

## 56<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Nikkei and Japanese Abroad Conference Declaration

We, the representatives and interested members of Nikkei and Japanese descendants living abroad and in Japan, discussed about the general topic “Post-War History of Japan and Nikkei Communities in Retrospect” in the Meeting of Country Representatives and the three Working Sessions (“Post-War Development of Japan and Nikkei Communities”, “Overseas Japanese Business and Nikkei Communities”, and “Message to the World: Lessons to be Drawn from Post-War History”) of the 56<sup>th</sup> Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad, taken place in Tokyo for the three days ranging from October 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015. We declare that the following 7 statements were adopted as the result of this Convention.

**1. The Nikkei abroad, taking the experiences of the 70 years of postwar into account, will work hard for the transmission of the heritage produced in this period and, at the same time, will work to further strengthen its role as a bridge between Japan and other regions.**

During Second World War, we found ourselves in extremely severe conditions due to conflicts between our countries of residence and Japan. After the war, however, as a result of our efforts, we built a firm position as a citizen of the country that we live in. We understand that the Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad initiated as an expression of gratitude towards the Nikkei, who participated in great number in the relief activity of LARA (Licensed Agencies for Relief in Asia), helping Japan which was experiencing serious food and material shortage after war.

We, on this year after 70 years since the end of the war, strongly feel the importance to think about the past and connect the history to the next generation. A good example is Indonesia, where the second generation of Zanryu Japanese has taken the lead in the management of social welfare associations founded by the first generation and has worked hard to keep projects such as Japanese language schools and special schools for children with autism. In the other hand, we can also see the situation in the Philippines, where individuals were separated from their parents, becoming unable to prove their Japanese identity due the loss of certificates. They are still fighting for their Toseki. Also, we shall not forget that, even though Japan is providing medical care, there are more than 1,000 foreign residents of the first and second generations who were victims of the atomic bomb.

We will continue to cherish the bonds that we enjoy with Japan, a country that has lived as a Pacifist nation, in many fields such as the social, the economic, and the cultural. We will play the role of bridge and strengthen the ties between our countries of residence and Japan. At the same time, we will advocate for the importance of

preserving the tangible and intangible heritages that our ancestors have built in the period of the postwar.

**2. We wish assistance and understanding for the Nikkei associations, which work hard toward the preservation of Japanese culture and language.**

The many “Japanese Festivals” held across countries developed in such a way that now they involve every local citizen at the community level – not only Nikkeis. We wish for further support and understanding from the Japanese society and – in particular – from the Japanese government. These events are organized by Nikkei associations and they help spread Japanese culture at the local level.

The Nikkei community has been focusing on the Japanese language education at the elementary and middle school level. However, we are also beginning to engage in higher education. In the Philippines, the “Mindanao Kokusai Daigaku” was established. In Brazil, a course aimed at training Japanese language instructors will initiate in 2016 in partnership with a Brazilian university.

**3. We expect to be partners with Japanese companies committed to international expansion. We hope to see further localization of these enterprises.**

Today, Japanese companies are increasingly advancing to foreign countries. We believe that, in order for these companies to fully enter these markets and achieve management stability, it is essential that they achieve further localization.

Many of the countries that Nikkeis live are multiethnic. We are confident that we have gained solid trust from the host-country and its local people, particularly in regions with long history of immigration. Our strength is the possession of the necessary know-how to coexist and compete in a multiethnic environment. We also have human resources that have accumulated skills through work and education in Japan. We hope that Japanese companies will recognize their talents and work in cooperation with them as business partners.

**4. We, Nikkei youths will contribute to the creation of a new international order by learning from the Past-war history**

After 70 years since the end of the war, Japan proved that it is possible to become an economically prosperous nation under “pacifism”. We believe that Japanese “pacifism” is a model for other nations and we will use our Nikkei network to transmit and share the ideals of “pacifism”.

We, Nikkei youth recognize that there is still a distrust and resentment in between Japan and neighbor countries. Nikkei youth requests that all parties involved engage in good faith in further efforts to solve their conflicts. Nikkei youth promise to engage with Japanese neighbors with respect, cooperation and tolerance and enhance

mutual understanding and trust between the citizens.

**5. We advocate for further understanding toward the issue of the ageing Nikkei community.**

The Nikkei community is starting to experience the effects of the ageing problem. By sharing the Japanese experience and the experience of countries where Nikkeis are living abroad, we contend that it is necessary to strengthen interest on this matter.

**6. We request that the Japanese government approves multiple nationality. In addition, we request that the JR group issues the “Japan Rail Pass” to the people with multiple nationality.**

As it is determined in the Family Register Act “The Japanese citizen lose their nationality when they choose to obtain the nationality of another country”. In some of the cases, this may violate the dignity and the right of the Japanese children grew up abroad to pursuit the happiness as “Japanese”. We claim to the Japanese government to accept multiple nationality that allows them to be a national citizen of the country they were born, while also accepting them to be a Japanese citizen.

In addition, we claim to the Japanese JR group to issue the “Japan Rail Pass” for the second generation Nikkei holding multiple nationalities, who wish to know more about Japan.

**7. We propose the simplification of the overseas voting system**

This year in June, the Public Officers Election Act was revised and the voting age was now brought down to 18 years old. 15 years have passed since the implementation of overseas voting. As we have proposed in the Convention 4 years ago, we demand for the improvements such as: (1) Automatic registration of voters at the city (or ward) office before the emigration, (2) Automatic distribution of voting notification (by post) to the persons registered and (3) Electronic voting to be implemented at the diplomatic establishment abroad.

End

\*LARA (Licensed Agencies for Relief in Asia)=An emergency relief organization for Asia that consisted of 13 religious, social, and labor associations.