



Invitation to

The Sixth Global Inter-religious Conference on Article 9

June 13th-15th, 2018 / Hiroshima City, Japan

January 25th, 2018

Dear Friends,

Warmest greetings of peace!

The Japanese Conference Committee (JCC) of the Global Inter-religious Conference on Article 9 of the Japanese Peace Constitution warmly invites you to the Sixth Global Inter-religious Conference on Article 9 which will be held at the *International Conference Center*, Hiroshima City, Japan, on June 13-15, 2018, under the theme of “World Peace through Article 9 of the Japanese Peace Constitution – From Ground Zero Hiroshima.”

The main focus of the conference is to share the values of Article 9 of the Japanese Peace Constitution, and to discuss strategies to sharpen peace and justice advocacy in the region, based on the spirit of Article 9. However, it is clear that the military tension in the East Asia is higher than ever, since 1950s. Especially the DPRK’s nuclear missile tests made its tension serious in relation to both governments of USA and Japan.

The Conference aims to highlight issues related to peace and reconciliation and integrate them into the mainstream agenda of the religious communities in Asia and the world. The Conference will encourage us to work towards building solidarity, enhancing perspectives, and initiating a proactive role as a faith-based community in building peace and justice in the world.

It is very significant to hold the Sixth Conference in June 2018, when the amendment of Article 9 may be raised one of the main issues in the Diet of Japan, which is consisted of the House of Representatives and the House of Councilors. The major coalition consists of the LDP and the *Komei-to* Party (supported by SGI), who would like to amend the Constitution including Article 9, took advantage of opposition’s breakup and gained more than two-thirds of the seats in both Houses. After gaining more than two thirds of the seats in both Houses, it is expected that the majority coalition will step forward to a national referendum for the amendment of the constitution.

Those who want to maintain such important parts of the present constitution like article 9 starts to prepare for a nation-wide movement to promote their earnest wishes, and some new movements start recently. It is hoped that our group to maintain Article 9 and our Sixth Conference will be able to make influence on such socio-political situation in Japan.

The tentative program/schedule is attached to this letter with the registration form. Please return your completed registration form by April 30th, 2018. The details will be finalized with the local preparatory committee in Hiroshima, the Hiroshima Article 9 Inter-religious Conference, before the end of next January.

We trust that the organization that sends you will cover the cost of your international airfare. The JCC will provide airfare subsidies for some representatives from the South and cover accommodation and meals of the overseas participants. If you would like to participate in a free exposure tour of Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, which is one of the most unique parks in the world, in terms of the catastrophe of the atomic bombing, please mark your registration form accordingly.

We earnestly hope that you can come and join in this historic moment when we unite our voices for peace, justice and a common destiny in Asia and the world.

With our best wishes,

On behalf of the Japanese Working Committee for Article 9,

KOHASHI, Koichi (National Christian Council in Japan); NOGUCHI, Yoichi (Niwano Peace Foundation); HIRUMA, Noriko (Japan Catholic); UEDA, Hiroko (United Church of Christ in Japan); TAKEDA, Takao (Nipponzan Myohoji); KANAI, Hajime (United Church of Christ in Japan)

Ps1: Today's socio-political situation in Japan and East Asia, with their historical background, is described in the concept paper attached.

Ps2: A brief contents of the 6th Conference are as follows:

- a. Date: June 13-15, 2018 (Pre-Assembly program will be held on June 12th)
- b. Venue: International Conference Center, Hiroshima City, Japan
- c. Theme: "World Peace through Article 9 of the Japanese Peace Constitution – From Ground Zero Hiroshima –"
- d. Expecting Participants from: World Council of Churches, Church of Scotland-World Mission Council, Methodist Church in Britain, Evangelical Church in Hessen and Nassau, Global Ministry, Christian Conference of Asia, The United Church of Canada, Evangelical Mission in Solidarity (EMS), Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), United Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church in the USA, National Council of Churches in Korea, National Christian Council in Japan, etc.