

Opening Session

Opening Address by Yoshiie Hiroyuki, State Minister Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan

Thank you very much for making time to attend the 13th Japan Education Forum today. On behalf of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), I would like to offer a few words of greeting.

This forum, jointly organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Hiroshima University, the University of Tsukuba and the MEXT, has been held annually since 2004 to promote free and frank discussion among various people, including administrators in charge of educational cooperation, representatives of cooperation organizations and NGOs as well as researchers, on how international cooperation in education can support the self-reliant educational development and the initiatives of developing countries.

One of the themes of this year's forum is "Japan's initiatives to achieve the goals of EFA." In order to achieve the goals of the EFA Dakar Framework of Action, the MEXT has been promoting various activities such as providing assistance through UNESCO projects and establishing systems to dispatch volunteer schoolteachers in order to advance EFA.

In the field of higher education, we have invited Ms. Mabel Imbuga, Vice Chancellor of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, to be a keynote speaker today. Kyoto University, Okayama University, Tottori University and other universities have been providing assistance to Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology for many years since its establishment by sending experts there and accepting trainees through JICA projects. In Japan, they are known as the "samurais who built a university in Africa."

The cooperation for human resource development promoted by universities and research institutes in Japan has gained a certain recognition in developing countries and others. In this regard, another keynote speaker, Mr. Hiromitsu Muta, Professor Emeritus of the Tokyo Institute of Technology, will give an overview of Japan's educational cooperation.

Another theme of today's forum is "Japan's role in achieving Education 2030 goals." The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by the United Nations' General Assembly in September of last year. "Education 2030" was adopted to achieve the Agenda's Goal 4 of strengthening the efforts to improve education and to promote ESD widely, from preschool to higher education.

The MEXT will host a G7 Education Ministers' meeting on "Innovation in Education" in May of this year. In order to share best practices, the G7 countries will discuss topics such as the role of education in confronting global challenges and in building peaceful, prosperous and sustainable societies; and the qualities and capabilities required in this new era in which coexistence and cooperation with people from various different backgrounds are becoming increasingly important. Japan would also like to lead the discussion on how to achieve the goals of "Education 2030," such as what each country should do to support improvement of learning and of acquiring vocational skills in developing countries.

Recently, leaders of developing countries are very interested in Japan's education and have high hopes for Japan's cooperation. The MEXT is planning to implement educational cooperation to introduce methods of Japanese education that meet the needs of each country, working with the MOFA and other relevant ministries, JICA and the private sector in the field of education. We will endeavour to further improve our educational cooperation, responding to the needs of emerging and developing nations.

Many events are scheduled to take place this year, including G7, TICAD VI, and ASEAN and APEC education ministers' meetings. Through these dialogues, the MEXT will strengthen its endeavours to improve its educational cooperation and human resource development for a sustainable future.

I hope that this forum will contribute to sharing each country's knowledge through the lectures and discussions and produce results that will improve the quality of education. In closing, I would like to thank all of those who gave

their time and effort to organize this forum. I hope today's forum will provide insights that are meaningful for your future endeavours.