

Opening greeting to the AIMS Symposium by Jun Ikeda, University of Tsukuba

1. Good morning everyone, as the representative of the University of Tsukuba I would like to extend the warmest welcome to all participants in this symposium and to Tsukuba, the City of Science.
2. These are the last days of a usually cold and snowy winter in Japan and even if the air is still chilly outside our hearts are blooming like the coming spring due to the joy of receiving so many friends in our university.
3. The symposium "*New Directions in Higher Education for the Development of Global Human Resources*" is the result of the joint efforts by SEAMEO RIHED and the University of Tsukuba in celebrating the launching of the AIMS programme in Japan.
4. Through this endeavor the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, Sports or MEXT seeks to reinforce the bases in the area of higher education towards the formation of global human resources through the mechanisms set by the AIMS Programme, which means becoming members of a network of almost 50 institutions throughout Southeast Asia that are already engaged in the multilateral exchange of students in the region.
5. From a total of 25 different programs on internationalization of higher education MEXT Japan selected 7 for the implementation of AIMS at the starting point. These 7 programs include joint endeavors carried out by Hokkaido University together with Tokyo University and Rakuno Gakuen University; the program engaging Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology, Ibaraki University and Tokyo Metropolitan University; and programs carried out individually by Hiroshima University, Sophia University, Waseda University, Ritsumeikan University and the University of Tsukuba.
6. This event represents one of the many fruitful outcomes of a long relation between SEAMEO as a whole and the University of Tsukuba as one of SEAMEO's affiliated members. At the same time this represents a seed for the future toward deeper and wider relationships between not only these institutions but more importantly to Southeast Asia and Japan.
7. Our motto at the University of Tsukuba is "*imagine the future*" and this is exactly what this symposium aims to do: share ideas, build friendship, strengthen partnerships among higher education institutions for a prosperous future with peace and sustainable development for all; we have gathered here on the belief that mutual understanding springs out of interaction, and that diversity creates synergy.
8. Both, AIMS and this symposium, bring together educational institutions and serve as platforms for the encounter of peoples and countries. As the Nations in Southeast Asia prepare to join the ASEAN Community next year, Japan too seeks to build bridges and to create bonds with the countries in the region through cooperation in higher education.
9. Globalization is affecting the life of people in contemporary societies and its effects are both extending horizontally (to include more societies) and vertically (by making its effects deeper in everyday life).

10. The impacts of this phenomenon are wide and far reaching some areas of social life are particularly affected, most clear examples include the integration of the markets and the increased level of mobility of goods, services and peoples. Gradually this is expanding to other areas such as security or culture.
11. Clearly the higher education scenario is not an exception to it and this symposium addresses some of those impacts through developing ways of cooperation that materialize in the exchange of students.
12. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the encounters produced in this symposium and the one taking place tomorrow at the University Hall that brings together all SEAMEO Centers and other educational institutions in Japan, jointly organized by the University of Tsukuba and SEAMEO Secretariat under the name of "*Bridging the ASEAN Community and Japan through Education*" represents a unique opportunity in giving globalization a desired direction towards the future.
13. Promoting the exchange of students among countries, as it happens in AIMS, while enhancing collaborative encounters for research and other forms of cooperation among SEAMEO Centers and other similar institutions in the University of Tsukuba and in Japan constitute visionary strategies to "direct" globalization.
14. This symposium will address two major topics that reflect how higher education can give direction to the global trends:
 - ① First by analyzing the issue of how universities and governments strive to produce global human resources among their graduates; and
 - ② Analyze main challenges universities face at the time of sending and receiving students engaged in temporary mobility programs and the strategies universities use to address those challenges.
15. With this in mind, I would like to invite all of you not only to share your experiences, interests and goals, but more importantly to imagine and to build an auspicious future for all.
16. We sincerely appreciate the efforts done for all participants and for coming such a long way not only to Tsukuba but also to Japan. Special thanks go to the representative of MEXT Japan Deputy Director General of Higher Education Bureau Mr. Tsukasa Nakaoka, the Director of SEAMEO RIHED Dr. Sauwakon Ratanawijitrasin, as well as all other SEAMEO Centers' Directors that join us today; the same gratitude goes to all the representatives from universities in Japan joining AIMS as well as representatives from partner universities of the University of Tsukuba from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, The Philippines and Vietnam; and to all participants as well.
17. We wish you a productive time during the lectures today and the discussion session in the afternoon. Once more thank you very much.