

Address

Mr. HOSOMURA Michio

President

National Institute of Special Education

Good morning, to those of you who were kind enough to participate in this Seminar from abroad by representing your countries, and to others who have likewise participated in this Seminar.

In opening the 23rd Asia-Pacific International Seminar on Special Education, I would like to greet you by representing the National Institute of Special Education.

Firstly, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to all of you who have decided to participate in this Seminar.

I am very happy that this year also, we can hold this seminar with the delegates from abroad who are working hard for the development and enrichment of special education in their countries.

NISE has been holding this Seminar every year since 1981, in collaboration with the Japan UNESCO Committee, with the aim of enriching the special education provided in the Asia and the Pacific region.

The Seminar has invited government officials, researchers, educators and others from the countries in the Asia and the Pacific region, and the number of participants from abroad has exceeded 300 in total.

The Seminar has thus been held for over 20 years, and its present name “Asia-Pacific International Seminar on Special Education” has been used since 2002.

This Seminar is being held every year by picking up important themes related to special education, in order to contribute toward the development and enrichment of special education in the Asia and the Pacific region.

This year's 23rd Seminar will be held under the theme “Educational Support for Children with Disabilities and the Utilization of ICT” in consideration of the rapid informatization of the society in recent years.

In this Seminar, presentations will be made on research outcomes, educational practices, administrative measures and others related to the use of information means in the education of children with disabilities in the Asia and the Pacific region. The presentations will be followed by discussions based on such presentations.

I hope that this Seminar becomes a good opportunity for the participants to learn from each other's experiences related to use of information means by children with disabilities, and to advance their relationship of cooperation.

The issues faced by the countries and the problems that they must solve may vary. Moreover, the countries may be tackling special education in different ways. Even then, we believe that we can mutually learn from the efforts made by the countries.

At present, special education in Japan has entered a period of major innovations. In 2001, as part of the Central Government Reform, the Ministry of Education was renamed Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, abbreviated MEXT, and the Special Education Division in charge of special education administration was renamed “Special Support Education Division.”

As a new directionality of special education in Japan, MEXT has clearly set forth the policy of converting from “special education” to provide education and guidance in special places in accordance with the kind and degree of disability to “special support education” to provide appropriate educational support in meeting with the educational needs of the individual disabled children.

Under this new policy concept of “special support education”, the Ministry seeks to take more active measures for the children who require special educational support and who are enrolled in ordinary classes.

In line with such innovations, NISE has started its new role as an Independent Administrative Body since 2001.

NISE will soon undergo a major reorganization. To that end, it has been building a system that it can cope promptly and flexibly with the issues related to special education and special support education faced by Japan.

I believe that it is highly significant that the 23rd Seminar should be held in such a period of major innovations.

I hope that through this Seminar, NISE can cooperate and collaborate with the countries in the Asia and the Pacific region, and carry out international cooperation that would contribute toward the progress of special education in such countries.

I would like to close my address by hoping that the discussions held and the opinions exchanged in this Seminar should be of value especially to those of you who were kind enough to participate from abroad.

Thank you very much.

Address

Welcome Remarks by Mr. SATO Shuji

**Senior Specialist, Japanese National Commission for UNESCO
Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology**

**Mr. HOSOMURA, President of the National Institute of Special Education,
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO, as well as the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), I am very pleased to extend my warmest welcome to all the participants from Asia and the Pacific Region, here for the opening of this seminar.

The National Institute of Special Education and the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO have been organizing the Asia and Pacific International Seminar on Special Education since 1981. I would like to thank the National Institute of Special Education for its great efforts.

The theme of the seminar this year is “Utilization of ICT and Educational Support for Children with Disabilities,” and the objective is focused on contributing to the development of special education in the Asia-Pacific region.

As you know, “the Dakar framework for Action,” which was adopted at the World Education Forum in April 2000, is a collective commitment to action for countries and international organizations so as to achieve the goal of “Education for All (EFA).”

When we discuss EFA, it seems that much attention is paid to universal primary education and reduction of the illiteracy rate. And it is indispensable for achieving all that to complete arrangements of an education system for children with some impairments who need special consideration. In this regard, I won't hesitate to say that it is very significant for us in the Asia-Pacific region to link up and to cooperate internationally for the promotion of research on special education.

It goes without saying that the utilization of ICT in Education has been becoming more important recently. The needs of children with disabilities are diverse, and therefore, it is necessary that each child is provided with education which meets his/her needs. Using ICT can make it possible to provide an education improved in terms of both quality and quantity.

Today, experts from 14 countries in the Asia-Pacific region have joined this seminar. I hope you will have significant opportunities to exchange opinions and information. I also hope you will gain results from the seminar and bring those back to your respective countries for further deliberation to see that education, which copes with each student's needs properly, will be provided in the Asia-Pacific region.

Last but not least, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to staff members of NISE who have devoted themselves to the preparation of the seminar. I hope that the seminar will be a great success, and that your stay in Japan will be productive, meaningful and enjoyable.

Thank you very much.