

[Concluding Discussions]

Riho Sakurai, Associate Professor (Center for the Study of International Cooperation in Education (CICE), Hiroshima University)

We have had very active discussions, and I wish we could continue, but since time is limited, let us move on to the concluding discussions based on the discussions we have had and on participants' opinions. Although this is our concluding session, as this forum is for the frank exchange of opinions, it is not our aim to come to a conclusion. Therefore I would like to ask each of the keynote speakers and the panelists to talk about the major points that you thought particularly important in today's forum; lessons we have learned to achieve EFA; and post-2015 educational cooperation. I would like to ask Mr. Eshetu to make his remarks first followed by Dr. Benavot, Mr. Ishihara, Prof. Chege, Prof. Baldin, Mr. Raya and Prof. Kuroda. As time is limited, please limit your remarks to 3 or 4 minutes.

Eshetu Asfaw (Director, Plan and Resources Mobilization Directorate, Ministry of Education, Ethiopia)

Okay, thank you. As an Ethiopian delegate, I have learned a lot from today's forum. One of the important things that I have learned here is that the issue of post-2015 is not only an issue of the developing countries. It is also an issue of developed countries. I also learned that although our problems are different, we have similar problems which bring us together. I have also realized that Ethiopia shares similar problems with other developing countries. For example, gender disparity is a problem shared by most African countries or most developing countries. It was also a good opportunity for Ethiopia to share its experience with you.

The most striking thing for me was about the government contribution to education. What I found out is that most countries allocate less than 10 percent of their annual budget to education, while Ethiopia spends 25 percent, which is quite high. When I was in Ethiopia, I didn't realize we spend so much money on our education system. But now I realize that our commitment is very high. That's why we allocate 25 percent of our national budget. In terms of the actual amount, it's not that much. The amount we spend on education is \$1.7 billion, which may be a half or a third of the education budget spent in developed countries like Japan. I think you can understand that because our general budget is very small, the education budget is also small. You may be surprised to know that 25 percent of the budget is allocated to education, but it is a very small amount compared to the number of children we have in school now. We have almost 26 million school-aged children, which is almost more than one fourth of the total population. Also, we are very diverse. We have different cultures, so we provide education for all children in their mother tongues. As you can imagine, this is not an easy task. It's very expensive. It is expensive for the Ethiopian economy. But anyway, we do it. That's very important. We have to respect the right of each individual child because education is a right. So we're doing this. We are successful in this area. However, it is very, very, very expensive. I realize that it has been made possible thanks to the international community's contribution. We appreciate it.

Aaron Benavot, Director (EFA Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO)

I am impressed by the level of engagement of many of the different people who came to the Japanese Education Forum, and their interest in the post-2015 framework. I agree very much with my colleague from Ethiopia. I hope, however, that the Japanese community will see that many key ideas in the post-2015 framework are also relevant to Japan, to countries in the Global North and not just countries in the Global South. In particular, I think the issues around quality and equity are major issues that are important for all countries around the world. I think that while we have a better idea about how to address the challenge of quality, I think we still have many questions about how to address the question of equity.

One of the recent questions was around how do you address disparities both among countries in the world but also especially disparities within countries. We need as a community come up with new programs and different

ways to target educational interventions for those who are most in need, for more disadvantaged populations, for those who have less opportunities. And there are many different examples and places that we can look to draw lessons. But we also need tools--data tools and monitoring instruments--that are more oriented to an equity orientation. This is something that has not been clear and apparent enough in the EFA monitoring framework. So it is my hope that the post-2015 targets and indicators will have a much stronger equity orientation and dimension. Finally, I would say that there are many things that we can say about financing. But in the final analysis, most of the funds for education go to pay teachers' salaries. 80-85% of expenditure of government in education is for teachers' salaries. The issue is that all these innovative financing mechanisms may help on the margins but they can't necessarily assist with the heart and the crux of educational expenditure, which is trying to develop, afford and provide decent compensation and promotion opportunities for teachers. It's important for us to keep this in mind.

The final thing that I would say is that one topic that we didn't talk about, but we should consider in the future is the prevalence of corruption in education even though we think that education is a place where only good-natured and well-intentioned people are involved. There are many ways in which corruption is prevalent in education both at primary, secondary and even higher education levels. I think we need to find ways to address creatively the prevalence of corruption both in terms of finance but also in many other ways. Thank you very much for this opportunity to engage in a conversation with you.

Shinichi Ishihara (Deputy Director General, Human Development Department, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA))

Thank you very much for attending this forum in this bad weather. I'm glad we were able to have very good discussions. In this closing session, I'd like to mention three things. First, I was able to recognize the importance of education once again. Quality is of course important, but a balance between quality and equity is also called for. I mean education should not just seek to produce elites but promote equity so that everyone will have an equal opportunity to study. JICA will always keep this in mind in international cooperation. Education is valuable when students enjoy studying and are interested in what they learn. At the same time, education to promote peace and diversity is also valuable. I believe we must convey these values of education in our activities.

Secondly, with regard to SDG, Dr. Benavot said, "Sustainable development begins with education." It is important for us to consider the effect of education on other sectors of development. JICA would like to continue its cooperation in a flexible way so that many ideas can emerge beyond the educational sector and from different viewpoints.

Finally, I believe it will become more important to collaborate with each other through global and regional networks to connect professionals who do good work in their own fields and capacities. What can be done only at a global level must be done by global organizations. Researchers can go to their target regions and conduct intensive studies. JICA has its own roles and strengths. Each player must play its roles fully. We would like to utilize various networks and share opinions so that we can address the post-2015 agenda in the best possible way. Thank you.

Fatuma Chege (Dean, School of Education, Kenyatta University, Kenya)

Thank you very much audience for being here with us the whole day and engaging and asking questions that have got us thinking even further. For me, I just feel that for the sustainable development goals post-2015, this sustainability must take a complementary approach so that we are not only looking at the international goals but also looking at how the regions are localizing these goals. How the goals are being interpreted by our own governments in terms of gender and education policies, and how education leaders including education managers and head teachers are capacitated to interpret the same policies to make their institutions equitable in all ways and also to ensure gender equality is also important.

I am now feeling that the education managers, the education leaders, the principals, and the head teachers

have a real duty of implementing the relevant policies, the gender equality policies. They should ensure that the educators, the teachers have the right skills through training or even refresher training, because these goals will not be sustainable unless they can be sustained right at the local levels, where we take this information and, bring communities and parents to work together. We've heard about partnership and financing partnerships. I think we should also go a little bit deeper, in a more qualitative manner and look at the ways and means of engaging parents and communities in order to own that process of ensuring that the identified goals are met and that they are sustainable. This we have seen in some countries where the private sector not only finances education, helping the government by building schools but also engaging in entrepreneurial activities where they get apprentices and train them on work skills. Let's say the children have finished a cycle of education and are waiting to join another cycle, the entrepreneurs give them work experience. That is a partnership where possibly they're not spending any money but do something that gives the young people the work skills, and the right attitudes towards work. I think that's a partnership that should also be encouraged.

Above all, I think it is really important that as we monitor from global levels how we implement easy-to-understand user-friendly means of enabling the institutions themselves to monitor and evaluate how they're performing in terms of achieving various goals. For example, institutionalizing gender responsiveness that will bring gender equality in the schools as part of a school culture or an institutional culture that involves the various partners including communities. The learners themselves should be helped to understand what they're engaged in and where they're heading to through education. Therefore, we need to think of more innovative strategies and think about alternative education for those out of school. We still have millions of girls and boys who are out of school and who are not yet adults to join the world of work. We should be thinking of alternative education of out of school girls and boys that would enable them to continue learning. And we need to understand that one of the post 2015 global goals to ensure lifelong learning. So, it should not matter where you have stopped attending school. The government should be obligated to think of an alternative education for the millions of out of schoolchildren. Thank you very much.

Yuriko Yamamoto Baldin (Professor, Universidade Federal de São Carlos, Brazil)

Today's forum had very important content, and I learned a lot. I am truly grateful for your contributions. Since my time was limited, I focused on my profession, teacher training, in my presentation, but when I heard a wide range of themes discussed in this forum, I realized I could have talked a lot more based on materials for the project I'm engaged in, too. I'm sorry I couldn't do that, but I'd like to address these themes at another time. In closing, I would like to say that not only quantitative but also qualitative assessment will be an important task in the post-2015 agenda and must be conducted jointly by the international community. This is clear from the Global Monitoring Report, too. This is my brief comment. Thank you.

Rene Raya, Lead Policy Analyst (Asian South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE))

Thank you to the organizers for giving me this opportunity to participate in this very productive exchange of ideas. And I think this process should be pursued because the interaction between university, government, civil society and private sector is certainly important in order to develop a collective voice and unity on many issues that confront us in the education sector. So, congratulations to everyone. I hope that this interaction will continue and flourish even more in the days to come. In our organization, we are bringing the agenda of expanded access, quality, equity and financing into the post-2015 education development agenda. We think that these are the critical issues and concerns that must be addressed in order to achieve quality education and lifelong learning for all. So, this forum actually enriched my understanding in the areas of equity and quality, by giving premium to teacher development to achieved empowered teachers in our schools and in our community. Equity, we give importance towards ensuring gender equity not only in terms of parity in access to schools and education but also looking at

gender more in terms of equality in access and in outcome of education - whether it serves to bridge the inequality gap between male and female.

The other learning that I have in this forum is that thinking of education and learning not only for work, but also for life and for community. This is because we perform multiple functions. Education and learning is not merely for our economic functions because we are also members of family. We are members of community. We are members of society. So, we have multiple functions to perform - in health, in political activities, in social mobilization. It is important to really have a holistic and lifelong learning framework for education. Thank you.

Kazuo Kuroda (Professor of the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies and Director of the Center for the Study of International Cooperation in Education, Waseda University)

Thank you. Let me briefly talk about my thoughts on today's discussions and on the post-2015 discussions in which I have been involved. First of all, EFA has not been achieved. Dr. Benavot said that there are 57 million children out of school. Actually, there are 59, according to the latest estimate. This is the situation we face today. We say "post-EFA" and "post-2015," but EFA has not been achieved, and it will continue to be the most important agenda item.

Secondly, what I was really interested in in today's discussion was that I was able to hear various opinions on disparities. When Prof. Chege explained gender issues in detail, she explained various disparities and presented various thoughts on disparities. The framework for the past 15 years has put a priority on gender issues in terms of disparities. Gender is an important factor, but there are other factors, such as disabilities, ethnic minorities, where you live, and the educational gap between the rich and the poor. The combined effects of these factors create disparities. An important aspect of the post-2015 agenda is to address these factors in a comprehensive manner.

With this in mind, my third point is to address the financing gap. This has been discussed over the past 15 years, and from Jomtien till 2000, too. Although the international community has made joint efforts to achieve EFA, it has not been possible because of the big financial gap.

We also discussed the potential public-private partnership, PPP. Of course, we must consider promoting PPP. When there is a shift from the vertical relationship between the developing and developed nations to the horizontal relationship, the private sector's power is very important. But at the same time we discussed what roles and obligations the government has. We must clarify the government roles and obligations when we ask for the private sector's support.

The quality of education is said to be the most important part of the post-2015 agenda. In fact, how to improve the quality of education in addition to expanding quantity has been discussed since the 1990s. Many interesting studies have been made to demonstrate the importance of the quality of education. For example, it is now becoming clear that economic growth is achieved not by expanding the quantity of education but by improving the quality of education.

As these studies show, we must focus our efforts on improving the quality of education. A major trend after 2015 will be to follow the outcome or output of education, in other words, academic achievements. This is, in itself, very important, but the content of education is probably more important. There will be a paradigm shift after 2015, and more discussion is required on the purpose and content of education. What do we teach? And for what do we teach? Unfortunately, we did not talk about these questions much in 2000. For example, the international community felt a strong need for peace education after 2001 in the context of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and of reconstruction assistance, but this was not clearly included in the framework developed in 2000. Therefore, sustainability, global citizenship education, and culture of peace are included in the new direction outlined in the post-2015 framework, which Dr. Benavot explained this morning. We do not know yet whether this proposal will be adopted in New York in September, but when we ask why the international community must work together to improve education, unless we know what we teach and what ideal society we seek to establish through education, I don't think we can discuss

the matter appropriately or make any adequate framework.

The past framework was to set development goals focusing on developing countries, but today the international community is discussing the fact that we need universal targets in the post-2015 years. It is now important for all countries, including developing and developed countries, to work together to achieve shared educational goals. In the past, education was regarded as the problem of each country, but in today's globalized society, education is regarded as a global issue. I believe this trend will become stronger after 2015.

We must consider what Japan can do after 2015. The purpose of today's forum was to provide an opportunity to deepen this discussion. Many efforts have been made to contribute to creating the post-2015 framework. The discussion will be continued in Incheon and in New York to develop the framework, which is now almost finalized. But of course, this is not the end. As the post-2015 framework is now almost complete, we must discuss what Japan can do in that framework and how we can promote the agenda, inviting opinions from around the world.

Japan must also start drawing up new policies to promote educational cooperation. The MEXT has established the International Cooperation Promotion Council for this purpose. In the past, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs submitted educational cooperation policies twice—for Prime Minister Koizumi and for Prime Minister Kan. So efforts are being made to draw up new policies. As we see today in this forum, representatives from NGOs and researchers are joining in the discussion on the post-2015 agenda. What sort of society will we create after 2015? What roles can education play in such a society? I am looking forward to continuing our discussions to answer these questions. Thank you.

We don't know what the weather is like outside. It may be snowing hard. I hope you will all have a safe trip home. I would like to thank all of you for staying until the end despite the bad weather.

Riho Sakurai (Associate Professor, Center for the Study of International Cooperation in Education (CICE), Hiroshima University)

Prof. Kuroda, thank you very much for giving us a summary of today's forum. I would also like to thank the keynote speakers and the panelists on the stage. Since Prof. Kuroda gave a good summary of the main points of today's discussion, I would like to make just one comment about how I felt as a moderator of this forum. Prof. Takehiko Kariya, an educational sociologist, wrote that the scenes in the classrooms of *terakoya* (private elementary schools attended by the children of commoners during the Edo period) were different from those of today. The students, called *terako*, and their teachers, called *shisho*, were not always facing each other. They were studying different materials, depending on their levels of understanding. For example, some were studying how to write while others were reading books. They were sometimes learning from each other. This is somewhat similar to what was discussed today on the global agenda of the post-2015 educational cooperation, which is shifting from vertical to horizontal activities, recognizing cultural diversity. What is needed in these activities is probably what this forum aims at, too, written on the back cover here: "supporting self-reliant approach" and "respecting cultural diversity." As I said at the beginning of this session, it is not our aim to come to a conclusion at this forum. On behalf of one of the organizers, I would be very happy if this forum could offer a thought-provoking opportunity to all of you.

Now we have to close the forum. Please give a warm round of applause to thank Mr. Eshetu, Dr. Benevot, Mr. Ishihara, Prof. Chege, Prof. Baldin, Mr. Raya and Prof. Kuroda. Thank you. All the programs of the 12th Japan Education Forum have now been concluded. On behalf of the four organizers, I would like to once again express my sincere gratitude to the keynote speakers and the panelists. I would also like to thank JICA for supporting this forum, the interpreters for their wonderful work, the students from one of the organizers for assisting with today's forum as interns, and the staff members of the organizers who worked behind the scenes. And last but not least, I'd like to thank all of you who gathered here at this forum, which would have been impossible without your kind support. Thanks to your input, we were able to have a lively discussion. With this, we would like to conclude the 12th Japan Education Forum. Thank you very much.