

THE 49TH CONVENTION OF NIKKEI AND JAPANESE ABROAD DECLARATION

We, volunteers and representatives of Nikkei and Japanese living in various countries, during the three-day period from October 1 to 3, 2008, held the 49th Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad in Tokyo. Discussions were based on the general theme of “Nikkei communities living in the age of globalization: In search of their ways and roles.”

In the course of the Convention the general theme was further sub-divided into the following issues, all of which were discussed intensively:

1. Increasingly closer relations among countries around the world, especially between the countries of Nikkei residents and Japan.
2. The growing importance of strengthening networks and reciprocal relations between Nikkei communities and Japan.
3. Importance of Japanese language teaching in promoting Japanese culture.
4. The increasing need for persons of Nikkei heritage to work in Japan.
5. Expanding and enhancing the right to vote outside Japan.

Based on these discussions we have drawn up the following five resolutions, which we issue here in a Declaration in the name of the Convention.

【RESOLUTIONS】

1. We welcome the promotion of networks and reciprocal relations between Nikkei communities and Japan

The importance of human resources development for Nikkei communities, including study and training in Japan, continues to increase. International cooperation implemented by Nikkei has achieved significant results, such as the third country training programs and dispatch of experts implemented by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). In such an environment, there are rising expectations in Nikkei communities for expanded networks of support activities.

In this year, which marks the 100th anniversary of Japanese migration to Brazil, the Executive Committee for the Japan-Brazil Exchange Year, which was established by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan has officially approved more than 440 commemorative events as of the end of September, and the Association of the 100th Anniversary of Japanese Immigration to Brazil has given its stamp of approval to hundreds of other events. A great diversity of organizations from both Japan and Brazil, from government institutions to non-profit organizations (NPOs) have demonstrated an enthusiasm for these commemorative events never before witnessed.

Furthermore, person-to-person exchanges among Nikkei have grown more numerous, as witnessed by the efforts of such organizations as the Association of Pan-American Nikkei. This can be

seen as evidence of the growing closeness in the world due to globalization and the growth of information technology, and we welcome these increasingly active reciprocal relations as one means of further promoting mutual understanding about and among Nikkei.

2. We propose the active utilization of Nikkei Japanese language schools as hubs for Japanese language education in North and Latin America

A report of the Overseas Exchange Council of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued in February regarding “measures and structures to strengthen Japan’s international presence” recommended that one means of strengthening Japan’s foreign policy message is to promote Japanese language education among foreigners. To this end, efforts are underway to expand the overseas Japanese language bases of The Japan Foundation to more than 100 locations, and as part of this process we propose the active utilization of Nikkei Japanese language schools operated by Nikkei organizations as hubs for Japanese language education in North and Latin America.

The Nikkei Japanese language schools that exist in North and Latin America are currently engaged in providing Japanese language education to Nikkei, from parent to child and from child to grandchild (Japanese heritage language education), but these schools could be more effectively used as a means to spread Japanese language learning, and act as hubs for Japanese language education to people other than those from Nikkei communities.

In addition, the Japanese heritage language education instructor training program being implemented by JICA forms a pillar of support for immigrant communities, along with the dispatch of Nikkei community volunteers and joint training with the Pan-American Japanese Teaching Association, and we strongly request the continuation of this program.

3. We propose the holding of an event for Nikkei living in Japan, providing assistance to Nikkei seeking to establish an identity

Many foreigners are now working in Japan and their numbers are continuing to increase. These workers are tending to reside for long periods in Japan with more of them becoming permanent residents. Nikkei are in the position of being pioneers in this regard.

There are escalating concerns that the global economy is about to enter a period of simultaneous deceleration, brought on by the financial crisis unfolding in the United States and there are worries that the Japanese economy may fall back from its longest period of recovery in post-war history. Notwithstanding these concerns, there is unlikely to be any significant change in Nikkei seeking to travel to Japan for employment. Through the forum provided by this Convention we were able to hear frank opinions from participating Nikkei workers in Japan, who spoke of their work-related concerns and issues they face.

The Japanese people, with a history of overseas migration extending back 140 years, have been highly evaluated in their local communities overseas for being hard-working, honest and filled with a spirit of compliance, these virtues having also been a guiding light for Japanese people. We hope that based on the pride and experiences of emigrants, the Nikkei who reside in Japan

will convey to the Japanese people the appeal of Latin American culture, in particular the spirit of benevolence and duty to friends and family. We believe that in so doing, the first generation of Nikkei residing in Japan and their children, the second generation, will be able to create circumstances in which they can live their lives with a clear identity and confidence. To ensure that this can happen, we pledge to give every assistance for the creation of community organizations for Nikkei residents in Japan.

4. We seek the expansion and enhancement of the system for exercising the right to vote while overseas

Persons with Japanese nationality residing overseas have requested the establishment of an overseas voting constituency, through the representative of which overseas residents could participate in the national administration of Japan. Moreover, a number of issues remain outstanding concerning the enhancement of the system of overseas voting, including simplification of the procedures for the issuance of an “overseas voter certificate,” the elimination of residence notification requirements and the introduction of voting by fax. Of these issues, the procedures for the issuance of an overseas voter certificate are complex, and issuance takes up to two or three months, resulting in a situation in which no more than 10% of persons eligible to vote actually apply for a voter certificate.

Of those of us living overseas who have the right to vote in Japan, we earnestly hope that support will be provided to increase the number of persons registering as overseas voters, and that the system for exercising the right to vote while overseas will be further expanded and enhanced.

5. We will utilize and support the Association of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad

Among the organizations operated by Japanese and Nikkei living overseas, depending on the content of the activities of these organizations it is sometimes the case that a base for activities in Japan is required. There have been many cases to date in which the Association of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad has offered cooperation with the activities of the Nikkei organizations in which we are involved, and the continued cooperation of the Association remains essential.

Examples where the cooperation of the Association has been able to make a significant difference in bringing about results are as follows: a fund for earthquake resistance construction work at the Japan-Mexico School in Mexico, an assistance fund for the needy implemented by the Nikkei Association of Peru, and a fund for an Intensive Japanese Language Gram School for Working in Japan run by the Brazil Japanese Language Center.

We believe that in order that we may continue to actively utilize the Association in the future, it is necessary that financial assistance continue to be extended to the Association. To this end, we recognize it as our mission to call upon as many overseas Japanese residents as possible to become supporting members of the Association.