

The Declaration of the 63rd Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad

The initiative of the new generation will drive the future of the Nikkei community.

October 18, 2023

We, the Nikkei and Japanese abroad who attended the 63rd Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad (October 16-18, 2023) from all over the world, held discussions on the general theme of “Making Great Strides for the Nikkei Community, A New Generation of Initiatives”. For the first time in four years since the novel coronavirus infection (COVID-19) pandemic, we held the event in a hybrid format for the first time, with face-to-face discussions and online streaming. We declare the following five resolutions as the outcome of this convention.

1 [The new Nikkei generation, ICT savvy and rich in ideas, will continue to take on challenges]

Due to the pandemic, Nikkei organizations in various countries were unable to hold face-to-face events and struggled to secure funds for their operations. In the midst of this crisis situation, it is the new Nikkei generation that has been instrumental in maintaining and expanding the activities of the organizations, which is Information and Communication Technology (ICT) savvy and rich in ideas. They used their ICT knowledge and ideas to organize online events, successfully connecting and furthering people's interest. In addition to their knowledge and ideas, they continue to take on new initiatives by fully utilizing their networks including those of non-Japanese descendants. The knowledge, experience, and support of the senior generation is essential for this. All generations will join forces to create new value for Nikkei society.

2 [Nikkei society, where Nikkei and non-descendants of Japanese work together, is a model of symbiosis and co-creation]

In recent years, Nikkei society in various countries have seen an increase in the number of non-Japanese descendants who are interested in Japanese culture and values and actively participate in Nikkei society activities, in addition to Nikkei who are immigrants from Japan and their descendants. These people can also be considered part of the new Nikkei generation. We have noted that the composition of the Nikkei society is already changing, and in order for the Nikkei society to continue to make great strides, we felt that it was important to create opportunities for the Nikkei and non-descendants of Japanese to work together as colleagues. Therefore, we have decided to write the name of this Convention as "ニッケイ社会," rather than "日系社会," using katakana instead of kanji.

The Nikkei community of the future will not only pass on Japanese traditions, culture and the Nikkei legacy to the next generation, but will also be an important entity that interacts with other communities in respective countries, opening up and contributing to the local community. The various reports at the Convention revealed the efforts of Nikkei society to transcend differences and demonstrate a new model of coexistence and co-creation in today's increasingly diverse yet fragmented world. In order to create a sustainable and developing Nikkei society, we will promote cooperation between Nikkei and non-descendants of Japanese and further deepen our collaborations among Nikkei societies around the world.

3 [It is important to carry on the spirit of "emphasis on education" and "mutual support" left to us by the early Japanese immigrants]

In the course of the discussion, it was pointed out that the future problems in realizing a society of harmonious coexistence in Japan will be "education for children" and "support for the elderly". These are old and new problems that early migrants faced at their destination countries. They have a history of working to solve problems under the mottos of "emphasis on education" and "mutual support". Today, the responses to these issues vary depending on the educational, medical, and pension systems of the countries in which the immigrants and Nikkei reside. However, it is important that the spirit of "emphasis on education" and "mutual support" left to us by the early immigrants be carried on in Nikkei societies in Japan and elsewhere.

4 [We support the next generation raised in Japan]

The Nikkei society in Japan is the third largest in the world after Brazil and the United States. Young people who were born or grew up in Japan as Nikkei, and who have acquired the language and culture of both Japan and their parents' countries of origin, are now spreading their wings one after the other. At the convention, such "next generation raised in Japan" shared their experiences of overcoming conflicts while searching for their identities and connecting them to their current work and activities. We support the next generation raised in Japan in taking on the challenge of unknown possibilities. Young Nikkei with diverse backgrounds and knowledge of Japan's strengths and weaknesses will be an integral part of Japanese society. Municipalities and businesses will no doubt be stimulated by their vitality. We call on the Japanese government to deepen its understanding of the next generation raised in Japan and work with flexibility and speed to nurture human resources.

5 [We request that the requirements for the fourth generation Nikkei visa be eased and that the Japanese Nationality Act be amended]

Although Brazil and other Latin American countries are home to the largest number of Nikkei, it is difficult to imagine that in the future there will be a new wave of Japanese immigrants to these regions, like in the prewar and early postwar era. For this reason, the Latin American Nikkei society expects Japan to provide opportunities for as many Nikkei as possible to visit and get to know Japan without complicated procedures, be it for tourism, study, or employment. While significant progress has been made in measures for up to the third generation of Japanese descendants, including the creation of permanent resident visas, many fourth generation Nikkei have not been able to come to Japan due to the strict requirements for acceptance. In response to the "proposed revision of the fourth generation Nikkei system" revealed in June of this year, five Brazilian Nikkei organizations have appealed to the Japanese government to further ease or eliminate the requirements for the fourth generation Nikkei visa. We ask the Japanese government to give further consideration to the status of residence in Japan for the fourth generation who are interested in Japan and wish to realize their dreams in Japan. In particular, we request that the government considers relaxing or eliminating the requirements for the acceptance supporter system, age restrictions, prohibition

of accompanying family members, and acceptance requirements for settlement (length of stay in Japan and Japanese language level).

In addition, in today's globalized society, it is necessary to revise the Japanese Nationality Law so that Japanese nationals living abroad and children born and raised abroad can retain both their country of residence and Japanese nationality in order to play an active role in the world while maintaining their identity as Japanese or Nikkei. We request that the government considers abolishing the provisions for loss of nationality (Japanese Nationality Law, Article 11) and the nationality selection system (Nationality Law, Articles 14-16). This measure is important to realize a society of harmonious coexistence and to expand the activities of Nikkei both inside and outside Japan.