

Opening Remarks

Sendai City Board of Education



Yoshikichi Abe*

Good morning. My name is Yoshikichi Abe, the Superintendent of the Sendai City Board of Education. Today I would like to offer my respect and encouragement to everyone involved in this symposium. I am anticipating a great success, and I am sincerely grateful to have the opportunity to be here today.

Well, how do you like Sendai? The residents of Sendai are proud of the beautiful zelkova trees that line our streets, and dramatically follow the cycle of changing seasons. We are comforted by the vivid, bright green of the new growth in the spring. In the summer, the rich, vibrant green of the dense foliage fills the air with life and vitality. As fall approaches, we marvel at the intensifying display of orange, yellow, and red, as the leaves meet with the cold winter air. The majestic Mount Zao, and other mountains tower over the west of the city, while to the east, the vast Pacific Ocean extends to the distant horizon. We are blessed with delicious water and bountiful harvests from the natural environment around us. I enjoy fishing, and from personal experience, I can tell you where to go to catch various types of flatfish that make a perfect side dish for rice wine.

I am proud to call Miyagi Prefecture and Sendai City my home, and I hope to preserve this area's beautiful natural treasures for all future generations.

For this reason, we must work to raise environmental awareness on the local and international level. On the local level, the city of Sendai has been certified with ISO 14001, and beginning with mayor of the city, we are all working towards protection and conservation of natural resources. The board of education also is working for this cause, and during summer vacation, about ninety thousand people have the opportunity to learn about environmental issues through "Eco-schools." Tomorrow we will hold the "Children's Practical Environmental Forum." I hope that this event, along with other efforts will help to promote our students' environmental awareness. On the international level, I know that people from various countries recognize that the natural environment transcends national boundaries. We share our wisdom and combine our efforts to work towards environmental protection and conservation on a local and international level, and lovingly care for the irreplaceable nature that benefits us all.

Starting today, the "International Environmental Education Symposium" will be held for three days based around the theme of finding the light that will illuminate the path towards saving the natural world. I wish to express my deep respect and gratitude to all of you who will participate in the search for this essential light.

Also, tomorrow's "Children's Practical Environmental Forum" held by the Sendai City Board of Education has been made possible through the cooperation and efforts of many people. I would like to thank all of you, and particularly, I would like to express my gratitude to Ms. Andrea Deri who will present the opening lecture. Because of everyone's efforts, the students of Sendai can gain a heightened environmental awareness

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and a broadened from of reference which will enable them to take practical steps towards environmental preservation.

In conclusion, many thanks to all of you who have traveled great distances to join this symposium. As you have heard, I am very proud of this city and its beautiful natural surroundings. I would be honored if all of you enjoy your stay here in Sendai. Thank you very much.