

Osaka Rally for 62nd Anniversary of the UDHR Declares Importance of Human Rights Education

On December 6, 2010, the Osaka Liaison Conference for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) organized a rally in Osaka to celebrate the 62nd anniversary of the UDHR, focusing on the World Programme for Human Rights Education under the slogan, “We Promote Human Rights Education and Awareness-Raising.”

The rally started with a keynote speech by Kenzo Tomonaga, Secretary General of the Osaka Liaison Conference, who began his speech with the historical development of initiatives taken by the United Nations in regard to human rights education, including the UDHR containing a provision for human rights education, and the UN Decade for Human Rights Education and World Programme for Human Rights Education. This was followed by educational initiatives taken in Japan aimed at solving the Buraku problem and establishing human rights, highlighting in particular the enactment of the Law on Human Rights Education and Awareness-Raising and its significance, and the need for its more effective use. As for future challenges, Tomonaga proposed the further promotion of the Law on Human Rights Education and World Programme for Human Rights Education, as well as the latter’s Second Phase Action Plan. Among other things, he stressed the importance of promoting human rights education at every level and sphere, while combining it with efforts for human rights community-building.

The keynote speech was followed by a panel discussion focusing on human rights training for professionals, including teachers, public officers and law-enforcement officers, which is the focus of the Second Phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education. Special attention and priority was given to the need to provide human rights training to younger teachers in the midst of a rapid generation change among teachers. Regarding public officers, it is important to ensure that they are given systematic human rights training, as respect of human rights is integral in their performance of duties. As for law-enforcement officers such as the police, they need to have human rights training pursuant to their duties, especially in times of cases of false charges being discovered in succession.

For human rights training in the private business sector, it was stressed that it be conducted in the course of fulfilling corporate social responsibilities, as indicated by the Global Compact and ISO26000.

Panelists included Yasumasa Hirasawa, Professor of Osaka University, Mariko Akuzawa, Associate Professor of Hyogo Prefectural University, Kazuo Okawa, attorney at law, and Hideo Onishi, President of the Industrial Federation for Dowa and Human Rights Issues, Osaka.

The rally was concluded by adopting a Declaration expressing determination to promote human rights education and awareness raising at every level and sphere. The rally had participation from 530 people from different sectors, including business, religious, local government and civil society.