

Soka Gakkai International submits herewith a report on its disarmament education activities for reflection and inclusion in the Report of the Secretary-General to the 65th Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the 2002 UN Study on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education.

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Soka Gakkai International (SGI) is a Buddhist association with more than 12 million members in 192 countries and territories. It has had consultative status with the Economic and Social Council since 1983. Headquartered in Tokyo, the SGI maintains UN liaison offices in New York, Geneva and Vienna.

The Soka Gakkai was founded in Japan in 1930 as an educational reform society with an underpinning of Buddhist humanism. Its founder, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871-1944), along with his colleagues, was imprisoned during World War II for opposition to the Japanese military government and its abuse of religion and education in support of its war of aggression in Asia. Makiguchi died in prison, but after the war, his protégé, Josei Toda (1900-58), rebuilt the Soka Gakkai as a lay Buddhist organization centered on the ideal of the *human revolution* or social change through individual empowerment and transformation. In 1957 at a gathering of 50,000 youth, Toda issued a declaration calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons, harshly condemning such weapons as a threat to humanity's collective right to life. This declaration, as well as the founder's struggle against military authority, has become the enduring inspiration for the SGI's activities for nuclear abolition. From the mid-1960s onwards, under the leadership of Toda's successor Daisaku Ikeda, SGI President since 1975, the SGI has actively promoted peace, education and culture.

What follows is a report on the SGI's disarmament education activities focused on the last two years:

People's Decade for Nuclear Abolition

The People's Decade is a grassroots educational initiative with the aim of building international public opinion against nuclear weapons and increasing the number of people who support and seek to live a culture of peace. Launched in 2007 coinciding with the 50th anniversary of Toda's antinuclear declaration mentioned earlier, the People's Decade has been engaged and supported by the SGI community worldwide and in collaboration with other antinuclear movements such as the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).

To date, the following activities and materials have been generated within the framework of the People's Decade initiative:

➤ **Exhibition: *From a Culture of Violence to a Culture of Peace: Transforming the Human Spirit*** (Recommendations 5, 12, 29a, particularly 2, 3)

This exhibition highlights the synergy between the goals of human security and disarmament, particularly nuclear abolition. It also presents personal and spiritual dimensions of disarmament—and the change in the human heart required if humans are to decisively triumph over violence.

Launched in September 2007, the exhibition has been shown in more than 200 cities in 23 countries in five languages. Noteworthy showings include those at the Palais des Nations during the NPT Preparatory Committee session in April-May 2008, the Mexican Senate Building during the 62nd Annual DPI/NGO Conference in September 2009, and the Melbourne

Convention & Exhibition Centre during the Parliament of the World's Religions in December 2009, the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum in February 2010.

Youth have been playing significant roles for the exhibition—taking part in developing its content and organizing symposia, teach-ins, and related events; university campuses have been popular venues. Viewer reactions suggest that the exhibition helps them appreciate the imperatives of nuclear abolition on an individual basis, as a personal commitment. Complete versions are available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese and Thai, with partial translations in Serbian and Macedonian.

➤ **DVD: *Testimonies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Women Speak Out for Peace*** (Recommendations 4, 5, particularly 2, 3, 26)

In 2005, the Soka Gakkai Women's Peace Committee in Japan filmed interviews with 31 female war survivors from all over Japan. In 2007, out of those interviews, those of eight *hibakusha*, or atomic bomb survivors, were compiled in a DVD in five languages: English, Japanese, Chinese, French and Spanish. The same content can be viewed at the People's Decade website.

➤ **People's Decade website** (Recommendations 2, 3, 15, particularly 22)

This website (www.peoplesdecade.org) contains up-to-date news on nuclear disarmament, an "Experts Say" section where the views of world leaders and experts are presented, and sections where disarmament education materials can be downloaded, including a PDF version of the *Transforming the Human Spirit* exhibition, mentioned above. The English site is regularly updated and seeks to serve as a clearinghouse for disarmament education information and tools. A Japanese site was launched in 2009 as well.

➤ **IPS/SGI joint media project** (Recommendations 2, 4, 5)

Since 2009, the SGI and the Inter Press Service (IPS) have jointly undertaken a global media and communication project (www.nuclearabolition.net) which aims to raise media visibility and awareness of nuclear disarmament issues. The site provides in-depth reports by IPS correspondents and project partners from around the world, as well as columns by experts and disarmament-relevant news feeds.

➤ **Petition drive calling for Nuclear Weapons Convention** (Recommendation 5)

In January 2010, Soka Gakkai youth members in Japan launched a petition drive calling for the adoption of a Nuclear Weapons Convention. Over the course of three months, a total of 2,276,167 signatures were collected through face-to-face dialogues. The petitions were presented to the President of the 2010 NPT Review Conference as well as the UN Secretary-General through the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs in May 2010.

➤ **Youth survey on nuclear weapons** (Recommendations 2, 5)

In early 2010, SGI youth members conducted a survey of young people's attitudes toward nuclear weapons. A total of 4,475 interviews were conducted in eight countries: Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, New Zealand, the United States, the United Kingdom, Brazil and South Africa. The findings were released in April and presented during the 2010 NPT Review Conference through a side event on the role of youth toward nuclear abolition. Survey data and commentary can be viewed at the People's Decade website.

➤ **Workshops and symposia** (Recommendations 5, 29a)

The SGI has organized various events around the world, from expert symposia to community workshops, dedicated to raising awareness and exploring the role of civil society in disarmament.

- In November 2008, a symposium titled “Strengthening the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)” was held at Christiansborg Palace, which houses the Danish Parliament, in Copenhagen. SGI-Denmark and the Danish Committee of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs cosponsored the event together with several peace organizations. Some 150 peace scholars, activists and ambassadors to Denmark attended the event, including former IAEA Director General Hans Blix.
- In April 2009, a seminar titled “Nordic Initiatives for Nuclear Abolition” was organized by the SGI, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO), and Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) at the Nobel Institute in Oslo.
- In May 2009, the SGI organized a symposium titled “Nuclear Abolition and Human Security: Shared Action to Meet a Common Threat” during the NPT PrepCom in New York. The event, cosponsored by ICAN, explored how the perspectives of human security can be brought to bear in countering the threat of nuclear weapons.
- In September 2009, the SGI and Mayors for Peace co-organized a workshop titled “International Decade for Disarmament: How NGOs can make it a Success with a Focus on Human Security and Nuclear Disarmament” at the 62nd Annual DPI/NGO Conference in Mexico City.
- In November 2009, the Swedish Network for Nuclear Disarmament, which consists of 17 peace organizations including SGI-Sweden, organized a conference on the theme of nuclear disarmament and the role of civil society in strengthening the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). SGI representatives participated in the panels and the plenary session.
- In December 2009, the SGI organized two sessions at the Parliament of the World’s Religions in Melbourne, Australia. One panel brought together Buddhist, Christian, Jewish and Muslim representatives in a call for moral leadership by the world’s religions in the effort to abolish nuclear weapons. The other panel explored the path to a nuclear-weapons free world from the perspectives of international law, the ethical heritage of the world’s religion and civil society action rooted in a human security framework.

➤ **Proposals and publications** (Recommendations 2, 3, 4)

On September 8, 2009, SGI President Daisaku Ikeda issued “Building Global Solidarity Toward Nuclear Abolition,” a proposal highlighting five key steps to abolish nuclear weapons. The SGI president’s annual Peace Proposal for 2010 also included an extensive discussion of the steps that can be taken by both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon states to reduce reliance on nuclear weapons, expand the scope of legal and moral restraints against their use and move toward their earliest possible abolition. These proposals for nuclear abolition are distributed in Japanese, English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Italian and other language.

Building a Culture of Peace

The SGI has been actively supporting the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010) through a range of educational and outreach activities. These have included exhibitions, lectures, workshops and conferences.

➤ **Culture of Peace Resource Centers and Distinguished Speakers Series** (Recommendation 12)

SGI-USA has opened the Culture of Peace Resource Centers in its community centers in New York, Santa Monica, Chicago, Honolulu and Washington, D.C., with the aim of promoting a culture of peace. The Culture of Peace Distinguished Speaker Series has been held regularly since 2007. Speakers have included Anwarul K. Chowdhury, former Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of the UN; Jeffrey Sachs of the Earth Institute at Columbia University; Betty Reardon of Teachers College Peace Education Center; former child soldier Ishmael Beah; and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Betty Williams. Selected lectures from this series have been published as *Voices for a Culture of Peace, Volume 1*. The Chicago Center organizes an annual community discussion program titled “Think Peace Take Action.”

➤ **Pocket-size Booklet and Bookmark for promotion of a Culture of Peace** (Recommendations 2, 4, 12)

The SGI has produced a pocket-sized booklet of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (A/RES/53/243) as well as a bookmark of the definition and eight action areas of a culture of peace. These materials have been widely distributed.

➤ **Women’s Forums for a Culture of Peace** (Recommendation 12)

The Soka Gakkai’s Women’s Peace Committee and the Young Women’s Peace and Culture Conference in Japan have been organizing fora, exhibition and publications promoting a culture of peace for a number of years. On the occasion of International Women’s Day in 2010, the Women’s Peace Committee organized a Culture of Peace Forum in Tokyo commemorating the 10th anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

➤ **Victory Over Violence** (Recommendations 2, 4, 5, 6 and 12)

Launched by SGI-USA in 1999, Victory Over Violence (VOV) is a grassroots initiative to help promote a culture of peace and nonviolence among youth. Youth facilitators who make presentations in schools have been trained, and over 5,000 grassroots discussions have been held. Over 1 million individuals have signed a “Victory Over Violence” pledge to lead nonviolent lives. VOV actively supports the United Nations Culture of Peace initiative, sustainability initiatives such as the Earth Charter and nuclear abolition. VOV activities have been taken up by SGI organizations around the world. SGI-New Zealand, for example, has introduced the Victory Over Violence program in high schools in the Reporoa area. Students make a personal pledge to value their own life, to respect all life and to inspire hope in others.