

Greeting from the Host

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On behalf of the co-organizing universities, I would like to greet you all at the start of this 4th Peace Forum. I would like to thank President Park of Kyungnam University, Vice President Wang of Chinese Culture University, and the professors and students from both universities for attending this forum from the early morning.

Soka University will mark its 50th anniversary in April 2021 and has been planning and holding various commemorative events since last year. As part of this 50th-anniversary project, we have held an event series called "Value Creation × SDGs," which combines the university's efforts toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with its educational philosophy of "Value-Creating Education." We started the "Value Creation × SDGs" Week yesterday, and will hold a series of events until the 17th of next week, including symposiums, exhibitions, and events organized by students on the common theme of "Peace and Human Rights."

With having the opportunity of holding this Peace Forum at a time of a milestone in the university's history, we had set out our intention to provide an opportunity to discuss with the professors of the co-organizing universities how to exert creativity for building peace and what shape "Value Creation" should take in the modern world.

However, as we were preparing, we were hit by the calamity of the COVID-19 pandemic. We had been looking forward to welcoming professors from Kyungnam University and Chinese Culture University to our campus in Hachioji, but the unexpected spread of the new coronavirus led us to hold an online forum as our first attempt.

In addition to the venue, we also adjusted the theme of the Peace Forum to "Creative Collaboration for a Resilient World—Creating New Shared Values and New Policies in the Post-pandemic World." This indicates our intention to create value so as to overcome the various

problems caused by the COVID-19 crisis.

Today, we are urgently required to mitigate the sacrifices caused by infectious diseases and the economic difficulties resulting from infection control. This severe challenge has made us keenly aware of the vulnerability of the current social and economic systems. Many intellectuals argue that human society requires an innovation that brings us the resilience to respond to disasters such as pandemics. Prominent intellectuals such as Yuval Harari and Jared Diamond say that the COVID-19 crisis is a turning point in human history.

In this forum, we are fortunate to welcome Professor Yoichi Mine of Doshisha University as a keynote speaker. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Professor Mine for accepting our request despite his busy schedule. Thank you so much, Professor Mine.

As is well known, Professor Mine has made great achievements in development economics and African studies. He has also made significant contributions not only to academic research but also to the practical areas of peacebuilding and development assistance. Based on these achievements, Professor Mine has, in recent years, presented a vision of what the world will be like in 100 years based on a global analysis of demographics. Today, which, as mentioned, is being referred to as a turning point in human civilization, it is truly timely to hear Professor Mine's story, and I hope that his lecture will make today's discussions even more fruitful.

Even though this Peace Forum is held online due to an unexpected reason, about 200 people have registered to participate, which is an unprecedented scale among our past forums. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone that is participating today. Thank you.

In closing, I would like to express my wish that we can demonstrate creative wisdom regardless of various obstacles in the future and that the network of the Peace Forum will develop into a global one.

Thank you for your kind attention.