

[Opening Session]

Opening Remarks by **Kyoko Nishikawa**

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I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all of you for participating in today's Japan Education Forum XI (JEF XI). On behalf of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), one of the co-hosting organizations, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of you.

This forum, jointly organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Hiroshima University, the University of Tsukuba and MEXT, has been held annually since 2004. Its purpose is to provide an opportunity for open and frank exchanges of opinions and ideas by administrators in charge of educational development, representatives of cooperation agencies, NGOs and researchers on how international cooperation in education can support the self-reliant educational development and ownership of developing countries.

On the theme of "Globalization, Education and International Cooperation," this year's forum will discuss the impact of globalization on education in developing countries and the roles of education in the globalized society.

The international community is making concerted efforts to achieve Education for All (EFA), which aims to enable every child to have access to free and high-quality compulsory education and to improve the quality of education. To achieve this goal, the MEXT has provided the Funds-in-Trust to UNESCO and implemented projects to achieve EFA. The target year, 2015, is right around the corner. When considering how international cooperation in education should address the post-EFA agenda, we must fully recognize social changes. In this regard, it is important to understand the impact of globalization on education and its issues.

An example of the impact of globalization on education in developing countries is the increasing demand in emerging and developing countries for local human resources who are highly educated and versed in advanced technologies as private companies from developed countries are expanding business to these countries. The number of students from developing countries who are studying in developed countries is growing, and exchange programs and cooperation activities are expanding. Developing countries are also interested in international evaluations for academic achievements as they endeavour to make self-reliant efforts to develop high-level human resources. These are some examples of globalization in education.

Today the world faces various issues, including the environment, poverty, human rights, peace, and development. The international community must act as one to address them. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) teaches learners to take these global issues as their own and consider what they can do to solve them. It also empowers learners to take action.

The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution to make 2005 to 2014 the U.N. Decade of ESD. As one of the proposers of this resolution, Japan has actively promoted ESD. As this is the last year of the Decade of ESD, Japan will host the "UNESCO World Conference on ESD" in November of this year in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, and in Okayama City. This will be an important conference to review the activities of the decade and to discuss the future activities of ESD after 2015. The MEXT will continue contributing to the improvement of the quality of education from the global viewpoint by promoting ESD.

Today we have invited two keynote speakers. Dr. Kilemi Mwiria, Kenya's former Assistant Minister of Education, has extensive knowledge of the educational issues in Africa. He will discuss globalization and education, based on the experiences of developing countries. The other keynote speaker is Professor Angela W. Little, Professor Emerita of the University of London's Institute of Education. She will discuss the relationship of globalization and education in Asia.

We have also invited experts from South America, Japan and Southwest Asia for our afternoon session. We expect a lively discussion among the experts, who will offer their views on the "Impacts and Challenges of Globalization concerning Education in Developing Countries" and "Japan's Education Cooperation in a Globalized/Global Society." I sincerely hope that sharing the knowledge of each country through today's lectures and discussions will produce fruitful results, which will contribute to improving the quality of education in every country.

In closing, I would like to thank all of those who gave their time and effort to organize this forum. I hope that it will be useful in your future endeavours. Thank you.