

**The 57<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Nikkei and Japanese Abroad**  
**Conference Declaration**  
**–Japanese descendants of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as partners for coexistence–**

October 26, 2016

Tokyo

We, Japanese descendants, or Nikkei people, from all over the world gathered for the 57<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Nikkei and Japanese Abroad, held for three days from October 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016, discussed topics centering on the overall theme “Image of Nikkei People in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” over three days. We hereby declare that we have adopted the following seven resolutions as a result of this Convention.

**1. We recognize that Nikkei communities are rapidly becoming diversified and new measures for coexistence need to be taken.**

Nikkei communities, that are now present across the world, are the result of emigration program driven by the Japanese government since the Meiji era. Over the years, core of Nikkei shifted from the first generation to the second, third and fourth generations, and now in some countries the fifth, sixth and seventh generation Japanese are being born. In many countries it is now very common for Japanese descendants to marry non-Nikkei people, and there has been an increase in the number of new generations that do not speak the Japanese language, whose ideas are more diversified than ever. On the other hand, the number of Japanese and their children living overseas, along with the number of Japanese living abroad due to international marriage, are growing. It is now causing emergence of a new breed of Nikkei people, or one might call it “Shin-Nikkeijin”, in many parts of the world. In addition, presence of Nikkei people and their children in Japan, staying in Japan for work since 1990s, should also be taken into account.

As we recognize this change of Nikkei communities that are rapidly expanding and becoming diversified, we acutely realized the need to reshape the image of Nikkei as “Nikkei people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century”. At the same time, participants of the Convention confirmed that the role of Nikkei people and Nikkei communities, as the globalization progresses, is increasing their importance as channels for Japan’s internationalization, both within and without the country. Additionally, for us Japanese descendants also building network within and without the adopted country would help us significantly to expand the range of our activities.

We strongly hope that the Japanese government bears such change in mind and conduct measures putting emphasis on “coexistence” and “cooperation”, shifting focus from “assistance”. Such measures, we believe, may include even more effective use of Nikkei people in international cooperation initiatives, as well as participation of Nikkei people or groups living overseas to National Sports Festival, interscholastic athletic meet, the National Cultural Festival and the National Culture Festival for Upper Secondary Schools.

**2. We propose effective use of Nikkei people as “human power” in diverse areas including business and international cooperation.**

Nikkei in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are the people who are rooted in the countries that they live in. It was displayed, for instance, in the Rio Olympic and Paralympic Games in which Nikkei athletes and instructors delivered great performance.

In addition to the language skills and knowledge of culture of the adopted countries, we Japanese descendants, having lived in harmony with people of different races and ethnicity, are aware that we have distinct “human power”. We also have personal network and credit inherited from, and developed by, our ancestors over time since the time of emigration.

We find it unfortunate that such “human power” of Nikkei is not fully recognized by Japan, and in particular, the Japanese business world.

We hope that Nikkei’s comprehensive ability, “the human power”, will get well-deserved recognition and be utilized in business operations by Japanese companies or in international cooperation activities implemented by the Japanese government. We believe that we Nikkei people will best display our “soft power” in assisting Japan when we are treated as equal partners.

**3. Nikkei youths, as internationally competitive human resources, will strive to bridge Japan and the adopted countries, making use of diverse backgrounds, flexibility and personal networks**

Nikkei people tend to lose identity as Japanese as generation changes. We Nikkei youths who live in Japan for study etc. discussed how to revitalize Nikkei communities and what roles we should play in the future. We all have different backgrounds. Some were born and raised in the home countries, while others grew up in Japan or in third countries. Nevertheless, we are all determined to work hard to learn Japanese language and to build up our expertise as well as to learn about Japan’s good customs and tradition while leading active daily lives.

In Nikkei communities within Japan also, there is new breed coming up like those get job in Japan after going through Japan’s entrance exam race, and those finish middle and high school in Japan and go to university in their home country and get job there. We all have bilingual background. Educational environment for non-Japanese students in areas where many Nikkei live in has been improved. We request the Japanese society to extend warm support to the second and third generations of Nikkei residing in Japan, including opportunity for language education so that they can live their lives to the fullest.

We, as Nikkei in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, are determined to work hard to promote qualities of Japan to the world, bridging Japan and our home countries making use of our education, diversity, flexibility and network.

**4. We ask for special consideration for resident status of the fourth generation, and generations after that.**

Increase of so-called “Dekasegi” work after the year 1990 generated not only opportunity to work and to live in Japan, but also a variety of secondary effects such as development of new type of human resources, new area of expertise and opportunity for cultural exchange.

As a result, flow of people between Japan and the home countries increased, and moreover, it is said that such flow revitalized some Nikkei communities that had been once feared to disappear due to absence of migrants. In recent years, as Japan builds up its attraction in technological, cultural and academic aspects, more and more people are interested in Japan and many youths are seeking opportunity to visit Japan, and to visit their family at the same time.

Currently the Japanese government issues special long-term resident visa up to the third generation. Beside this treatment, we request Japan to take special measures, in terms of resident status, for the fourth generation and generations after that who think their roots are in Japan.

**5. We propose provision of educational opportunity to, and effective use of, non-Nikkei people who work in Nikkei communities.**

Not only Nikkei people drive Nikkei communities. There are more and more non-Nikkei people who take part in annual Japan Festivals, or those engaged in judo, Japanese drumming, tea ceremony, flower arrangement and cool-Japan culture, or even those teach the Japanese language at schools. In Nikkei communities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, their presence is indispensable. We request Japan to recognize their roles and contribution, as well as to be flexible on target range of programs for Nikkei such as “Nikkei training programs” to support revitalization of Nikkei communities.

**6. We request the Japanese government to take flexible measures and allow dual nationality.**

The Nationality Law of Japan stipulates that in case of a Japanese citizen acquires nationality of foreign country at his/her own discretion, he/she shall lose Japanese nationality, and the law has been executed strictly. However, this law in some cases violates the right to the pursuit of happiness of those who wish to participate in social activities as Japanese and yet cannot be recognized as one, or those who have Japanese parent(s) but cannot have identity as Japanese. We request the Japanese government, in this era in which flow of people is increasingly dynamic, to open a path for dual nationality and give Japanese nationality to those who wish to maintain nationality of the country of birth or country of residence, eyeing fully on measures taken across the world and the presence of Nikkei people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**7. We propose simplification of the system for voting from abroad.**

In June 2015, the revised Public Offices Election Law was enacted lowering voting age to 18. Since the implementation of voting from abroad 16 years ago, measures such as voting registration at local government office prior to migration have been taken. However, in light of maintaining the rights and duties of citizens, we request further improvement of the system including automatic distribution of election notice and introduction of voting through fax or electronic voting.