Statement by Kimiaki Kawai, Soka Gakkai International (SGI)
Open-ended Working Group—Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations
4 May 2016, Geneva

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

I am representing Soka Gakkai International (SGI), a Buddhist faith-based organization active in education for the general public with a focus on peace and disarmament, which is also an international partner of ICAN.

I deeply thank all the panelists this morning who reminded us what nuclear weapons are all about.

I resonate with the views expressed by Ms. Sara Sekkenes from UNDP who looks at the issue of nuclear weapons through the lens of SDGs and human security which is stated in SGI’s working paper A/AC.286/NGO/17.

Mr. Chairman,

In a world of growing needs and finite resources, the opportunity costs of nuclear weapons have become increasingly unbearable.

If the immense resources now spent on nuclear weapons were to be applied to the fields of hygiene, health and education, the lives of vast numbers of people could be improved. The continued maintenance and modernization of nuclear weapons runs counter to the spirit of Article 26 of the UN Charter, which calls for the “least diversion for armaments of the world’s human and economic resources.”

Nuclear weapons also subvert the non-material basis for human security, such vital yet intangible public goods as human dignity and hope. The proliferation of despair, nihilism and senseless violence in the decades since the first use of nuclear weapons has roots in their toxic impact on the human spirit.

By threatening to obliterate the accumulated achievements of human society, erasing the individual and collective record of our lives, nuclear weapons undermine our existence as historical, cultural beings—the very heart of our humanity. They erode the meaning of human life and impede our ability to look to the future with hope.

Mr. Chairman,

The challenge of nuclear disarmament is not something that concerns only the nuclear-weapon States; it must be a truly global enterprise involving all States and fully
engaging civil society. All States have an obligation to promote and participate in good faith negotiations for disarmament, bringing them to a successful conclusion.

The growing demand for the legal prohibition of nuclear weapons arises now as part of a shared global quest for authentic security—for human security for all. It is time to move forward.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.