

# Inquiry into Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament

## Submission by Soka Gakkai International Australia

### Background

Soka Gakkai International Australia is an affiliate of Soka Gakkai International. The 12 million members of Soka Gakkai International (SGI), active in 192 countries and territories, embrace Nichiren Buddhism with a core philosophy summed up by the concept of "Human revolution." This is the idea that the self-motivated inner change of a single individual positively affects the larger web of life and results in the rejuvenation of human society. The common activity of all members is participation in discussion groups where people from all walks of life come to learn about the potential each individual has to reform their own lives and contribute to the betterment of society.

Originating in Japan during the 1930s, the Soka Gakkai developed as the militaristic nationalism in Japan culminated in Japan's entry into World War II. The State Shinto ideology was imposed on the population and all forms of dissidence suppressed. The refusal of Makiguchi (the first president of Soka Gakkai) and his closest associate Josei Toda (1900-58) to compromise their beliefs and lend support to the regime led to their arrest and imprisonment in 1943 as "Thought criminals." Despite attempts to persuade him from his principles, Makiguchi held fast to his convictions and died in prison in 1944.

Josei Toda was released from prison and amidst the confusion of post-war Japan, set out to rebuild the Soka Gakkai. He promoted an active, socially engaged form of Buddhism as a means of self-empowerment – a way to overcome obstacles in life and tap inner hope, confidence, courage and wisdom. In 1957, Toda made an impassioned speech calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons at a meeting of 50,000 members of the Soka Gakkai's youth. Toda saw developments in nuclear weaponry as a product of the darkest aspects of human nature. His stance against the proliferation and use of nuclear weapons is a guiding principle of Soka Gakkai's peace efforts.

Daisaku Ikeda (third president of Soka Gakkai and current SGI president) also experienced the horrors of war and has dedicated his life to building peace by promoting human diplomacy and engaging in dialogue with leading world figures. Every year since 1983, SGI President Daisaku Ikeda has published a peace proposal given to the United Nations, which explores the interrelation between core Buddhist concepts and offers concrete proposals to the diverse challenges global society faces in the effort to realise peace and human security.

In his 2009 peace proposal, released on 26 January, he analyses the current global economic crisis as caused by a tendency, as in war, towards a destructive spirit of abstraction. In response, he advocates a paradigm shift to "humanitarian competition", a

concept first proposed by Soka Gakkai founder Tsunesaburo Makiguchi in 1903, in which nations and individuals compete to contribute the most to global society and the welfare of humanity. With regard to a core value of Soka Gakkai's peace efforts, that of the abolition of nuclear weapons, Ikeda states, "Nuclear weapons embody an absolute evil that threatens humankind's right to live; they are incompatible not only with the interests of national security but with human security."

## Proposals

The concrete proposals Ikeda makes are as follows and, along with the humane rationale, they form the crux of our submission to the Inquiry into Nuclear Non-proliferation as we are confident Australia can play a leading role by facilitating and promoting dialogue on these initiatives:

- The prompt holding of a US-Russia summit, where a basic agreement for bold nuclear arms reduction plans be reached. "This would clearly demonstrate to the world the two nations' commitment to disarmament ahead of the 1010 NPT Review Conference."
- The regular convening of five-state summit for nuclear disarmament, including other nuclear-weapon states and the UN Secretary General to begin drafting a roadmap of truly effective measures to fulfil their disarmament obligation stipulated in Article VI of the NPT.
- The pursuit of the conclusion of a Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC), which would comprehensively prohibit the use, manufacture, possession, deployment and transfer of nuclear weapons.
- Consideration given to the Model Nuclear Weapons Convention, which was drafted under the initiative of NGOs and submitted to the UN by Costa Rica in 1997. A revised version has already been circulated as a UN document, which UN Secretary- General Ban Ki-moon is urging countries to consider.
- Reversing the policy of deterrence, which Ikeda believes serves as a justification for other states to seek nuclear weapons capability and makes it more an imperative to establish international norms that comprehensively prohibit nuclear arms with no exception for any state.

He includes the following reference to activities occurring on the global stage and SGI's commitment to supporting by garnering support for the movement toward the abolition of the scourge on humanity of nuclear weapons.

"Global Zero, a campaign launched in December 2008 aiming to eliminate nuclear weapons and build broad-based public support for this cause, is planning to convene a World Summit in January 2010. I have long called for such a summit, and welcome this

initiative. I would urge that negotiations for an NWC be commenced, using discussions at the Global Zero World Summit and the NPT Review Conference as a springboard.

The SGI is determined to foster stronger international public opinion with particular emphasis on activities initiated by women and young people, working closely with other NGOs such as International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), who launched the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).”

## Conclusion

We believe treaties that promote nuclear non-proliferation are essential commitments that represent the voice of communities otherwise disempowered in speaking against the horror of nuclear war. Bringing into focus the need for humanity to advance beyond the abhorrent resolution of disputes through violence and the utter disregard for human life that nuclear weapons represent, treaties connect the humanistic hope that the people of various countries yearn for.

Australia has an opportunity through negotiating and signing effective and responsible treaties to give weight to its voice against the proliferation of nuclear weaponry. In doing so we, as a nation, open opportunities to engage other countries and promote the same determination to outlaw such weapons. Our lack of reliance on a nuclear weapons industry may allow a credibility of objectivity.

The further development of inter-parliamentary committees, including the participation of NGOs within Australia, would greatly contribute to the discussion, development and implementation of the kind of ideas that are represented in this submission. Practical and soundly based concepts when created and tested by this type of committee based approach can withstand scrutiny and form a basis for a creative response to the current challenge of the nuclear age.

With such extensive consideration, ideas and practical suggestions, these can form the basis of international proposals and unify countries and organisations around a realistic target for the dismantling of the nuclear arms industry and stockpiles.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'GJ' with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Greg Johns  
General Director  
30 January 2009