Message

Ambassador Libran Cabactulan, Chair of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Ambassador Sergio Duarte, UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Dr. Kathleen Sullivan and friends from Hibakusha Stories, Members of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to offer my deep appreciation to Ambassador Cabactulan and High Representative Duarte, who have attended despite the enormous demands on their time and attention during the NPT Review Conference. I would also wish to express my deepest gratitude to the atomic bombing survivors, our friends from Hibakusha Stories who have traveled the great distance from Japan in order to share their experiences and thus convey the realities of atomic weapons use. It is truly an honor to be able to welcome you to our New York Culture Center at this ceremony where petitions in support of a Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC) are to be presented to the NPT Review Conference and to the United Nations.

From the start of this year, members of the Youth Division of the Soka Gakkai in Japan began gathering signatures on a petition calling for an NWC, to be presented at the NPT Review Conference. In the end they were able to collect more than 2.2 million signatures, each of which represents the voice of a young person choosing a more hopeful future. These signatures are the crystallization of an even greater number of heartfelt dialogues and discussions; it is in these exchanges and interactions that the ultimate meaning and value of this effort by young people is to be found.

The understanding and support that have grown up around today’s efforts for nuclear abolition are the fruit of many years of earnest and persistent work on the part of our distinguished guests gathered here today. In particular, I wish to
acknowledge the singular importance of the efforts made by the *hibakusha*, who have sought to awaken people to the inhumane nature of nuclear weapons, determined that no one should ever have to experience the horrors that were visited upon them.

There are sources of immeasurable power and energy that lie hidden in the depths of seemingly ordinary people. Manifesting and bringing together this energy will unleash a great force for change, one capable of transforming our world. The SGI’s efforts for peace, which now embrace 192 countries and territories, are focused on transforming people’s consciousness, stirring their consciences and generating an expanding solidarity of courage and hope, through dialogue.

The abolition of nuclear weapons cannot remain a mere ideal. Abolition is a real-world necessity, an indispensable condition for the world’s people to live in peace. We can create this new reality through the power of awakened citizens working in solidarity.

We of the SGI are pledged to continue striving until nuclear abolition is achieved, and we look forward to working together with those who share this goal.

In closing, I wish to offer my heartfelt prayers for the continued health and wellbeing of all in attendance and for the further flourishing of your respective organizations.

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Daisaku Ikeda
President
Soka Gakkai International