

The Future Lies in the Power and Passion of Youth

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Symposium on SGI President Daisaku Ikeda's 2017 Peace Proposal: "The Global Solidarity of Youth: Ushering in a New Era of Hope"

Pune/August 19, 2017: Today in Pune a fresh wave towards peace and brotherhood was ushered in through a peace symposium that centered around Soka Gakkai International (SGI) President Daisaku Ikeda's 2017 Peace Proposal titled *The Global Solidarity of Youth: Ushering in a New Era of Hope*.

Held at SVC Auditorium, Symbiosis, Pune, the symposium featured eminent discussants such as Dr Vijay Bhatkar, Chancellor – Nalanda University, Ms. Pratima Kirloskar, President Innovations- Pune Chapter, Promoter Group- Kirloskar Brothers Ltd and Dr. Ganesh Natarajan, Founder – 5Fworld, Chairman – Nasscom Foundation and Global Talent Track. The keynote address was delivered by Dr S.B. Majumdar, Founder & President – Symbiosis Society, Chancellor- Symbiosis International University.

In this address Dr. Majumdar said, "Dr Ikeda is a dreamer of peace, who has been promoting and propagating peace for the past several decades... in this world mired with violence and conflict, Buddhism can promote the brotherhood of mankind and world peace." He endorsed Dr. Ikeda's view that youth are the engine of the world, for they "have the energy to usher in a new era of hope and prosperity."

Focusing on the peace proposal, Mr. Vishesh Gupta, Chairperson Bharat Soka Gakkai said that "In these times of conflict, the human touch of reaching out and listening to the other is at a premium. There is an urgent need to establish a culture of trust, a culture of inclusiveness. President Ikeda's current proposal addresses many of these issues, impressing on us the need to bring to the fore a culture of respect for the other."

Going further Mr. Gupta quotes President Ikeda and said: "The world is not simply a collection of states, nor is it composed solely of religions and civilizations. Our living, breathing world is woven of the endeavours of countless human beings, ... but no two of whom are the same.

"To view and judge others only through the prism of religion or ethnicity distorts the rich reality we each possess as individuals. In contrast, when we develop a deep appreciation, through our individual friendships, of each other's unique value, differences of ethnicity or religion are illuminated by the dignity and worth of that friend and shine as the value of diversity." Ending on a note of hope, Mr Gupta emphasized Dr Ikeda's belief that in "our world's young people, each of whom embodies hope and the possibility of a better future".

Each year President Ikeda formulates a peace proposal that goes beyond diagnosing obstacles to peace and provides solutions that encompass attitudinal change and other concrete suggestions. The emphasis is always on tapping humanism, people-to- people contact and deeply caring for everyone. This is not a spiritual document but one that diagnoses problems at a fundamental level and offers concrete, pragmatic solutions.

The key focus of all President Ikeda's writings is to examine how to bridge gaps between people across different cultures and nationalities to actualize a more peaceful world. He believes that the power of dialogue as well as the innate ability of humans to respond positively to difficult situations holds the key.

In his recent proposal as well (the focus of the Symposium) President Ikeda's emphasised the need to build just and inclusive societies envisioned in the Sustainable Development Goals. He also looks on restoring hope in the hearts of refugees and on the spirit of gender equality. Through the concept of global citizenship, President Ikeda revives the ancient Indian thought of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* – a Sanskrit phrase from the *Maha Upanishad*, which means "the world is one family". Dr Ikeda's respect for Indian thought is repeatedly reflected in the above Peace Proposal when he refers to Indian wisdom as shared by King Ashoka and his principle adviser Kautilya and contemporary Indian economist Prof. Amartya Sen on his views on *niti and nyaya*.