

The 7th Peace Forum Greetings

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The Peace Forum, which has been held in cooperation with Kyungnam University and Chinese Culture University, is now in its seventh year. It is a great pleasure and honor to host the Peace Forum at Soka University for the first time and to welcome President Park Jae-Kyu of Kyungnam University and Distinguished Chair Professor Chao Chien-min of the Chinese Culture University. I would like to extend my hearty welcome and express my gratitude to the professors from Kyungnam University, University of North Korean Studies, and Chinese Culture University for traveling all the way to our university to attend today's Peace Forum. Thank you very much indeed.

Although your stay may be short, I hope that you can enjoy the atmosphere of our campus with the trees that have finally begun to change its colors for autumn.

In the video message that I sent for The 6th Peace Forum organized by Kyungnam University last year, I mentioned that although international cooperation is crucial, confrontation and division between major nations are increasing. Furthermore, I have also mentioned that rationally examining the impact of the US-China strategic competition at this annual Peace Forum has an important meaning in today's world where wars/conflicts are still ongoing and a large number of innocent civilians become victims of these conflicts. I am very aware of the significant results achieved at the last year's symposium.

Unfortunately, the war in Ukraine has not yet come to an end, and in addition, the Israel-Hamas conflict has occurred. It seems like the major nations, which have great influence in such armed conflicts, are prioritizing national benefits over saving the lives of the people that are threatened.

On January 11, 2023, the Soka University Founder, Dr. Daisaku Ikeda, announced a

statement calling for action aimed at restoring peace in Ukraine, urging for life and dignity to be given top priority. He states:

“This year marks eighty-five years since the adoption by the League of Nations General Assembly of a resolution on the protection of civilians from aerial bombardment. It is also the seventy-fifth anniversary of the adoption by the United Nations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which expressed the shared vow to bring about a new era in which human dignity would never again be trampled and abused.

Recalling the commitment to protect life and dignity that undergirds International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law, I urge all parties to bring about the earliest possible end to the present conflict.”

I hope that today's symposium will provide wisdom on how to transform conflicts among nations into cooperation and create an Asia and a world where "life and dignity" are prioritized.

To close my remarks, I would like to express my gratitude to the speakers for the symposium and all the professors who have contributed in holding today's Peace Forum. Thank you very much.