

Remarks for SGI exhibition reception December 7 2009

Thank you...

It is a great privilege to speak briefly tonight in such esteemed company. I would also like to acknowledge that we meet now on the country of the Kulin Nations, and to honour the first people of this nation.

Soka Gakkai International has long understood the importance of individual action, finding peace within and then bringing this peace to the rest of the world. In many ways, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear weapons adopts this same philosophy, by calling for both individual and governmental understanding, education and then action to rid the world of the worst weapons ever known – nuclear weapons. It is the very reason our campaign is called ICAN – because every one of us can do something towards creating a world free of nuclear weapons.

In an international context, we have seen a decade of deadlock, dysfunction and deadly intent on the issue of disarmament. We have seen wars started that have drawn in too many nations, including our own, and killed far too many people. We have seen disappointment and impasse dominate multilateral debates on disarmament, especially around the issue of nuclear weapons, when over 23,000 continue to plague the planet. But this time is fast passing.

So it is a great honour for us at ICAN to join with Soka Gakkai International for the Peoples Decade of Nuclear Abolition. The SGI campaign and the exhibition we have seen here tonight are vital contributions for a changing dialogue. SGI and ICAN are both hopeful that we will soon see this wonderful exhibition tour around Australia through local councils with our other partners Mayors for Peace.

As our campaigns build, so will the dialogue for disarmament. We have heard US President Obama pick up on this, along with an increasing number of other governments throughout this last year in particular, and we hope to see it picked up more strongly by the governments of Australia and Japan in coming weeks. We need to see this dialogue, this talk, translated into meaningful action.

Our campaign, ICAN, promotes a Nuclear Weapons Convention as a way forward for nuclear disarmament. The model Nuclear Weapons Convention was first developed in 1997, the result of a massive collaboration of experts from around the world over many years. It was updated and released again when we launched the ICAN campaign in 2007. This model Nuclear Weapons Convention, now accepted as a UN document, outlines how we can get to zero nuclear weapons.

But we acknowledge that it is the voices and actions of the people, from all backgrounds, that will see us freed from the curse of nuclear weapons. Through the work of people, no matter what nationality, creed or religion, no matter whether they are politicians, policy makers or folk from any other walk of life, nuclear disarmament is possible. It is necessary. And it is achievable now.

We hope that you will join with SGI, ICAN and people all around the world now working for disarmament and building the Peoples Decade for Nuclear Abolition.

Arigatou

Thank you.