

[Opening Session]

Opening Remarks by Hirokazu Matsuno

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 (JEF) VI. 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.

It is our great pleasure to have Dr. Komlavi Francisco Seddoh, former Minister of the Education and Scientific Research of Togo, and Dr. Eiichi Kajita, President of Hyogo University of Teacher Education, as our keynote speakers. I would also like to express my deep gratitude to the many experts participating from Japan and abroad.

The international efforts towards Education for All (EFA), led by the United Nations, have contributed to the steady increase in the school enrollment rate in developing countries. However, further efforts must be made to address many issues including improving the quality of education and redressing gender disparity. I hope that this forum will provide important suggestions and insights in support of these efforts.

Last year, which marked the halfway point to 2015, the target year for achieving the goals of EFA, Japan hosted the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) and the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit. I would like to note that TICAD adopted the Yokohama Declaration and its Action Plan, which spelled out specific measures to be taken in various fields including education. Only seven years remain before we reach the EFA target year. In order to make EFA a reality, we must implement the plan and make efforts to improve the quality of education.

Last year, MEXT set a target to grant scholarships to 500 African students in five years. MEXT is also working on the "International Cooperation Initiative," in which the knowledge of Japanese universities and other entities is utilized to develop teaching materials and educational cooperation models relevant to developing countries. Furthermore, in collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency, MEXT is dispatching public school teachers as Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers to support education in developing countries. MEXT would like to continue promoting international cooperation in education, utilizing its experience, knowledge and human resources.

I sincerely hope that fruitful discussions will take place in this forum on the autonomous development of education by developing countries and the educational cooperation that supports such endeavors. Thank you.

(Tentative English Translation by CICE)

