

**Opening Address by Hakubun Shimomura,
Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan
For the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development
November 10 (Mon) 2014
At Nagoya Congress Center**

It is a great honor today to have an honorable attendance of His Imperial Highness the Crown Prince and Princess, and Her Royal Highness Princess Lalla Hasnaa, and I am very pleased to see so many participants at this UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development. On behalf of the organizers as Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan, I would like to welcome you and thank you for coming to this very important event.

As you may know, the UN Decade of ESD had its origins at the 2002 Johannesburg Summit. At the Summit, then Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi proposed the idea of the ESD. A resolution for the Decade of ESD was adopted at the 57th UN General Assembly. Since then, Japan has been promoting ESD internationally through our support to UNESCO. I am delighted to say that ESD is now taking root around the world.

ESD is also being actively promoted in Japan. We have included the concepts of ESD in the government's Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education and in MEXT's curriculum guidelines for schools.

Moreover, in Japan, there are 807 UNESCO Associated Schools, the largest number in the world. These schools are the focal points for various ESD activities held at the local level.

We are now facing many global problems. In September this year, the UN Climate Summit was held. At the summit, the political will of nations to build new frameworks to fight climate change was confirmed. In other words, strong momentum has been built around the world to overcome the problem. In Japan, we are making many efforts to reflect our concern for the global environment. One example is Japan's world-leading commercial

production of fuel-cell cars.

Within this context, I believe we must work to further promote ESD with the spirit of making a fresh, new start.

In addition, for Japan, 2020 will be the year we host the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics. The Olympics will help shape the future direction Japan will take. Indeed, I believe 2020 will be a big turning point for Japan. We will show the greatest concern for the environment in staging these Olympics. I want to encourage young people to have the confidence to take positive action to solve global issues, beginning with environmental problems. I believe that ESD will be a key perspective for this.

I can say with pride that Japan is one of the countries making the most positive efforts for ESD. We want to continue to enhance and expand these efforts in Japan, as well as contribute to the promotion of ESD throughout the international community.

I would here like to announce a new initiative by Japan. We have proposed to establish a new award, called the UNESCO/Japan ESD Award, to commend outstanding efforts for ESD around the world and this has been approved by the UNESCO Executive Board. We hope that this award will motivate ESD practitioners worldwide to break new ground in ESD.

The preparations for this World Conference on ESD have been carried out under close cooperation among UNESCO, Aichi Prefecture, and the cities of Nagoya and Okayama. Various interesting cultural events have also been planned. I am sure that your time during the conference period will be well spent and worthwhile.

Lastly, I expect that this conference will be very fruitful. And I hope that the results will be shared widely in the international community and further advance ESD around the world.

Thank you.