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The Fuji Declaration is a document of great importance for the entire planet. It deals with our quest for inner enlightenment and also our responsibility to society and the planet we inherit which today is under great stress due to human avarice and insensitivity over the last two centuries. I recall that along with my good friend Ervin Laszlo, Masami Saionji and other committed people we were able to launch the Declaration which was widely circulated around the world.

The challenge of such declarations is whether we are able in fact to live up to the great ideal that they express. Regretfully we cannot claim to have done so, because strife in the name of religion still continues to drench the world with innocent blood. The Declaration speaks of move towards a new civilization, and outlines the requirements for this. I sincerely hope that the 7th Anniversary of this Declaration will give a fresh impetus to humanity urging it, even at this late hour, to change tac and appreciate the Divine Spark that every human being encapsulates.

The Interfaith Movement which began with the First Parliament of World Religions in Chicago in 1893 remembered largely for Swami Vivekananda's outstanding inspiration. After a long gap the Parliament was re-started again from Chicago and the Second Parliament was held exactly a hundred years later in 1993. Subsequently, Parliaments have been held around the world, and this year the 9th Parliament is again scheduled for Chicago. Despite the large number of delegates who attend these and other interfaith gatherings, I sometimes get the impression that we are preaching to the converted and that our message is not in fact reaching around the world, particularly the younger generations. It is important that the Fuji Declaration gets widely known among younger people because they are the ones who are going to inherit the future. The Declaration itself seeks to create a global network of young leaders. I am not sure how far this has proceeded, but I hope that although they may not be formally involved in any organisation, millions of young people around the world are looking for a new paradigm. The Fuji Declaration will certainly give them a clear roadmap to help them meet the challenges that lie ahead.

I send Ervin Laszlo and Masami Saionji my warm greetings on this occasion.