

Welcome Speech from President, Miyagi University of Education

Kaoru Yokosuka*



Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I'm very delighted to take part in the opening ceremony of this Asian- Pacific Environmental Educational Research Seminar. As a representative from one of the sponsoring institutions, I'm glad to extend some words of greetings here.

This seminar is being held in Kesennuma-City, surrounded by plentiful nature, ria-coastline, a saw-rugged coastline and the mountains. Owing to everyone's cooperation, this seminar can be held here. I want to express my gratitude from the bottom of my heart.

This time, UNESCO has worked as the catalyst. According to the 29 member nations of the Asian-Pacific area, this seminar is in effect based on this area's education development plan that has been promoted since 1974. As an environmental educational seminar, it has been held in Tokyo six times. This year, our university has begun to undertake this seminar.

The purpose of this seminar is about the support for school education in the environmental education field. In particular, teacher training is one of the areas highlighted. We hope to have various activities, promote participants' information exchange, grasp the present situation and clarify the DESE (the Decade of ESD). This seminar was originally a meeting for specialists at the beginning. As we consider how to make good use of our work in environmental education and share this information and thinking with the citizens, we decided to open the seminar to the general public for two days from today to tomorrow.

Through this opening seminar and the international environmental education activity in Omose Elementary School, the citizens could have the chance to get some information about environmental education in different countries. Our most precious global environment should be protected. This sponsor, Miyagi University of Education, sincerely hopes that they can understand the importance of environmental education and develop much deeper symbiotic relations.

Miyagi Prefecture is the Japanese birthplace of the non-governmental UNESCO. This international seminar is being held in Kesennuma-City, which has proceeded with environmental educational development in cooperation with our university. Even from this point, it has a big significance.

Finally, I want to say a few words of gratitude to the institutions, which are supporting this seminar and giving us their cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Kesennuma-City, the United Nations University, the Asia-Pacific Cultural Center for UNESCO, Kesennuma UNESCO Association, Omose Elementary School, the citizens of Kesennuma. I hope that this seminar will be held successfully. Thank you very much.

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