

EARLY RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT STRESSED IN 2000 PEACE PROPOSAL

SGI President Daisaku Ikeda on Jan. 26 released his annual peace proposal, "Peace Through Dialogue: A Time to Talk," celebrating the 25th anniversary of the SGI's founding. This time, he called for the immediate establishment of an international conflict resolution committee within the U.N. system that would help assure the application of international human rights and humanitarian law in conflict-plagued regions, the proposal offers many concrete proposals for action.

Since the end of the Cold War, regional and internal conflicts have claimed more than 4 million lives; 90 percent of these people were unarmed civilians, women and children. The international community, says Ikeda, must act early to bring all parties to the table for negotiations before a given conflict escalates into large-scale, protracted violence.

The proposed committee would enhance the monitoring and early warning functions of the United Nations by holding public hearings seeking to bring the parties to a conflict face-to-face in an open, neutral setting.

The proposal explores the need to overcome the tendencies toward attachment and discrimination in the depths of individuals' lives. Many conflicts stem from the assumption that transient and superficial differences are permanent and definitive. The author asserts that humans are capable of challenging such assumptions and that such inner change can help create a truly robust global culture of peace.

Other suggestions from President Ikeda include:

- A concerted effort to eliminate poverty worldwide — a global Marshall Plan equivalent to that used to rebuild Europe's shattered economies after World War II. As poverty is both a result and a cause of conflict, such programs should be funded through reductions in global military expenditures, currently estimated at \$700 billion per annum.

- The placement of U.N. embassies in as many countries as possible to bring the functions of various U.N. agencies together in a single venue, with a consolidated point of liaison with governments. This would focus and enhance the work of the United Nations in human development.

- The creation of a Northeast Asia Peace University to promote exchange, interaction and confidence-building in the region. Mongolia is a possible site, the SGI president mentions, as the Mongolian government has official relations with all of the countries of Northeast Asia. (*The full text of the 2000 peace proposal will appear in an upcoming issue of Living Buddhism.*)