



PEACE ACTIVITIES
2019 ANNUAL REPORT

The Soka Gakkai is a global community-based Buddhist organization that promotes peace, culture and education centered on respect for the dignity of life. Its members uphold the humanistic philosophy of Nichiren Buddhism in 192 countries and territories around the world.

Individual Soka Gakkai members strive to actualize their inherent potential while contributing as empowered global citizens to their local communities and responding to the shared issues facing humankind.

The Soka Gakkai and the SGI (Soka Gakkai International) engage in activities to promote a culture of peace. The SGI has been accredited as a nongovernmental organization (NGO) in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 1983.

Action on Global Issues

Working with the UN, NGOs and other stakeholders, the SGI undertakes efforts to address global issues through activities such as raising awareness and bringing ideas and recommendations to the UN. The SGI Office for UN Affairs based in New York and Geneva is actively engaged at the United Nations.

The SGI was an early proponent of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-14) and played an active role in the UN process for the realization of the World Programme for Human Rights Education which was launched in 2005 as a follow-up to the UN Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004). It launched the “Second People’s Decade for Nuclear Abolition” in 2018 following the first Decade launched in 2007, in order to support current efforts to realize the early entry into force, and universalization of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

The SGI actively participates in networks including NGO committees on specific themes such as peace and disarmament, human rights education and gender equality in New York and Geneva, and the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the UN (CoNGO).

Peace, Culture and Education

The ideal of peace describes a world in which all people can freely thrive and express their potential, a world in which the dignity of life and the fundamental rights of all people are respected. Promoting culture means enhancing and celebrating our shared humanity and interconnectedness. Education, in its broad sense, is the ongoing cultivation of our humanity.

Peace Proposals

The annual peace proposals of Daisaku Ikeda, president of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI), have played an important role in inspiring action toward these ideals both at local and global levels.



**Peace
and
Disarmament**

The SGI's nuclear abolition efforts trace their roots back to 1957, when second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda (1900–58) made a public declaration calling for the elimination and prohibition of nuclear weapons. The SGI has been working toward realizing a world free from nuclear weapons and the creation of a culture of peace through a number of initiatives and events, including the latest exhibition “Everything You Treasure— For a World Free From Nuclear Weapons.”



**Education for
Sustainable
Development
and
Climate Action**


The SGI promotes sustainable living through community-based non-formal education efforts. It has developed various educational tools including the Seeds of Hope exhibition, a joint initiative between the SGI and the Earth Charter International (ECI) launched in support of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–14).

Climate justice resonates with Buddhist philosophy and standing with the most vulnerable in society. In response to the current global emergency, the SGI has begun working on awareness-raising, mitigation and advocacy at the global, national and local levels.



**Human Rights
Education**

The quest for human rights can be perceived as “a challenge of otherness” in which individuals develop the courage to acknowledge, respect and appreciate the differences among people. The SGI is engaging in activities to advance human rights education in support of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005–ongoing) and the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (2011).



**Humanitarian
Relief
and
Disaster Risk
Reduction**

The SGI has been engaged in humanitarian relief activities over the years, taking advantage of its unique strengths and capabilities as a faith-based organization (FBO). Since the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015, the SGI has organized events sharing the Soka Gakkai's relief efforts following the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011.



**Gender Equality
and
Women's
Empowerment**

Gender equality and the empowerment of each individual are integral to the Buddhist philosophy of the Soka Gakkai, which upholds the inherent dignity and equality of all human beings. The SGI supports the activities of UN Women and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) by working with other like-minded groups through organizing events and actively participating in the NGO Committee on the Status of Women.

SGI PRESIDENT ISSUES 2020 PEACE PROPOSAL

On January 26, 2020, the 38th annual peace proposal by Daisaku Ikeda, president of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI), titled "Toward Our Shared Future: Constructing an Era of Human Solidarity" was released, marking the anniversary of the founding of the SGI.

Climate action and nuclear weapons abolition were Ikeda's main themes, with a focus on the individual lives and suffering often hidden behind macroeconomic indices. He described climate change as "a fundamental challenge, on which the fate of humankind hinges," and stressed that it threatens to render meaningless global efforts toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Praising the energy of youth climate activists, he stated, "When young people's will to transform reality merges with an indomitable optimism, the possibilities are limitless."

Ikeda proposed that UN Youth Climate Summits be held every year toward 2030 and called for a Security Council Resolution mainstreaming youth participation in climate-related decision-making.

Consistent with his decades of action toward the abolition of nuclear weapons, Ikeda urged efforts to ensure that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) reaches 50 ratifications and thus enters into force this year, the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

He proposed holding a People's Forum for a World Without Nuclear Weapons centered on hibakusha and civil society in Hiroshima or Nagasaki to follow the treaty's entry into force.

He also called for a five-year extension of the New START Treaty between the US and Russia as the first step toward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

Alarmed by risks that cyberattacks or artificial intelligence (AI) could destabilize nuclear weapons systems, he urged that deliberations on a prohibition regime related to cyberattacks on nuclear systems, AI and other new technologies should begin at the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference in April and May this year.

Ikeda also highlighted the plight of children and youth deprived of educational opportunities due to armed conflict or natural disasters, and therefore called for strengthening of the financial foundation of the UNICEF-hosted Education Cannot Wait global fund.

Ikeda also advocated that gender perspectives be more thoroughly integrated into disaster risk reduction efforts. He stated, "Because the circumstances in which many women live their day-to-day lives are obscured by societal norms and discriminatory attitudes, they are at greater risk of being left behind when assistance is most needed." He urged that we must ensure that gender equality becomes a reality and prioritize those who tend to be overlooked and left behind in everyday life as we work to build community resilience.

Ikeda concluded with a commitment to continued grassroots action, saying, "The SGI will further promote empowerment of, by and for the people, as we address the climate crisis and other challenges with an expanding movement of global solidarity."



SGI-ICAN ANTINUCLEAR EXHIBITION SHOWN IN KAZAKHSTAN

The SGI-ICAN antinuclear exhibition "Everything You Treasure—For a World Free From Nuclear Weapons" was shown at the Library of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan – Elbasy in Nur-Sultan, from October 2 to 13, 2019, to mark the 30th anniversary of the end of nuclear weapons testing at the Semipalatinsk nuclear weapons test site and the 10th anniversary of the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (CANWFZ).

The showing of the exhibition aimed to attract support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and to galvanize further interest in the issue. This was its first showing in Central Asia.

In his message to the exhibition opening (<https://www.daisakuikeda.org/sub/resources/works/lect/20191001-msg-nuke-abol-kazakhstan.html>), SGI President Daisaku Ikeda expressed his respect for Kazakhstan's contributions to nuclear abolition, stating:

"Semipalatinsk was the venue for the signing ceremony for the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. It was also a pivotal site for a popular movement opposing nuclear weapons . . . the Nevada-Semipalatinsk Movement that famously developed into a global grassroots effort to ban nuclear weapons testing and nuclear weapons themselves."

The exhibition was also held in October at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg and at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur. As of December 2019, it had been shown in 93 cities in 21 countries.

Selected List of Venues in 2019

Date	Venue
August-September	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
October	Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan
October	Winnipeg, Canada
October	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
November	Fukuoka, Japan



UN SIDE EVENT ON "APPEAL OF THE HIBAKUSHA" SUPPORTED BY SGI PROMOTES NUCLEAR BAN TREATY

On October 11, 2019, at UN Headquarters in New York, the Austrian Mission and the "Appeal of the Hibakusha" hosted a side event, with the support of the SGI and Peace Boat, where Ambassador H.E. Jan Kickert of the Austrian Mission to the UN warmly recognized ICAN partners' efforts as a driving force to make the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) more widely accepted and expressed his gratitude especially to the lifelong dedication of the hibakusha.

Toshiki Fujimori, assistant secretary general of Nihon Hidankyo (Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations) and a Hiroshima A-bomb survivor himself, shared his own experience of losing six of his family members and

having fought for a world free from nuclear weapons so that no one else suffers the same fate. An official statement delivered by an SGI representative stressed: "The entry into force and implementation of the TPNW will help bring humanity back from the brink of nuclear disaster and open the way to a more secure future for us."

On the same day, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and Peace Boat co-organized an event, called "Youth Champions for Securing our Common Future." The event was part of UNODA's "#Youth4Disarmament" initiative, aimed at connecting young people with experts to learn about today's

international security challenges, the work of the United Nations, and how they can become involved. The event was held onboard Peace Boat. The day featured keynote speakers, educational panel discussions, workshops, and musical performances. Speaking to the Agenda for Disarmament's first pillar—"Disarmament to save humanity"—together with experts from the EU Mission to the UN and UNODA, Murphy Yanashima from the SGI as a partner of ICAN talked about the danger of nuclear weapons and the need for their elimination.

The SGI statement can be viewed here: https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/dca5da_814cfb739f694456af7dac8893b4f148.pdf

TOKYO SYMPOSIUM ON UN NUCLEAR ABOLITION DAY CO-ORGANIZED BY SOKA GAKKAI PEACE COMMITTEE



An antinuclear weapons symposium commemorating the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons was held in Tokyo on September 16, 2019, inviting youth and experts from various perspectives to shed light on future endeavors toward a world free from nuclear weapons.

At the event, Masako Wada, assistant secretary general of Nihon Hidankyo (Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations) and a Nagasaki A-bomb survivor herself, gave her testimony. Many of the participants were young people who for the first time were able to hear direct stories about the horrific experience of being a survivor of the A-bomb. They later wrote down their personal determinations to take action for the elimination of nuclear weapons as part of a questionnaire.

As a representative of the youth, Taira Togashi of All Nippon Renovation shared his rich experience of engaging with social activism, inspiring each participant to be a “change maker” in society.

A panel discussion followed, moderated by Hiroki Komasaki, CEO and founder of NPO Florence that has incorporated the language of ordinary people into the expert narratives of the nuclear weapons issue, with representation from Akira Kawasaki, International Steering Committee member of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), and Keiko Nakamura, associate professor at the Research Center for Nuclear Weapons Abolition (RECNA) at Nagasaki University.

Kazuo Ishiwatari, chairperson of the Soka Gakkai Peace Committee, stated that it will continue to urge the Government of Japan to renew its stance and sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

The event was organized by the Soka Gakkai Peace Committee, supported by Nihon Hidankyo, RECNA, Nagasaki University and All Nippon Renovation.



CARIBBEAN FORUM ON NUCLEAR BAN T SGI PLAYS SUPPORT

On June 19 and 20, 2019, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Guyana and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), in partnership with the SGI, convened a Caribbean Regional Forum on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons to take stock of the Treaty from a regional perspective and to canvas progress for the early signature and ratification by all countries in the region.

The Forum was attended by representatives from 10 countries out of the 14 CARICOM (Caribbean Community) member states, as well as those from civil society and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

At the Forum, participants exchanged views on various topics, including the scope of the Treaty, its relevance to the region, how the Treaty relates to other disarmament treaties



The SGI has been working as an ICAN partner toward the early entry into force of the TPNW, particularly promoting the Treaty among the Caribbean nations through organizing regional meetings with permanent missions in New York and Geneva. As part of such efforts, the SGI partnered with ICAN for the actualization of this Forum.

Anna Ikeda of the SGI actively took part in the Forum through moderating and speaking at sessions, as well as supporting logistical and organizational aspects. Hayley Ramsay-Jones of the SGI also took part in preparations toward the Forum, including helping draft a briefing paper on the TPNW's relevance in the region and developing a paper titled "A Social Injustice—Race, Gender and Nuclear Weapons," both of which were distributed at the Forum along with other materials.

and procedures for becoming a State party. Government representatives at the Forum reiterated their commitment to work toward the early entry into force of the TPNW. The Forum concluded successfully with the adoption of the Georgetown Statement.

The Forum was addressed by Mr. Carl B. Greenidge, and Dr. Karen Cummings, foreign secretary and foreign minister respectively of the Republic of Guyana.



CAMPAIGN TO STOP KILLER ROBOTS: CONCERNS OVER DATA AND RACIAL BIAS

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots held its first global meeting in Berlin, Germany, from March 21-23, 2019, to shift gears and move the Campaign's work to preemptively ban fully autonomous weapons "to the next level" and convince states to launch negotiations on a treaty.

Following the global meeting, from March 25-29, members of the Campaign attended a meeting at the UN Office at Geneva of the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (GGE), established by the High Contracting Parties of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). Representatives of the SGI attended both meetings.

During the GGE, Hayley Ramsay-Jones and Anna Ikeda of the SGI convened a briefing with representatives of the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent (WGEPAD), which was holding its 24th session during the same week, under the theme of "Data for Racial Justice."

During the briefing, representatives of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots and WGEPAD discussed the concern that if fully autonomous weapons were to be developed and used, the data and algorithms used in such weapons systems would have inherent bias on the grounds of race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation and other factors. At the end of the week the WGEPAD delivered the draft report, which included some of the concerns on racial bias discussed at the briefing. The report was submitted to the Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly.

The SGI also organized a regional briefing with representatives of the CARICON (Caribbean Community) member states and informed them of recent developments in the CCW and the overall goals of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

The SGI has been a member organization of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots since late 2018.

UN EXPERT WORKSHOP ON RACISM AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



A UN expert workshop on the impact of new information technologies on racial equality was convened on October 16-17, 2019, by E. Tendayi Achiume, the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) School of Law.

The meeting was sponsored by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Promise Institute for Human Rights at UCLA School of Law, and the UCLA Center for Critical Internet Inquiry. Around 25 people participated in the meeting and Hayley Ramsay-Jones of the SGI was one of the 15 invited speakers.

Ramsay-Jones spoke about the current global landscape of racism and examined how racism reinvents itself, the various ways new information technologies can be racist, the dangers of weaponizing these technologies, and the cultural, social, political and economic impact of killer robots on marginalized groups. Inputs from the workshop informed the Special Rapporteur's report, finalized in April 2020.

UN HIGH LEVEL FORUM MARKS 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF CULTURE OF PEACE DECLARATION

On September 13, 2019, marking the 20th anniversary of the adoption of General Assembly Resolution 53/243, the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, the High Level Forum on the Culture of Peace was convened by the President of the General Assembly in cooperation with the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace (GMCoP). The SGI is a founding member of GMCoP and has helped organize the Forum annually as a core member of GMCoP for the seven consecutive years since it was first convened in 2012.



A solidarity message from Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Leymah Gbowee was delivered at the General Assembly Hall on the theme "The Culture of Peace: Empowering and Transforming Humanity" followed by statements by governments.

A total of 56 Member States and various groups and UN agencies submitted statements. The afternoon session consisted of a panel of governments, UN experts, academics and civil society.

INTERFAITH STATEMENT CONDEMNING NUCLEAR WEAPONS AS INCOMPATIBLE WITH FAITH TRADITIONS PRESENTED AT NPT PREPCOM IN NEW YORK



On May 1, 2019, a diverse group of faith-based organizations and individuals committed to a nuclear weapon-free world presented a joint statement at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The statement was read by Emily Welty of the World Council of Churches (WCC) on behalf of the group Faith Communities Concerned about Nuclear Weapons during the session for statements from civil society.

The statement had been endorsed by 54 groups and individuals of Christian, Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist affiliations including the SGI.

Recognizing that there are core prohibitions common to both the NPT and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), such as those against the transfer of nuclear weapons and against assisting other states in acquiring nuclear weapons, that can be supported regardless of a state's position on the TPNW, it urges all States parties to the NPT to engage in constructive dialogue toward strengthening such prohibitions as a concrete and practical step to fulfilling the obligation of all States parties to the NPT in pursuing nuclear disarmament.

The statement reads: "We share and value the basic human right to live in a world free from the fear of total destruction, in an environment

free from contamination. The indiscriminate and destructive capacity of nuclear weapons makes them wholly incompatible with our faith traditions and requires our consistent advocacy for their total and complete elimination."

This is the 11th statement of its kind since April 2014. To date, the group has issued interfaith statements at the international conferences on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, previous NPT PrepComs, the UN General Assembly and the UN conference that negotiated the TPNW.

"SEEDS OF HOPE" EXHIBITION SHOWN IN ZAMBIA, PHILIPPINES AND JAPAN



SGI-Zambia hosted the "Seeds of Hope" exhibition, jointly created by the SGI and the Earth Charter International, at Mulungushi International Conference Centre in Lusaka from May 30 to June 1, 2019. About 800 people including students from seven private schools viewed the exhibition and deepened their understanding of sustainable development issues.

On September 24, SGI-Philippines organized a showing at the University of Philippines (UP). In the opening ceremony, UP Vice President for Public Affairs Elena Pernia read a message from UP President Danilo Concepcion: "We welcome its message that we need to widen our circle of compassion and love to encompass more than just our tribes, but the entirety of nature as well."



In early October, the Soka Gakkai in Japan hosted the exhibition at Iki, an island city in Nagasaki Prefecture selected as an SDGs Future City by the Japanese government. On September 26, Iki became the country's first municipality to declare a climate emergency. The exhibit showing there took place just after the declaration and attracted many local visitors.

SPREAD OF "MAPTING" AND EARTH CHARTER AROUND THE GLOBE

The Maping app was co-created by the Earth Charter International (ECI) and the SGI in 2016 as a way to track and map activities that contribute to actualizing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to learn about the Earth Charter as an ethical framework and its Principles related to each SDG. Maping has been introduced and implemented in several college classes, workshops and conferences to deepen understanding of the correlation between the Earth Charter and the SDGs.

In August 2019, Maping successfully motivated youth to take action for climate change through a photo competition.

In November 2019, the 40th General Conference of UNESCO adopted a resolution that reaffirms the importance of the Earth Charter as an ethical framework for sustainable development. It encourages Member States to use the Earth Charter in particular in the implementation of its new framework Education for Sustainable Development (ESD): Towards achieving the SDGs (ESD for 2030) and in connection with the 2017 UNESCO Declaration of Ethical Principles in Relation to Climate Change.



SGI AND AMAZON INSTITUTE JOIN EARTH CHARTER INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

From January 29 to 31, 2019, the Earth Charter International (ECI) hosted an international conference titled “Leading the Way to Sustainability 2030: Education, the Earth Charter and the Sustainable Development Goals” at the University for Peace in Costa Rica. Over 100 participants from 18 countries shared pedagogical approaches, materials and lessons learned in the search for transformational education processes for sustainable development and global citizenship.

Representing the Soka Institute for Environmental Studies and Research of the Amazon (CEPEAM) in Manaus, Brazil, Tais Tokusato, environmental education coordinator, and Monique Tiezzi, international relations advisor, also outlined their education projects such as the Environmental Academy for local schoolchildren. Tadashi Nagai of the SGI and Christine Lacayo, ECI youth coordinator, conducted an interactive presentation on the Mapping app.



Joan Anderson and Hiro Sakurai of the SGI joined a session on nonformal education and co-presented on “The Seeds of Hope Exhibition: The Role and Impact of Nonformal Education Tools.”

For more details and highlights of the conference, visit the Earth Charter website.



6TH ASIA-PACIFIC FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) took place from March 27 to 29, 2019, at the UN Conference Centre in Bangkok. Hiro Sakurai of the SGI participated.

At APFSD, the SGI had a booth which showcased Maping, a mobile app co-developed with the Earth Charter International for the promotion of the SDGs. Maping was featured on March 29 at a side event titled "Building a Regional Movement for Sustainable Development through Online Platforms" co-organized by

the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) SDG Help Desk, UN Development Programme (UNDP) Bangkok Regional Hub, MY World 2030 Advocates, and the UN Volunteer Programme.

Prior to APFSD, the Asia-Pacific People's Forum on Sustainable Development (APPFSD) was held from March 24 to 26. The Asia Pacific Faith-Based Coalition for Sustainable Development (APFC) organized a workshop titled "Empowering People: Faith-Based Organizations ensuring

inclusiveness and equality" on 26 March. The SGI helped organize the workshop and made the opening remarks as convener of APFC, followed by presentations from representatives of Islamic Relief Worldwide, World Vision International, ACT Alliance and Arigatou International.

25TH INTERNATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH SOCIETY (ISDRS) CONFERENCE

From June 26 to 28, 2019, the 25th International Sustainable Development Research Society (ISDRS) Conference took place at China's Nanjing University. The ISDRS is a global network of sustainable development professionals that links researchers in academia and practitioners from all continents in order to expand collaboration and exchange of knowledge, experiences, best practices and critical reviews.

Alexandra Masako Goossens-Ishii of the SGI attended the conference.

The conference gathered about 170 scholars and researchers from various backgrounds related to sustainable development. The theme of the 2019 conference was "Sustaining Resources for the Future." Presentations ranged from economic to philosophical perspectives on sustainable development.

Some of the keynote speakers included: Professor Pauline Deutz of the University of Hull and president of ISDRS; Professor Huadong Guo of the Chinese Academy of Sciences; Professor Antonio Bento, director of the Center for Sustainability Solutions, University of Southern California; and Professor Xuehua Zhang, chief scientist at the Lishui Institute of Ecology and Environment, Nanjing University.



REFORESTATION AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS CONTINUE AT SOKA AMAZON INSTITUTE

The Soka Institute for Environmental Studies and Research of the Amazon outside Manaus, Brazil, expanded its activities in 2019.

In the field of education, through its Environmental Academy program, 2,000 students visited the center to learn about the river, trees and archaeology of the Amazon. The first phase of a School of Environmental Educators Project was concluded in October 2019, involving 30 teachers from a public kindergarten.

The forest enrichment planting program continued, with 1,300 trees being planted through the Seeds of Life program, a partnership with a local maternity hospital and the Specialized Court of Environment and Agrarian Issues of Amazonas whereby a seedling is planted for every baby born.

In 2019, the Institute strengthened environmental conservation measures at the Private Reserve of Nature Heritage Dr. Daisaku Ikeda that surrounds it. A solar power system was adopted and the seedling nursery was enlarged.

In April 2019, a new project aimed at making Humaitá in the southern part of Amazonas State a sustainable city was launched, as an initiative of the Soka Institute, the Federal University of Amazonas, the Federal Institute of Education and the State University of Amazonas.

Over 30 years of the Institute's activities, nearly 100 million tons of CO2 have been neutralized through planting of trees and forest regeneration. All its initiatives are aimed at recovery of the local environment.

SIDE EVENT AT HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The SGI participated in the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) at UN Headquarters in New York. On July 11, 2019, the SGI joined the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education, Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the UN, Global Call to Action Against Poverty, Asia Development Alliance, General Board of Church and Society, and the Episcopal Church Center in organizing a side event titled "Education to End Inequality and Promote Peace."

As Sustainable Development Goal 4 was up for review for the first time since the 2030 Agenda was adopted in 2015, it was considered a momentous year for the education constituency worldwide. At the event, civil society spotlight reports on SDG 4 from the Asia Pacific region were launched and handed to Jordan Naidoo, Director of the Division for Education 2030 Support and Coordination of UNESCO.

Alexandra Goossens-Ishii and Hiro Sakurai of the SGI facilitated a group session on peace education and the culture of peace.

Additionally, during the HLPF, the SGI showcased panels from its various exhibitions related to target 4.7 which includes education for sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, and promoting the culture of peace and global citizenship, at UN Headquarters.

SGI PARTICIPATES IN UN CIVIL SOCIETY CONFERENCE IN SALT LAKE CITY

The 68th UN Civil Society Conference on Building Inclusive and Sustainable Cities and Communities was held in Salt Lake City, USA, from August 26 to 28, 2019. The SGI co-organized three workshops.

The workshop "Amazon Frontline Report—Challenges and Partnerships for Sustainability in Manaus, Brazil's Amazonas State" drew 70 people. Tais Tiyyoko Tokusato of the Soka Institute for Environmental Studies and Research of the Amazon (CEPEAM)

outlined the Institute's environmental education initiatives, and Cintia Okamura, a community participation specialist from São Paulo, described a sustainable community project in Aleixo Lake near Manaus being developed in partnership with CEPEAM.

The workshop was co-organized by CEPEAM, the National Institute of Amazonian Research (INPA) and the Specialized Court of Environment and Agrarian Issues of Amazonas.

The SGI also co-sponsored a workshop titled "Cities Must Save Themselves from the Nuclear Weapons Threat" organized by the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, and co-organized another titled "Power of Faith Actors to Promote Resilient Cities & Communities," together with the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities (JLI), Unitarian Universalist (UU) United Nations office, and Episcopal Relief and Development.

UN CLIMATE ACTION SUMMIT AND SDG SUMMIT

The SGI was engaged in activities during the UN Climate Action Summit and first UN SDG Summit, held during the high-level week of the 74th session of the UN General Assembly.

On September 24, 2019, Ivy Koek of the SGI spoke at an SDG Action Zone event at United Nations Headquarters organized by Islamic Relief Worldwide on “Why faith actors are critical to achieving the 2030 agenda.” The five speakers were invited to speak on different SDGs.

Koek spoke on gender equality, its challenges and the potential for religion to be an agent of change, as well as sharing the SGI's activities involving women at the grassroots initiating projects. Examples included the Soka Gakkai Women's Peace Committee promoting the culture of peace in their communities for the last 16 years and the Young Women's Stories project of young women telling their personal stories of transformation and overcoming gender stereotypes in their workplaces.

Other speakers included Naser Haghamed, CEO, Islamic Relief Worldwide; Christine Allen, director, the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD); Jean Duff, chief executive, Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities (JLI); and Ruth Messinger, global ambassador at the American Jewish World Service and Finkelstein Institute social justice fellow at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTS).

SGI SURVEYS ON AWARENESS OF SDGS AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN JAPAN, THE UK AND THE US

The SGI hosted an event at the Salvation Army Auditorium in New York on September 23, 2019, where the results of a survey carried out by Soka Gakkai student members in Japan, the UK and the US on awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and climate change were presented.

Announced by Koichi Kabasawa (Soka Gakkai Japan), Amelia Gonzalez (SGI-USA) and Scott Hartley (SGI-UK), the findings showed differences in the specific SDGs students in the three countries were most interested in.

Key findings were: among the UK respondents, 84% said that the SDG they have an interest in is climate change, 75% of US respondents said that the government and society are not making enough efforts to address climate change, and interest in climate change among Japanese students was lower than that of other SDGs. Following the youth presentations, three speakers shared their reflections: Ramu Damodaran, Chief, United Nations Academic Impact, and Kusumita P. Pedersen, Climate Action Task Force and Board of Trustees, Parliament of the World's Religions, commented on

the findings, stressing that the role of youth is crucial in finding innovative approaches to achieving the SDGs.

Meanwhile, Ludovica Martella, a postgraduate student in sustainable strategies at the New School for Public Engagement, emphasized how each Sustainable Development Goal is interconnected and thus the importance of comprehensive approaches to tackle climate change and other global challenges.



CLIMATE CHANGE PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS SHOWCASED AT UN SDG ACTION ZONE

On September 21, 2019, two SGI representatives were among 500 delegates attending the UN Youth Climate Summit at UN Headquarters in New York. This was the first youth summit solely devoted to climate action in UN history.

Toward the Youth Climate Summit, in August, the SGI and the Earth Charter International (ECI) co-organized a photo competition on climate change, SDG 13, to promote climate action by youth.

Applicants were encouraged to share photos showing the effects of climate change and actions taken in response to it on Maping, the free educational app created by the ECI and the SGI, and related social media.

More than 200 people from across the world submitted photos, and 12 entries were selected as prize winners. Catalina Gómez Vives from Costa Rica won the top prize of a ticket to New York to join climate-related activities at UN Headquarters. Her photo showed teenagers researching the impact of climate change on endangered leatherback sea turtles.

The photo competition and Maping app were showcased at the SDG Action Zone on September 24, during the UN General Assembly high-level week. This was a space where exhibitions or interactive events highlighting dynamic ways to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals were shared.

Information about Maping and the 12 winning photographs were exhibited on a screen, and participants expressed interest in promoting youth engagement in climate action remotely via social media. The 12 winning photographs can be found here: <https://maping-blog.com/competition-2019/>

Based on these experiences, the Youth Division of Soka Gakkai Japan has renewed its campaign titled “Soka Global Action” and is encouraging individual members to take action on the climate issue.



YOUTH STANDING UP FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

On December 9, 2019, the Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the United Nations, in partnership with the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, organized an event at the United Nations Office at Geneva to launch the fourth phase (2020-2024) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, dedicated to youth, as part of the celebrations of Human Rights Day 2019. The UN Human Rights Council adopted a related Plan of Action in September 2019, to start on January 1, 2020. The event was co-organized by the Human Rights Council's Governmental Platform on Human Rights Education and Training.

The venue hosted the exhibition "Transforming Lives: The Power of Human Rights Education", co-organized by SGI and the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning.

On this occasion, an opening musical performance by Seven Eyes, a musical band of young people from the UK, took place.

It was then followed by remarks from H.E. Sabina Stadler, Ambassador of the Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the UN, Kate Gilmore, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, and by young human rights educators and advocates,



such as Mickaël Repellin, representative of Centre de Conseils et d'Appui pour les Jeunes en Matière de Droits de l'Homme (CODAP), and Elisa Gazzotti, SGI representative and chairperson of the NGO WG on HREL.

The remarks were followed by video messages from Jayathma Wickramanayake, the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Tin Kampl, Director of the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth, Patrik Bole, youth delegate from Slovenia, Lalita Thongiam and Krawee Tongintee, youth delegates from Thailand, Mariana Castrejón Castañeda "Yuya", young human rights defender from Mexico and

Arizza Nocum, young human rights defender from the Philippines.

Closing remarks were given by H.E. Sek Wannamethee, Ambassador of the Permanent Mission of Thailand to the UN, followed by a closing musical performance by Seven Eyes.

On this occasion, Elisa Gazzotti emphasized the importance of translating into action the commitments taken at the UN to ensure the realization of the rights of all people, including youth.

41ST SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL



The SGI actively participated in the 41st session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) held at the UN Office at Geneva from June 24 to July 12, 2019. On July 4, Elisa Gazzotti of the SGI was invited by the Pacific Rim Institute for Development Education to join a panel titled “Development Education: Case Studies from Around the World” as co-chair of the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning (NGO WG on HREL).

Gazzotti gave a presentation on human rights education and youth, introducing the website “Transforming Lives: The Power of Human Rights Education.” She emphasized that this was created as a resource particularly geared to reach young people, in the hope that they can realize their rights based on what they learn and promote a better future and environment in their respective communities.

CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION AND DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP HELD IN LONDON

On June 14, 2019, the 13th Annual International Conference for Education and Democratic Citizenship titled “Education for Human Rights and Citizenship: The Challenges of Inter-generational Justice” took place at University College London. The conference aimed to support research programs in the interdisciplinary fields of citizenship, education and democracy, and it brought together academics, students and civil society representatives.

Elisa Gazzotti of the SGI gave a poster presentation titled: “Reimagining Human Rights Education: Bridging UN Initiatives and Daily Realities.”

Based on the SGI’s philosophy of inner transformation, the presentation addressed the themes of how we can build an authentic culture of human rights, why we need to reimagine human rights education and what role young people play as actors of change.

Gazzotti currently serves as the co-chair of the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning in Geneva.

NGOS WELCOME YOUTH PHASE OF WORLD PROGRAMME FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

The SGI participated in the 42nd session of the Human Rights Council at the UN Office at Geneva from September 9 to 27.

On September 13, Elisa Gazzotti of the SGI, on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning (NGO WG on HREL), delivered an oral statement co-signed by 17 organizations. The statement welcomed the Plan of Action for the fourth phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, focusing on youth. The Plan of Action has been prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in close consultation with several stakeholders including civil society and particularly youth representatives. The statement emphasized that a significant gap still exists between formal international support for human rights education (HRE) and national implementation.

It called on States to support the adoption of the Plan of Action for the fourth phase of the World Programme and to ensure significant commitments to implement it, including submitting follow-up reports requested by OHCHR.

On September 26, through Resolution A/HRC/42/L.5, the Human Rights Council adopted the Plan of Action for the fourth phase of the World Programme for HRE without a vote. On the same day, Gazzotti, on behalf of the NGO WG on HREL, supported a Training Session on United Human Rights Mechanisms organized by the International Catholic Center of Geneva (CCIG) and the UNESCO Etxea - UNESCO Basque Country Centre.

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION EXHIBITION AND SYMPOSIUM SUPPORTED BY SGI HELD AT UNESCO HOUSE, PARIS



A symposium on the theme “Transforming Lives: The Power of Human Rights Education” was held at UNESCO House in Paris, France, on December 13. The symposium was co-organized by the Permanent Delegation of Slovenia to UNESCO, Soka Cultural Association of France, the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning (NGO WG on HREL), the International Organization for the Right to Education and Freedom of Education (OIDEF), the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) and the SGI Europe Buddhist Association (SGI EBA).

The exhibition "Transforming Lives: The Power of Human Rights Education" created by the SGI together with HRE 2020, the NGO WG on HREL and the Platform for Human Rights Education and Training, was also on display from December 10-18. During the opening of the exhibition on December 11, Jean-Claude Gaubert, President of Soka Cultural Association of France, Veronika Boskovic-Pohar, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Slovenia to France, Morocco and UNESCO, and Elisa Gazzotti, co-chair of the NGO WG on HREL, delivered opening remarks.

The December 13 symposium consisted of four roundtables on the following themes: (1) The World Programme for HRE: the fourth phase; (2) Discrimination and social inclusion; (3) Global citizenship; and (4) Faith and human rights. Gazzotti moderated the roundtable on the fourth phase of the World Programme for HRE, starting in January 2020 with a focus on youth. The roundtable offered different perspectives on this Programme phase, addressing opportunities and best practices as well as challenges, such as how to include young people who do not have access to the formal education system due to conflict.

The symposium closed with remarks from Doudou Diène, former UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and Chair of the Board of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience.



FOCUS ON YOUTH HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATORS AT 2019 SOCIAL FORUM

The SGI, as part of the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning (NGO WG on HREL) engaged in the Social Forum, an annual meeting convened by the Human Rights Council, on October 1 and 2, 2019, during which time the exhibition “Transforming Lives: The Power of Human Rights Education” was displayed in the United Nations Office at Geneva.

During the evening of October 1, Elena Ippoliti, Human Rights Officer of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), organized a screening of the movie “A Path to Dignity,” co-sponsored by the SGI, Human Rights Education Associates and OHCHR. One of the attendees of the event was Premalatha, a young woman whose story is featured in the movie.

On October 2, the NGO WG on HREL organized a side event titled: “Youth as Ambassadors of Human Rights Education: Implementing the next Plan of Action of the World Programme.” About 70 people participated in the event including representatives of youth organizations and networks, Permanent Missions, UN agencies and local and international NGOs. The side event consisted of a panel discussion with Paulina Tandiono, OHCHR Associate Human Rights Officer; Guillermo Gutierrez, IIMA and VIDES (Uruguay) HRE educator; Victoria Ibiwoyem, One African Child Foundation for Creative Learning (Nigeria) Director; and Aunell Ross Angcos, UNESCO Youth Peace Ambassador and Chairman of UNESCO Young Professionals of the Philippines.

The panel was moderated by Elisa Gazzotti of the SGI, co-chair of the NGO WG on HREL. Three youth human rights educators shared their views and experiences on how the Plan of Action for the fourth phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education can be implemented in Nigeria, Uruguay and the Philippines. After the discussion, a breakout session took place, and all the participants had the opportunity to voice their ideas and experiences as well as how to take concrete action to implement the Plan at the national level.

SGI CO-ORGANIZES TOKYO YOUTH FORUM ON CHILD RIGHTS



On December 1, 2019, a youth forum titled “Thinking about the Convention on the Rights of the Child with Youth and Children” was held in Tokyo. The event was co-organized by the SGI, Amnesty International Japan and Japan Youth Platform for Sustainability (JYPS), with the support of the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC), Tokyo. Around 100 people joined NGO activists and experts to discuss the role of youth in promoting the convention.

In his opening speech, Hideaki Nakagawa, executive director of Amnesty International Japan, explained how a youth forum was initiated and organized for the first time in 2018 by several NGOs to mark the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He said that the aim of the event was to provide an open space for young people to learn and discuss about their role as proponents of human rights.

A message from Kul Chandra Gautam, former deputy executive director of UNICEF and assistant secretary-general of the United Nations, was introduced at the event. In his message, Gautam stated that “even in Japan, children today face challenges such as bullying, abuse, sexual exploitation and poverty,” and therefore it was “very fitting that the Tokyo Youth Forum 2019 stresses the importance of human rights education for children and youth.”

Mikiko Otani, member of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, gave a keynote speech and emphasized that promoting the rights of the child not only creates a positive effect for children but also impacts all aspects of society, contributing to the realization of the principle of “leaving no one behind” of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She also stated that young people can play a unique role in supporting children and initiating change in society because they are close in age to children and

are able to build trust and listen empathetically to children who might have difficulty in voicing their true feelings about their experiences.

The panel discussion, moderated by Kaoru Nemoto, director of UNIC, focused on the environment surrounding children today including issues such as poverty, the increased use of social media and internet bullying, as well as youth’s role to protect children from these new risks. Panelists included representatives from the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the Social Media Association of the University of Hyogo, Hachioji Cafeteria for Children and JYPS.

The exhibition “Hope and the Culture of Peace” created by the Soka Gakkai Women’s Peace Committee was also shown during the forum. A short video of the forum can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/kECJggeMqRE>

TYPHOON RELIEF AND ONGOING SUPPORT FOR DISASTER-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES IN JAPAN

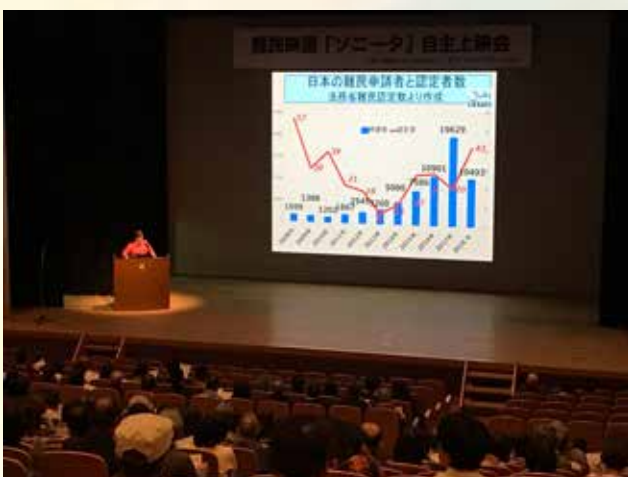
In Japan, in September 2019, Typhoon Faxai caused the strongest winds on record, and in October, Typhoon Hagibis caused widespread damage across 13 prefectures, with many overflowing and flooded rivers, along with incidents of landslides and mudflows. The Soka Gakkai promoted volunteer activities to clean mud out of people's houses in many affected cities.



The Soka Gakkai also continued its efforts to dispatch volunteer choirs and orchestras to disaster-affected areas to encourage the victims. This initiative entitled "Building Bonds of Hope Concerts" started after the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake as the focus of efforts shifted to the recovery stage. Such concerts have been held more than 150 times according to the needs of local communities, and in total more than 60,000 people have attended. In November 2019, in light of its activities, the orchestra was invited to perform at the Pre-festival of the World Bosai Forum held in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture.

AWARENESS-RAISING EFFORTS ON REFUGEE ISSUE IN JAPAN

In January 2019, a screening of the film "Born in Syria" was held in Tokyo by the Soka Gakkai Peace Committee, supported by Japan for UNHCR. After the screening, a student from Soka University who left home after the Syrian Civil War shared his experience and dreams, and Saburo Takizawa, chairman of the Board of Directors of Japan for UNHCR, delivered a presentation on the current situation of refugees around the world. Around 400 citizens joined the event and gave feedback afterwards. One participant stated: "The film was very powerful and really made me think what I could do for these children. It may be a small step, but I will share this in my local area and keep thinking what we can do."



In December, a similar event screening the film "Sonita" was held at the Soka Gakkai Kansai International Culture Center in Hyogo. Some 250 people attended.

From December 2018 to April 2019, an exhibition of paintings by refugee children titled "We dream to be able to continue to dream" was shown at the Kansai International Culture Center. Eighty paintings are displayed in the exhibition, collected through NGOs working for refugee children in Ecuador, Jordan, Lebanon, Myanmar and Uganda.



Young Women's Stories—Fostering Leadership



SGI OFFICE FOR UN AFFAIRS LAUNCHES WEBPAGE HIGHLIGHTING YOUNG WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

The Young Women's Stories---Fostering Leadership project created by the SGI Office for UN Affairs is now showcased on its website at sgi-ouna.org. As of December 2019, there were 12 stories uploaded from young women in countries in Africa, Asia, North America and Europe. The project began in 2018, with the aim to better understand how young women display leadership in different capacities and what their story of transformation was in the process.

The SGI Office for UN Affairs continues to complement and expand the perception of leadership with one of its values that "Leadership belongs to everyone and is a self-motivated process to bring forth our full human potential."

The Global Network of Women Peacebuilders assisted with contribution of young women's stories.



SHARING YOUNG WOMEN LEADERS' STORIES AT CSW PARALLEL EVENT

The SGI participated in the 63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW63) from March 11 to 22, 2019, which gathered over 7,000 civil society representatives and delegates in New York. Based on the CSW63 priority theme, the SGI organized a parallel event titled “Young Women’s Leadership for Inclusive Social Protection Systems” co-sponsored by the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace, Footage Foundation, Global Movement for the Culture of Peace, Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, Global Sunrise Project, RESURJ, SPECTRA Feminists Rwanda, and the Youth Empowerment and Leadership Organization.

The event, attended by over 150 people at the Church Center for the United Nations, consisted of a roundtable discussion moderated by Ivy Koek of the SGI. Six speakers from Afghanistan, Canada, Rwanda, South Sudan and the US demonstrated the power of stories through their work with young women leaders in education, gender training, peace and security, film and digital media.



They shared how young women’s voices are critical in building inclusive social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure. To encourage reflection and participation, the audience was invited to talk in pairs, which led to lively discussions.

As a contribution to the negotiations on the agreed conclusions, the SGI signed on to two CSW63 joint written statements: one submitted by Graduate Women International and seven other NGOs; and another with three other NGOs focusing on the needs of young women which included topics such as equal pay, redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work, and improved health and safety.

PROMOTING THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA AND THE CULTURE OF PEACE

A photograph showing a woman in the foreground on the right, wearing a white shirt and glasses, speaking into a microphone. In the background, three other women are seated at a long table covered with a black cloth, listening attentively. The setting appears to be a conference room or a meeting hall with wood-paneled walls.

On October 17, 2019, the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, New York (NGO CSW/NY) held its monthly meeting on “UNSCR 1325—Towards the Culture of Peace.” Speakers included Ambassador of Hungary to the UN Katalin Bogyay and Mallika Iyer, program officer, Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP). Ivy Koek of the SGI, vice chair of the NGO CSW/NY, and Azadeh Khalili of the International Alliance of Women and communications secretary of the NGO

CSW/NY co-moderated the discussion, linking the importance of the Women, Peace and Security agenda (Security Council Resolution 1325) with the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (General Assembly Resolution A/53/243) which marked its 20th year in September. It was stressed by speakers that the Culture of Peace is essential to Resolution 1325 and that it is something everyone at all levels can be a part of. Women have a role as agents of change and peacebuilders,

and this can happen from the bottom up, as GNWP has seen at the grassroots localizing 1325. With this approach, the agenda becomes relevant to people and allows them to be informed and advocate for their own human rights.

WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK AT THE UNITED NATIONS IN GENEVA



On February 5, 2019, World Interfaith Harmony Week was observed with an event co-organized by the Foundation for Gaia and the NGO Alliance on Global Concerns at the UN Office at Geneva.

World Interfaith Harmony Week was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in Resolution A/RES/65/5 adopted on October 20, 2010, which reaffirms that mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue constitute important dimensions of the culture of peace. The purpose of this event was to showcase practical initiatives of interfaith action by NGOs and faith-based organizations which may meaningfully contribute to alleviating conflicts associated with religious or spiritual traditions.

The panelists included Mohammed Bechari of the World Muslim Communities Council, Lea Wyler of Rokpa International, Gilles François of the LDS Charities, Diane Ala'i of the Bahá'í International Community, Mintze Van Der Velde of World Goodwill, Vita de Waal of the Foundation for Gaia, and Alexandra Goossens-Ishii of the SGI. The panel was moderated by Gerald Williams of LDS Charities. In her presentation, Goossens-Ishii highlighted how core principles of the Sustainable Development Goals reflect and resonate with most faith traditions.

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