

# MESSAGE TO COMMEMORATE THE 80<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF SOKA GAKKAI

By  
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I am pleased to have this opportunity to congratulate Soka Gakkai as it commemorates its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This is a very happy occasion not only for members of Soka Gakkai, but also for all who have worked with it to advance some of the most important goals in our world today.

Founded in 1930 to advance educational reform, Soka Gakkai has emerged over the last eight decades into one of the world's leading groups promoting the great causes of world peace, disarmament, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and harmony among all peoples.

The annual Peace Proposals by Daisaku Ikeda, the President of Soka Gakkai International, have been an insightful and inspirational resource, which, if fully implemented, would advance some of the most fundamental goals of the United Nations Charter—indeed, of all humanity.

I have been especially impressed with the dedicated efforts by Soka Gakkai to promote nuclear disarmament. During the Review Conference last May of the parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), I had the privilege of receiving a petition with over two million signatures that were collected by youth members of Soka Gakkai International, in support of the conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention.

I applaud all the many efforts by Soka Gakkai to engage young people in the common global effort to achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons, a point I personally made to the *hibakusha* who travelled to New York to attend related events during the NPT Review Conference.

Thanks to the work of Soka Gakkai and many other groups, as well as from an increasing number of Governments, expectations are growing for new progress in nuclear disarmament, and for work to begin on a nuclear weapons convention. This goal has now been supported by parliamentarians, mayors, and countless members of the UN General Assembly and States Parties to the NPT. It is also being actively promoted by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

So I wish to extend my deepest congratulations to Soka Gakkai as it celebrates its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary and wish it the greatest of success in all its future work.