

Address

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Distinguished representatives of member countries who have participated from overseas and fellow participants who are participating this seminar, good afternoon. On the opening of the 24th Asia-Pacific International Seminar on Special Education, I would like to extend a few words of welcome on behalf of the National Institute of Special Education (NISE).

First of all, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to those who have participated in this seminar. It is a great pleasure to be able to hold the seminar again this year together with delegates of each country who are working hard for the enhancement and development of special education.

Since 1981, NISE has jointly hosted APEID Seminar on Special Education together with the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO. A total of more than 300 overseas representatives including government administrators, academic researchers and educators from the Asia-Pacific region have so far participated in this seminar. After being held for more than 20 years, in 2002 the name of the seminar was changed to the Asia-Pacific International Seminar on Special Education. This seminar is held annually in order to contribute to the enhancement and development of special education in the Asia-Pacific region covering important themes in special education.

The main theme of the 24th Asia-Pacific International Seminar on Special Education is “Educational Supports for Children with Multiple Disabilities with sensory impairments including deafblindness” which focuses on education for the multiply disabled in area in which progress and efforts are seen in the Asia-Pacific region in recent years.

In this seminar, presentations and discussions on practices and researches on education for children with multiple disabilities with sensory impairment including deafblindness will be made.

I hope that this seminar will create an opportunity for participants to learn from each other and to build cooperative relationship on education for children with disabilities particularly those with multiple disabilities accompanying sensory impairment.

Different countries may face different challenges and issues to overcome. However all those approaches to special education taken by each country may differ. We can still learn the experiences of other countries from each other.

Special Education in Japan is now facing a major reform. An elaborate education approach has been taken in the past by implementing special education in schools for the blind, deaf and other disabilities, special classes in elementary and middle schools as well as in resource rooms in accordance with the types and degree of disabilities of each child so that all disabled preschool, elementary and secondary school children can develop the ability to become independent in the society. However in order to meet the new challenges that we are facing recently in dealing with those with LD, ADHD and High Functional Autism requiring special education assistance in their learning and their living. Japan is making a directional transition in special education to adopt a new system that can provide an appropriate education assistance in accordance with the educational needs of each individual children with disabilities.

NISE conducted a major reorganization this April. In order to deal flexibly and speedy with the challenges we are facing regarding education for children with disabilities in Japan. I sincerely hope that we can collaborate and cooperate with other countries from the Asia-Pacific region through this Asia-Pacific International Seminar on Special Education and contribute to the development of special education in each countries.

The achievements of this seminar should not simply be discussions and information exchanges. We are also hoping that collaboration among member

countries will continue after the seminar and we would like to make a suggestion during this seminar on how exchanges and sharing of information should be made among member countries in the future. I would like to ask for your cooperation in this matter.

Lastly, I would like to end my speech by wishing the discussions and exchanges in this seminar will be meaningful to all the participants from each country.

Thank you very much for your attention.