

Opening Address Miyagi University of Education

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Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, Good morning. Mr. Masayuki Inoue, the Deputy Director General of the Science and Technology Academic Policy Bureau of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, and Mr. Nobutaka Watanabe, the Chair of the Board of Education of Miyagi Prefecture and Mr. Yoshikichi Abe, the President of the Sendai City Board of Education and distinguished panelists and speakers and participants from all over the world and distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for joining us for the symposium despite your busy schedule in December and end of the year. I would like to say some words of gratitude to all of you for joining us today. On behalf of the organizers, teaching staff, faculty, graduate school, students and undergraduate students and the infants and children in the schools attached to our university, I welcome you all. In the area of environmental education, this is actually the first experience to hold an international symposium organized by our university with sponsorship from Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. This symposium certainly will mark the first page of a very significant opportunity to lead to a new way for environmental education, and I really would like to say words of thanks to the ministry for selecting this symposium as one sponsored by the ministry. This symposium has the theme of Support for School Environmental Education, by exchanging the research findings and information of all the people engaged in the field of environmental education. This symposium attempts to make some contribution to the enhancement of environmental education in the future. Now, on a global base, environmental issues have attracted much of the attention and also to the education of children in educational arena. This symposium, I believe, holds great significance. The course of study in Japan has been revised. A new course of study was enacted in April this year, and the new comprehensive learning class which dealt with crosscutting issues beyond the various disciplines has started. Therefore, how we raise the awareness toward environmental problems in the minds of children and students and to enhance the improvement of environment and conservation of environment constitute very important themes for all of us. Our university established the Environmental Education Center in 1997, to grapple with environmental issues and education. We exchanged a memorandum in March this year among the universities and Miyagi Prefecture Board of Education and Sendai City Board of Education to enhance the quality of education and to improve the quality of teaching staff in environmental education. This symposium is being held within the wide range of activities toward this end. I hope that we would like to turn our ears to the voices from the fields of environmental education to emphasize the community approach. The various communities grappling with environmental education thereby facilitate participation in the global activities. I hope the symposium will not only activate environmental education efforts in Japan but in the world and with a major contribution made by the Environmental Education Center of the university, we would like to further accumulate the findings of our research on today's symposium to expand the field of research in the

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future. Taking this opportunity, I would like to solicit the support and guidance of every individual with your understanding and cooperation so that our wish and aspiration could be realized in the future. Thus, in holding today's symposium, we are indebted to the efforts of many people, to mention a few, the faculty of the center, the teaching staff of the university, and also people from outside the university, and as you are fully aware the students of our university have been making great efforts in holding this symposium. The teaching staff, students, and people of the university's affiliated schools were involved in the process of teaching material development. Taking this opportunity, I would like to say a word of appreciation to all of you. Let us repeat again, how appreciative we feel for your cooperation, and I really hope that the symposium starting today will be a productive one to all of you. Thank you very much.