Statement by Kimiaki Kawai, Soka Gakkai International (SGI)

Open-ended Working Group—Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations

10 May 2016, Geneva

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

I am speaking on behalf of Soka Gakkai International (SGI), a Buddhist faith-based organization and an international partner of ICAN. SGI is active in education and awareness-raising among the general public on peace and disarmament issues.

The views expressed on 'essential elements that could form part of effective legal measures' by the delegates of Mexico, Jamaica, Austria, South Africa, Ireland and others who pointed out that the humanitarian discourse is all about security resonate deeply with my organization.

Mr. Chairman,

SGI believes, as stated in its working paper NGO/17, that at the heart of the nuclear weapons issue is the radical negation of others—of their humanity and their equal right to happiness and life.

In this regard, I would like to draw the attention of all delegations to the public statement by the Faith Communities Concerned about the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons; a continuing interfaith effort to prohibit nuclear weapons, presented to the OEWG Chair on May 3 which reads that:

"Nuclear weapons are incompatible with the values upheld by our respective faith traditions—the right of people to live in security and dignity; the commands of conscience and justice; the duty to protect the vulnerable and to exercise the stewardship that will safeguard the planet for future generations. Nuclear weapons manifest a total disregard for all these values and commitments. There is no countervailing imperative—whether of national security, stability in international power relations, or the difficulty of overcoming political inertia—that justifies their continued existence, much less their use."

Mr. Chairman,

As Buddhists upholding the value and dignity of life, we believe that this can only be countered through a sustained effort to expand our individual and shared capacities for imaginative empathy.

There is a universal impulse to avoid suffering and harm. We all have an intuitive sense of the unique value of our individual being. To the degree that we can realize that others must feel the same way, we can sense the reality of their suffering and embrace their dignity. Such empathy makes genuine dialogue possible. And dialogue is the most certain path to realizing our shared quest for the authentic experience of security.

Mr. Chairman,

There is a strong desire to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations as part of a shared global quest for authentic security—for human security for all. It is time to fill the legal gap and act for our shared security by banning nuclear weapons. Those of us who are committed to creating a nuclear free world are ready for that.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.