

Opening Address by Koichi Aiboshi, Ambassador, Assistant Vice- Minister, Director-General for Global Issues, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan

## **1. Introduction**

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), one of the co-hosting organizations, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to the Japan Education Forum 13.

## **2. Steady implementation of SDG4 and Education 2030**

Last year was a milestone for international cooperation in education sector. In May, the World Education Forum 2015 adopted the Incheon Declaration, a political commitment on education through 2030. In September, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted at the United Nations summit. It clarified the educational goal as the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4): “Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning.” In November, the Education 2030 Framework for Action was adopted at the Education 2030 High-Level Meeting for achieving the SDG-4.

## **3. Formulation of the Learning Strategy for Peace and Growth**

Against this backdrop, the Cabinet of Japan adopted the Official Cooperation Charter in February of last year and decided to formulate policies for each area to address development issues including education.

With regard to the new development policy in education sector, the “Learning Strategy for Peace and Growth” was developed based on contributions not only from related ministries and organizations but also from experts and civil society. In last September, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced the strategy at the United Nations summit, at which the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted. The new policy has three guiding principles.

The first is educational cooperation for marginalized children who are deprived of access to quality education, something the Millennium Development Goals were unable to achieve. According to a UNESCO report, the number of illiterate people in the world 15 years old or older was estimated at 750 million in 2013. About two thirds of them are women. Malala Yousafzai, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, has repeatedly stressed the importance of girls’ education. Japan will also continue to actively support girls’ education. The number of child soldiers under 18 is estimated at 800,000. Education in conflict-torn nations and regions is also in serious condition. Japan will support education for these marginalized children by collaborating with international organizations and others.

The second guiding principle is to cooperate on education for human resource development to provide a foundation for “Quality Growth” as well as for sustainable social economic development. Japan will provide educational cooperation so that people who receive an education can find satisfying jobs. For example, projects in the Philippines jointly conducted with Japanese corporations support local vocational schools. Japan will support initiatives that promote “Quality Growth” in developing countries, using its expertise. Japan will also conduct educational cooperation in the field of disaster prevention and environment, in which Japan has

experience and knowledge. Japan has conducted the School-based Disaster Education Project in Turkey, an earthquake-prone country like Japan.

The third guiding principle is to establish and expand international and regional networks for educational cooperation. Today, actors in the field of educational cooperation are not limited to governments and international organizations but are expanding to various actors including private sector and civil society. In implementing the new strategy, Japan will strengthen collaboration with diverse actors to promote educational cooperation.

The G7 Ise-Shima Summit will take place in May and TICAD VI in Kenya in August of this year. Japan will take these opportunities to make its new educational cooperation policies widely known.

#### **4. Conclusion**

It is important to review past achievements and to discuss future challenges once again at this forum, which provides an important opportunity for experts in educational cooperation from Japan and abroad to gather. I hope that lively discussions will take place and that today's forum will be a productive one at which we give further thought to future educational cooperation and the promotion of efforts to achieve the SDG4. Thank you.