

Address

Welcome Remarks By *Mr. ASAI Takashi*

Deputy-Director for International Affairs

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, and MEXT, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, I am very pleased to extend my warmest welcome to all the participants from a number of countries at 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 the great efforts.

At the seminar this year, the theme is "the current situations and future trends of educational practice for children with visual and/or hearing impairments," 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 to achieve the goal of "Education for All (EFA)." From the viewpoint of international cooperation, Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi has announced "BEGIN: Basic Education for Growth Initiative" in which Japan has put together its approaches for future Japanese assistance to attain EFA, on the occasion of the Kananaskis Summit in June.

In the BEGIN, it was described as the principle that the efforts of developing countries to secure the widest possible participation of their citizens from all levels of society are essential for the attainment of EFA. It is also mentioned that all of the stakeholders in the international community supporting those efforts, namely, bilateral donors, international organizations, NGOs, must collaborate and cooperate together and demonstrate an effective partnership for development. In particular, Japan will attach great importance to collaboration with such international organizations as World Bank and UNESCO that bear a central role for the attainment of the Dakar Framework goals. In addition, Japan will promote collaboration in assistance among donors on a country level and participate in sector-wide approaches in the education sector.

It is indispensable for the achievement of EFA goals to complete preparations for an education system for children who have some impairments and need special consideration. In this regard, I have no hesitation to say that it is very significant for us to link up and to cooperate internationally for the promotion of researches on special education.

Here today, Experts from 12 countries of 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.

In closing, I would like to express my cordial appreciation again to all the staff of the National Institute of Special Education for their work in preparing this seminar, which I sincerely hope will meet with great success.

Thank you very much.