

# ***Address***

**Mr Yutaka ODA  
President  
The National Institute of Special Education**

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen.

First of all I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation for your participation in the seminar. My name is Yutaka Oda, President of The National Institute of Special Education, assuming this position since April this year. Therefore I am looking forward to hearing from all of you on this occasion. On behalf of the NISE, I would like to express heartfelt appreciation to all of you, our dear delegates from abroad. I am very much pleased and honored to be able to hold this seminar with all the delegates who have made efforts for implementation of special education in each country.

NISE has sponsored this seminar together with The Japanese National Commission for UNESCO since 1981. This seminar was called as APEID Regional Seminar on Special Education. For the development of special education in the Asia and Pacific region, we have invited the government officials and researchers in education from the region, totaling to over 320. This seminar has been continuing for over two decades and this seminar was renamed in 2002 to the Asia-Pacific International Seminar on Special Education.

For the further development and improvement of special education in the Asia-Pacific region this seminar is held annually focusing on important theme in this area. This year marks the landmark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and we focus on the education for children with intellectual disabilities where we see much progress in this region and we have set theme of "Improvement of Educational Practice and Environment for Students with Intellectual disabilities- for active participation in society through employment". In this seminar we would like to learn from each other on the current status of the educational frame work and various programs given at home to the children and students with intellectual

disabilities for active participation in the society through employments in this region.

I do hope that this seminar will help our understanding on the educational opportunities given to those children with disabilities. Of course challenges and issues confronting each country differ from one country to another and program also should differ from one country to another. However we believe that we are able to learn each other even if the programs and activities given to those children are different. This is very good opportunity for all of us.

The Japanese government, particularly the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Science and Technology has embarked on new initiative and has been making the shift so-called "special education" where the education is given in the special places to so-called "special support education" where the educational support is given to the individual children with each educational needs. Under this new scheme or the name of special support education we will take more active approach to the children who need special educational support even if they are attending ordinary classes or ordinary schools.

I believe this is significant opportunity for us to have this 25<sup>th</sup> seminar in this year of transformation. Through this seminar, I do hope that we will be able to make some contribution for the development of special education in the region.

Last but not least, I do hope that you will have successful and fruitful seminar for you all. Thank you very much.