

[Opening Session]

Opening Remarks by **Yuko Mori**

Senior Vice-Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the participants in today's Japan Education Forum IX. On behalf of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), one of the organizers of the program, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of you.

This forum, co-sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Hiroshima University, the University of Tsukuba and MEXT, has been held annually since 2004. Practitioners at the forefront of bilateral or multilateral cooperation in education as well as experts in this area are invited to exchange views on how the international cooperation in education can support the self-reliant educational development and ownership of developing countries.

The theme of this year's forum, "Aid Effectiveness and Responsibility of International Cooperation in Education," addresses the issue of international cooperation in education after "Education for All" (EFA). The international community is making concerted efforts to achieve EFA and the "Millennium Development Goals" (MDGs) as the target year of 2015 approaches. Through various endeavors in international cooperation in education, 1) the number of children not attending school in 2008 in the world decreased to 67 million, down from 106 million in 1999; and 2) in particular, significant progress was seen in Southwest Asia where the number of out-of-school children dropped by half.

Despite this progress, (1) the demand for lower secondary schools has been increasing and yet there are a large number of young people who are still not able to go to school and (2) many children have superficially graduated without thoroughly acquiring basic reading, writing and arithmetic skills or have dropped out of school midway through the course. If this continues, 72 million children will still be out of school in 2015, which will be far from achieving the target.

By verifying the outcomes of past cooperation and the challenges that remain, we must thoroughly review how educational cooperation should be pursued. Amidst serious global economic conditions, the field of education has seen a great deal of investment by the world, including Japan through ODA, but the fact remains that despite the investments, the target has not been achieved, which entails a need to thoroughly verify whether or not such investment is actually being effectively utilized, and we also believe that it is essential to strive to use the valuable budgets of each country and international organization in the most effective way.

Japan has focused primarily on field-based projects in conducting international cooperation in education. Recently, however, new approaches to cooperation are being more actively implemented, including financial support and/or support in policy formulation. The effectiveness of each approach must be further verified in order to carry out the most relevant support addressing the actual situation of each country and its needs. In this way, we must make every effort to achieve the goal of EFA.

Moreover, since child labour is an impediment to achieving the goal of EFA, we believe that, in order to achieve the goal of EFA, it is vital to provide support to all children suffering under adverse conditions, including the practice of child labour, and to offer educational support to those countries affected by conflicts and disasters.

Dr. Birger Fredriksen, former Director of the Africa Region Human Development Department of World Bank and Dr. Ruth M. Mubanga, Director General of the Education and Specialized Services of Zambian Ministry of Education, are today's keynote speakers. Both of them have worked for many years in the field of international cooperation in education on either the donor side or the recipient side. I believe they will give valuable input to our discussion.

We have also invited four panelists from Japan and abroad for our afternoon session. I am sure we will have a lively discussion as they offer their views on future international cooperation.

In closing, I would like to thank all of those who gave their time and effort to organize this forum. I sincerely hope that today's forum will benefit your future endeavors.

[Opening Session]

Opening Remarks by **Kazuhiko Hamada** Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Japan

- It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the Japan Education Forum IX.
- This is indeed an important year as only three years are left until 2015, which is the target year for the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- Since the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011, Japan has received aid from the international community, to which it had offered aid. Japan has also conducted technical transfers in various sectors, including education, and is proud of its ODA.
- Japan has been making various efforts to achieve the goals of the Education for All (EFA) and MDGs by the target year of 2015. Japan cannot do this alone. In order to achieve these goals, further collaboration by the international community is essential. From the viewpoint of human security as well, united global efforts are imperative.
- Education has always been an extremely important factor in the creation of a society with a safe and comfortable environment where people can care for their families and their communities. In today's context, education is becoming even more important. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and all other public agencies must unite to promote education. Collaboration between the public and private sectors is also important as seen in the joint public-private initiatives of the Gates Foundation. For every challenge we face, we must be aware that we are all in the same boat.
- We hope that this forum will provide an opportunity for meaningful and candid discussions among the participants from the public and private sectors as well as educators on the relevant themes, including the nature of aid and evaluation methods so that we can strengthen our ties for further collaboration. At this forum as well, I would like to see a spirit of collaboration in conducting discussions so that the MDGs can be achieved at the earliest possible time as the target year of 2015 approaches.