

The Yokohama Appeal

We, the representatives of the 78 cities that have been given the title of "peace messenger" by the United Nations and are members of the International Association of Peace Messenger Cities, held our 14th General Assembly in Yokohama, Japan from the first to the third day of August 2001, the first year of the 21st century, on the theme "For the Peaceful Future of Our Children."

With the arrival of this year, the world moved out of the 20th century, which has been characterized as an age of unprecedented war, and into the 21st century. But even today, countless precious lives are being needlessly lost due to territorial disputes growing out of confrontation between people of different ethnicity, race, or religion as well as poverty and starvation. The troubles have a particularly strong impact on the children, many of whom lose their lives or are inflicted with severe hardship including mental and emotional trauma. And in the more recent past, apprehensions have been mounting about the prospect of a new build-up of nuclear arms and missile systems. We must resolve this situation as soon as possible and build a peaceful world. It is imperative for us to make the earth a place in which all people can lead decent lives in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect. To this end as well, the activities of the Association and our member cities, that is, on the city level, will continue to play a vital role alongside those on the national level in forums such as the United Nations.

The 14th General Assembly also heard a report on the "Yokohama Students' Appeal for World Peace" composed by the children of Yokohama as the culmination of their discussions on the theme of "Peace, Dreams, and Hopes for the 21st Century - What We Can Do" at the Yokohama Students Peace Messengers Conference.

To resolve territorial disputes, poverty, famines, and other such problems and to build a peaceful 21st century in keeping with the goal of a peaceful future for our children, we peace messenger cities shall work together in making approaches to the United Nations and the international community as well as developing programs of concrete action that can be taken by cities. More specifically, besides supporting the work of the United Nations in its endeavors to establish peace and prosperity in the international community, we must help to nurture peace through consciousness-raising campaigns among our citizenry and educational programs in our schools. In addition, it is important for us to collaborate and cooperate with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other citizen groups in order to widen the circle of action and play our part as cities to build peace.

We hereby pledge to convey the Yokohama Appeal adopted at the 14th General Assembly to the member cities and the United Nations, to spread awareness of its sentiment among our citizens, and to do our utmost in actual efforts aimed at helping to bring peace to the entire world.