



Foreword

The paramount importance of an urgent call for universalizing quality education is widely shared by the international community in both developing and developed countries. Japan strongly acknowledges that education is the foundation of nation-building, human resources development, and contributes to realize Human Security. As such, Japan has been reinforcing its contribution to educational development in developing countries through various means such as Official Development Assistance (ODA). Japan has also continued to strengthen its efforts towards international educational cooperation based on the “Basic Education for Growth Initiative (BEGIN)” announced at the G8 Kananaskis Summit in 2002, as well as leading the international community in making firm commitments in the occasion of TICAD IV and the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit in this year of 2008.

The Japan Education Forum (JEF) is an annual international forum established in March 2004 through government and academic collaboration as part of Japan’s educational cooperation. Its purpose is to provide an opportunity for open and frank exchanges of opinions and ideas among officials in the public sector, international development agencies, NGOs, scholars, etc., who are seeking strategies of international educational cooperation to best support and promote the self-efforts of developing countries towards sustainable educational development. The forum will also offer the opportunity to present Japan’s own experience in terms of self-sustaining educational development and provide inputs on ways for international cooperation in this area.

The international community has been working towards universalizing basic education, the common international goal as declared in 1990 at the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) and reconfirmed in the Dakar Framework for Action in 2000. Access to primary education has increased rapidly in light of these international initiatives, yet on the other hand, its quality remains a major concern. Was the growth of access to primary education accompanied by improvements in the teaching-learning process at the classroom level and its outcomes? Further efforts concerning educational administration and school management are needed which well reflects the current education needs. Quality education is a continuing challenge for all of us and its definition varies depending on the geographical, cultural and socio-economic status.

JEF-VI will put thoughts into such key questions as “what do we mean by quality of education?” from multiple viewpoints and “in what aspects and how do the governance need to be strengthened in order to improve and maintain its quality?”. We hope that this Forum will serve as a platform for active and constructive discussions by all the participants.

