi, *Kachiron*, 186.
- 13 Nussbaum, *Not for Profit*, 79-80.
- 14 (trans. from) Makiguchi, *Makiguchi Tsunesaburo zenshu*, 5:131.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 4:44.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 4:45.
- 17 Zolli and Healy, *Resilience*, 21.
- 18 UN Women, "Photo Essay."
- 19 UN News Centre, "Interview with Amina J. Mohammed."
- 20 See Maathai, *Unbowed*, 122.
- 21 UNHCR, "World Refugee Day."
- 22 Ikeda and Nanda, *Our World to Make*, 152.
- 23 (trans. from) Toda, *Toda Josei zenshu*, 1:20.
- 24 Maritain, *Man and the State*, 80.
- 25 UNICEF Press Centre, "50 Years after UNICEF."
- 26 See UNHCR, "Worldwide Displacement."
- 27 UN General Assembly, "United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training," 3-4.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 3.
- 29 See IEA, "Key Trends in CO2 Emissions," vi.
- 30 TEMM, "Footprints of TEMM," 2.
- 31 See UN, "Sustainable Development Goals Fact Sheet," 6.
- 32 Maathai, *Unbowed*, 130.
- 33 See SGI, "Panel at Sendai."
- 34 See FAO, "Nothing Dirty Here."
- 35 See UN, "Sustainable Development Goals Fact Sheet," 8.
- 36 UNISDR, "Sendai Framework," 13.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 23.
- 38 See UN SG Envoy on Youth, "4 out of 10 Child Soldiers Are Girls."
- 39 (trans. from) Makiguchi, *Makiguchi Tsunesaburo zenshu*, 2:395.
- 40 Ban, "Video Message to the Conference."
- 41 (trans. from) Toda, *Toda Josei zenshu*, 4:565.
- 42 ICJ, *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*, 267.
- 43 ICAN, "Humanitarian Pledge."
- 44 UN General Assembly, "Taking forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations," 3.
- 45 Kane, "Disarmament: The Balance Sheet," 2.
- 46 UN General Assembly, "2010 Review Conference," 21.
- 47 UN General Assembly, "Towards A Nuclear-weapon-free World," 5.
- 48 UN General Assembly, "United Action Towards the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons," 3.
- 49 UN General Assembly, "Ethical Imperatives for A Nuclear-Weapon-Free World," 3.
- 50 UN General Assembly, "Statement by South Africa," 2.
- 51 UN General Assembly, "2015 NPT NGO Presentation: Faith Communities Concerned about the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons."
- 52 UN General Assembly, "Taking forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations," 1.
- 53 International Youth Summit for Nuclear Abolition, "Generation of Change."
- 54 *Ibid.*

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