

The 64th Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad - Convention Declaration
Nikkei communities are working to create a society of harmonious coexistence as a
model for overcoming division and conflict

October 17, 2024

We, the Nikkei who have gathered from all over the world for the 64th Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad (held in Tokyo from October 15 to 17, 2024), discussed the overarching theme "Let's overcome the age of division and conflict! – Nikkei Community Contributing to the Realization of Harmonious Coexistence." As the outcome of this Convention, we declare the following six resolutions.

1. [Nikkei communities will contribute as a model for dialogue and cooperation]

In recent years, Nikkei communities in various countries have been changing into open societies, not only for Nikkei who are descendants of Japanese people, but also for non-descendants who share an interest in Japanese culture and values, as well as Japan's language and history. To emphasize this important change, since last year's Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad, the Japanese version of the Declaration has been written in katakana (ニッケイ) instead of kanji (日系) for "Nikkei communities."

In today's world, where fierce wars with no end in sight continue and division and conflict are deepening, there is a need for attempts to overcome differences in culture, race, and religion, and to seek paths of dialogue, reconciliation, and cooperation. The role of Nikkei communities in various countries, where Nikkei are working hand in hand with non-descendants to achieve coexistence, is important as a model for such attempts. We will inherit the Nikkei legacy built by our predecessors and contribute to the realization of a harmonious society of coexistence in cooperation with non-descendants.

2. [With the spirit of "resilience," we aim for a diverse and harmonious society]

Almost a quarter of century is going to pass since the beginning of the 21st century, but the world is still plagued by war, and many people are suffering. During World War II, many Nikkei abroad were treated as enemy aliens and were subjected to adversity such as forced internment and confiscation of property. The history of how they overcame these hardships over many years with the spirit of "resilience" and won apologies and compensation from the governments of their countries of residence is also part of the Nikkei legacy. At this year's Convention, the Brazilian government's admission of wrongdoing and apology for imprisoning and abusing Japanese immigrants and forcing them to evacuate during and immediately after World War II was a topic of discussion. A documentary film about Norman Mineta, a Japanese American politician in the United States, was also shown, and we learned about his persistence in demanding the protection of human rights and the elimination of discrimination. Such unyielding efforts are also common to the activities of the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidankyo), which will be awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize. We are proud of the history of Nikkei who have opened up the future with their tenacious resilience, and we will continue to strive to create a diverse society where people can coexist while respecting differences in ethnicity, culture, and customs.

3. [We look forward to strengthening cooperation between the Pan American Nikkei Association and the Association of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad]

We welcome the increasingly friendly relations in recent years between the Pan American Nikkei Association (APN), which is comprised of Nikkei organizations from 13 countries in North, Central and South America, and the Association of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad. Thanks to the cooperation of APN, the 59th Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad in 2018 declared June 20 as "International Nikkei Day," and commemorative events have been held on this day every year. Both APN and the Association of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad place importance on promoting the development and cooperation of Nikkei communities, protecting their cultural values, and encouraging the participation of the younger generation. We hope that cooperative relations will continue to expand and deepen in the future through the dissemination of information, interaction among the younger generation, and participation in activities.

4. [We support the next generation who are active in the Nikkei community in Japan]

The Nikkei community in Japan, which began with the so-called "dekasegi" (work away from home) phenomenon, has a history of over 30 years and has become the third largest Nikkei community in the world after Brazil and the United States. We are now in an era where the "next generation raised in Japan," who have received education in Japan and have acquired the language and culture of both Japan and their

parents' countries of origin, are playing an active role. At this Convention, we shared the younger generation's experiences of using their bilingual skills to promote the attractions of the areas where they live and to contribute to the development of the economy and local communities. The activities of these young people, who have experienced not only the good points of Japan but also the problems, are stimulating Japanese society. We also look forward to a wide range of exchanges between young Nikkei from various countries and young Nikkei living in Japan. We request the Japanese government to enhance support for the "next generation raised in Japan" in cooperation with local governments, companies, NPOs, and various other organizations.

5. [We request that the requirements for the 4th generation Japanese visa be eased and that the Japanese Nationality Law be amended]

It is important to ensure opportunities for exchange for young Nikkei who are interested in Japan and wish to go to Japan. This Convention saw reports of the dynamic activities of fourth-generation Nikkei. We have been calling for the relaxation of requirements for the acceptance of fourth-generation Nikkei to Japan. Although the requirements were reviewed last year, the number of applications for the "fourth-generation visa" is still low. We continue to urge the Japanese government to consider relaxing or abolishing the requirements for the host supporter system, age limit, non-accompaniment of family members, and requirements for permanent residency (length of stay in Japan, Japanese language proficiency level). In order to realize a society of harmonious coexistence and for Japanese and Nikkei people to play an active role in the world, it is essential to revise the Nationality Act so that they can maintain the nationality of both their country of residence and Japan. We urge the Japanese government to consider abolishing the provisions on loss of nationality (Article 11 of the Nationality Act) and the nationality choice system (Articles 14-16 of the Nationality Act).

6. [Efforts are needed to address the issues associated with the aging of Nikkei communities]

In the Nikkei community in Japan, the aging population is advancing, and various issues have arisen regarding nursing care and welfare. In Nikkei communities in various countries, it is also necessary to enhance welfare services as the population progressively ages. At this Convention, in addition to discussions to encourage greater interest in the aging population, the conclusion of social security agreements between Japan and the countries of origin, which would lead to securing pension eligibility for Nikkei living in Japan, was also discussed as part of the solution. Social security agreements have been concluded with Brazil in Central and South America, but many countries, such as Peru, have not yet concluded such agreements. We urge the Governments of Japan and other countries concerned to consider solutions to this important issue of aging with these new perspectives in mind as well.