

News

Sophia welcomed UN Secretary-General António Guterres

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NEWS

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Sophia University hosted a special lecture by UN Secretary-General António Guterres and his Dialogue with Students

"Global Challenges: The Role of Human Security"



António Guterres, UN Secretary-General

Sophia University in Tokyo hosted a special lecture by UN Secretary-General António Guterres on 14 December 2017 during his first visit to Japan as the Secretary-General. The title of the lecture was "Global Challenges: The Role of Human Security." The event was supported by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the UN Information Center in Tokyo. After the lecture, Sophia University also hosted a dialogue between the Secretary-General and 30 students from Japanese universities linked with the UN Academic Impact program.

(The event was realized by the negotiation of Professor Daisaku Higashi, who visited New York for his own presentation at UN Headquarters in the fall of 2017.)



President Yoshiaki Terumichi

In front of 600 audience members who gathered in the hall of Sophia University from all over Japan, Professor Yoshiaki Terumichi, President of Sophia University, welcomed the Secretary-General and stressed that the message by the Secretary-General on Human Security "will provide us with insight on how we should envision our future."

(There is the link of the entire speech by President Terumichi in the last part of this page)



Professor Daisaku Higashi

Then, Professor Daisaku Higashi, Deputy Director of the Human Resource Center for Global Cooperation at Sophia University, introduced the Secretary-General who served as Prime Minister of Portugal from 1995 to 2002 and UN High Commissioner for Refugees from 2005 to 2015.

Professor Higashi also emphasized that the Secretary-General obtained overwhelming support from UN member states after he presented his vision and ideas for action to the UN General Assembly during the selection process for Secretary-General in 2016.

(There is the link of the entire speech by Professor Higashi in the last part of this page)



In his special lecture, the Secretary-General presented five key threats that the world is tackling: (1) nuclear threats, including the North Korea nuclear crisis; (2) more complex military conflicts and civil wars; (3) climate change; (4) globalization and inequality; and (5) the international tensions caused by migrants and refugees. He then emphasized that the concept of Human Security is “absolutely crucial” in tackling these threats and challenges in a holistic manner, as Human Security is based on respect for the dignity of human beings and is supported by all member states: “Nobody put it into question in terms of the concept of human security,” he said.



The Secretary-General stressed that preventing conflicts is much more important than managing conflicts, and Human Security is a “unifying concept” that can bring us to work together to create the political, social, and economic conditions that would address key agendas such as prevention, sustainable development, and sustainable peace. He claimed that Human Security should be used much more to design a strategy and blueprint of actions by both national governments and the international community to tackle these global challenges.



The Secretary-General added that Japan has been playing a critical role in advancing the concept of Human Security; the concept of Human Security was invented by Japan. He introduced that Japan created the mechanism in the UN system to enhance Human Security and implemented successful projects based on this concept around the world. He stressed that it is time for the UN and the international community to take advantage of this unifying concept.

Finally, the Secretary-General argued that academics and civil societies can play an important role in expanding intellectual discussion on the concept of Human Security, which could convince many governments in different parts of the world to advance the agendas of prevention, sustainable development, and sustainable peace, based on “enlightened self-interests.” (There is the link of UN Web TV which shows the entire speech by the Secretary-General in the last part of this page)



Awardees of the 2nd UN Wall Newspaper
Contest

After the lecture, the Secretary-General was taken the pictures with 7 students of elementary schools and junior high schools, who obtained the best award by Minister of Foreign Affairs in the 2nd UN Wall Newspaper Contest, organized by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The special lecture was about 30 minutes, and it was moderated by Professor Yasuhiro Ueki, Director of the Human Resource Center for Global Cooperation at Sophia University.

Dialogue between Secretary-General and 30 students



(from left) Chancellor Fr.Koso,S.J., the
Secretary-General and President Terumichi

After the lecture, the Secretary-General signed the memorial book of Sophia University and was photographed with Professor Yoshiaki Terumichi, President of Sophia University, and Fr.Toshiaki Koso,S.J., Chancellor of Sophia School Corporation.

Then, the Secretary-General began an active discussion with 30 students from 13 different universities across Japan, moderated by Professor Daisaku Higashi of Sophia University.



With regard to a question about the role of UN in bridging conflicting parties in wars, the Secretary-General claimed that it is getting more difficult to mediate conflicting parties because many political and military leaders think that they can win the war; it is crucial to convince conflicting parties that everybody would lose if they have wars.



In terms of the North Korea nuclear crisis, the Secretary-General emphasized that it is important for the Security Council to be united on the issue of North Korea. At the same time, he stressed the importance of diplomatic engagement to solve the problem peacefully. Asked about the need to address the mental health problems of ex-combatants, the Secretary-General argued that there is a gap between the need for psychological support for victims of violence and ex-combatants and the actual mechanisms to implement assistance. He claimed the importance of improving funds and mechanisms to provide needed support.



Responding to a question about how to prevent conflict, the Secretary-General emphasized that there are many factors that could prevent conflict: economic development and job opportunities for youth can prevent conflict in a critical manner; avoiding radicalization is also crucial. The Secretary-General stressed that conflict can also be prevented by mediation; enhancing the capacity of mediation and conflict prevention is one of the most important tasks for him as UN Secretary-General.



Finally, the Secretary-General gave a message to the Japanese students. On the one hand, he hopes the students will engage in political and social life in Japan as Japanese citizens. On the other, “Do not look at only Japan but also at the whole world,” he said. “Because we are so interlinked now, what happens in the world will shape how Japan is going.” The Secretary-General concluded his remarks by expecting the students to be “full citizens of Japan” but also “full cosmopolitans of the world.”

(There is the link of UN Web TV which shows the dialogue between the Secretary-General and students)

Related links

- [The whole speech by President Terumichi](#)
- [The whole introduction by Professor Higashi](#)
- [The video of speech by the Secretary-General](#)
- [The video of dialogue between the Secretary-General and students](#)

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