

**A Public Statement by the Soka Gakkai International (SGI)  
to the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee  
for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to  
the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)  
April-May 2019, New York**

**A Renewed Nuclear Threat**

Tensions surrounding nuclear weapons are mounting worldwide. The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) are facing grave challenges and there were recently military exchanges between two nuclear-armed states in South Asia. These facts remind us of the danger of a new nuclear arms race, in a world of fragmentation and complexity. In this deteriorating security environment, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), long the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament regime, is facing renewed challenges.

**Common Interests Encapsulated in the NPT**

The NPT embodies the urgent global imperative to eliminate nuclear weapons and the grave threat they pose. The preamble of the NPT stresses the need to make every effort to avert the danger of a nuclear war and the importance of strengthening trust between states in order to “facilitate the cessation of the manufacture of nuclear weapons, the liquidation of all their existing stockpiles, and the elimination from national arsenals of nuclear weapons and the means of their delivery.” The shared commitment of all states parties to achieve a world free from nuclear weapons is enshrined in the Article VI.

If the NPT is to be maintained and fulfill its original purpose, states parties must refocus on the common ground to which they have all agreed and committed themselves. As one means of strengthening the NPT regime and advancing the nuclear disarmament agenda, the Soka Gakkai International (SGI) supports the call by UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu that a ministerial meeting be held at the beginning of the 2020 NPT Review Conference to adopt a political declaration that would reaffirm the circumstances and motivations that brought the Treaty into being and focus deliberations on the Article VI commitments.

**Moral Imperative for Meaningful Security**

Determined that no one else should suffer what they have endured, the hibakusha (atomic bomb survivors) have shared with the world the dire realities of nuclear weapons use. These catastrophic humanitarian consequences, profound concern over which was unanimously expressed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, give rise to the imperative that nuclear weapons never be used again, under any circumstances. As affirmed by the 1996 Canberra Commission and in the 2017 Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), the only certain assurance against the use of nuclear weapons is their elimination. The fact is that the overwhelming majority of the world’s states, including those that do not adhere to the TPNW at this point, maintain security policies that are not dependent on nuclear weapons, signaling their acceptance of its core norms.

There are many in the nuclear-weapon and nuclear-dependent states who, even if not actively supporting nuclear deterrence policy, consider it an unavoidable necessity for the maintenance of national security. While acknowledging the seeming complexities of security, if we view the world from the perspective of each individual, however, it becomes very clear the depth of the suffering

experienced by those whose interests have been overlooked under traditional ways of thinking about security.

### **A New Vision of Peace**

The foundational action must be the effort to build a world in which all people can enjoy a feeling of meaningful security and can together foster hope for the future. It is necessary to recast the issue of nuclear weapons, which have been viewed as necessary for the peace and security of states, in the light of the intrinsic value and the dignity of life, a question of pressing and intimate concern for all people.

The SGI, grounded in our convictions as a Buddhist association, has continued to maintain that if we are to truly put an end to the era of nuclear weapons we must struggle against the real enemy, which is neither nuclear weapons per se nor the states that possess or develop them, but rather the ways of thinking that permit the existence of such weapons—the readiness to annihilate others when they are perceived to be a threat or a hindrance to the realization of our objectives.

The second president of our organization, Josei Toda, in 1957 issued a call for the prohibition of nuclear weapons, which he termed a violation of right to life of the world's peoples. This right is inherent and inviolable. To energize and sustain efforts for a world free from nuclear weapons, it is essential that we develop and share positive vision of a world in which all people fully experience and enjoy their inherent worth and dignity. In this sense, the SGI deeply concurs with the goals set forth in the Disarmament Agenda by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres: disarmament to save humanity, disarmament that saves lives and disarmament for future generations.

For this reason, we have continued to stress the importance of peace and disarmament education that addresses the full spectrum of disarmament concerns and potentialities. The SGI's grassroots disarmament education activities not only promote awareness of the devastating consequences of nuclear weapons but also seek to connect the issue to the concerns of daily life, stressing that each of us has the power to transform reality, including the daunting challenges of nuclear weapons.

### **For A Directional Shift Toward Disarmament**

Humanity possesses the power of solidarity, a strength with which we can overcome any adversity. The darker the night, the closer the dawn: now is the time to accelerate momentum toward disarmament by taking the present crises as an opportunity to create a new history. To this end, the SGI calls on states parties to the third session of the Preparatory Committee of 2020 NPT Review Conference to:

- 1) Continue to heed the voices of civil society, especially those of the world's hibakusha, so that the NPT process will have a consistently human focus as common ground; to declare the shared commitment of the world's people that the suffering endured by the hibakusha must never be repeated;
- 2) Engage in constructive dialogue to produce concrete results in line with an ultimate objective of a world free from nuclear weapons encapsulated in the NPT, recognizing that the TPNW is an effort to fulfill the obligation of all states parties to the NPT to pursue and bring to a conclusion negotiations culminating in the elimination of nuclear weapons;
- 3) Deepen commitment to supporting disarmament education that takes an intersectional approach as an integral element to advance the goals of the NPT. In addition, implement the recommendations contained in the UN Secretary-General's report (A/57/124) regarding the UN study on disarmament and non-proliferation education in order to advance the goals of the Treaty in support of achieving a world free from nuclear weapons.