

**Speech by JICA President Takao Kawakami
at the UNESCO EFA High Level Meeting on October 30, 2001**

Mr. Chairman, Director-General Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to be invited to this august occasion and to address Excellencies, distinguished members of the EFA High Level Meeting. I feel deeply honored to present, in the capacity of President of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), some views and suggestions on the agenda of the Third Session, *“The Role of International Development Agencies to help in achieving EFA goals”*.

The Dakar Framework for Action, adopted by the World Education Forum last year, provides an invaluable basis to mobilize international efforts in the field of education. I would like to highly commend all the efforts that initiated and formulated the Dakar Framework for Action, and I especially would like to note that UNESCO has spared no efforts to play an important role as the coordinator to follow-up the Education for All. Allow me to express my sincere hope that UNESCO will continue to provide leadership in helping the efforts of the international community achieve the targets of the Framework.

It goes without saying that people living in developing countries are eagerly waiting for the early realization of Education for All. I personally experienced such aspirations of the people when I was stationed as ambassador in Pakistan and Indonesia for the past seven years. In Indonesia, a high rate of elementary school enrollment had been achieved through strenuous government’s efforts for the past many years, with the literacy rate going up as high as 90 percent, while later I had to witness with much pain that many pupils had to drop out from schools as their families were suddenly and severely affected by the Asian economic crisis which took place mainly in 1997 and 1998.

In Pakistan, I observed that a gender gap created a large disparity between men and women in terms of literacy and school enrollment, especially in Provinces like Balochistan and the part of NWFP. However, I also knew the fact that many women willingly attended their literacy classes, despite being engaged in heavy workloads. I was moved and encouraged to see determination and aspiration of women to receive education.

The Japanese public’s strong support of education has been in place since the late Edo period in Japan, early 19th century. The then literacy rate of Japan was already among the highest of the world. The Japanese have made education a cornerstone of “nation building” in light of the fact that human resources are what support development of a nation. It is with such a background that Japan emphasizes education as a foundation of development when planning and implementing its cooperation with developing countries.

In programs and projects of JICA, human resources development has been placed in the center of so called “capacity building”. JICA, in planning and implementing its programs and projects, attaches great importance to the following;

First, JICA endeavors to support local personnel and to develop human resources, while carefully avoiding to take over their functions. This naturally aims at maintaining the projects to be sustainable even after the projects are completed. In other words, JICA gives priority to nurture and develop ability, what is commonly referred to as “ownership” of developing countries.

Second, JICA’s programs and projects are designed to support recipients themselves setting goals of the development as well as achieving such goals. JICA presents, therefore, Japan’s own experiences and cases in point primarily for reference in order to enable counterparts of developing countries to find out ways and means on their own that could be applied to their countries. Otherwise JICA’s programs and projects wouldn’t have taken roots among recipients.

These two points form the basis of Japan’s policy with regard to enforcing capacity building. I believe that such a process will contribute to enhancing ownership of developing countries in the way they manage the entire process, from planning to implementation and monitoring.

Mr. Chairman,

Many developing countries have recently taken steps to draw up their national plans and sector

programs in the context of EFA. JICA welcomes such development and continues to extend its full support.

Collaboration and cooperation among all stakeholders, including bilateral donors, international organizations and NGOs, will be needed to support formulating sector programs. The Sector Wide Approach, in this context, can be a useful framework to effectively maximize limited aid resources.

In Sector Programs, donors are able to establish common understanding about a given sector, and we recognize the importance of such an approach in the sense that donors' experiences and projects are flexibly utilized when and where they are thought to be appropriate.

It is important to bear in mind, however, that donors' assistance is utilized within a flexible framework in the way that each donor's different comparative advantages are respected. We believe that by utilizing each donor's experience and resources to the extent possible, dynamic and effective mobilization of resources can be achieved and thereby the most effective sector strategies are realized. Another important issue lies in that development cooperation should be implemented through developing countries' ownership, not by donors. To do this, while recognizing the need for discussing procedural issues, we would like to emphasize the importance of capacity building efforts on the recipient country side through human resource development.

Mr. Chairman,

Now I would like to briefly touch upon how Japan aims to make its contribution to addressing various issues presented in the Dakar Framework for Action.

The Japanese Government's policy of attaching importance to the social sector, including education, has been demonstrated on such occasions as 2nd Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD II), and G-8 Kyushu-Okinawa Summit which were held respectively in October 1998 and in July 2000.

At TICAD II, the Government of Japan has announced a goal of providing approximately 750 million US dollars (90 billion yen) in grant aid over 5 years to Africa in the sectors of education, health and medical services and water resources.

At Kyushu-Okinawa Summit, Japan has also announced contributions to enhance assistance for measures against infectious diseases including HIV/AIDS with the target of allocating a total of 3 billion US dollars over the next 5 years, and also a comprehensive cooperation package for bridging the international digital divide has been presented with the view to extending a total of 15 billion US dollars over 5 years through non-ODA and ODA.

Allow me now to refer to our activities to expand school enrollment opportunities, one of the main targets of the Dakar Framework for Action. Japan has consistently devoted its efforts to provide school facilities, especially in Asia and Africa. In 1999 and 2000 of fiscal year alone, Japan provided new class-rooms and educational circumstances to over 1 million pupils around the world. These school facilities are also provided as resource centers for community empowerment. I have personally had many chances to observe, when attending openings of new classes or otherwise, that local residents as well as teachers and pupils are fully satisfied and radiant with joy. We continue to make contributions to expanding school facilities. At the same time, from the view of poverty reduction, we also intend to encourage such functions of schools that could be mobilized, in collaboration with residents, for development of local communities. This process will promote community participation for education and local development, thus leading to nurturing ownership of the communities.

As regards to improvement of educational quality that often tends to be overlooked, JICA has worked for many years. Just to give one example, development of teaching methods and training of teachers in science and mathematics has been JICA's priority area. Take Africa as an example, JICA is implementing such projects in a large scale in Kenya, Ghana, and South Africa. Under these projects, Japanese experts are working with local counterparts to clarify their current conditions and constraints while providing relevant Japanese experience, through which local counterparts and relevant authorities of partner countries will be able to manage the projects. These projects represent JICA's method of capacity building that I have mentioned earlier.

The project in Kenya is now expanding to surrounding countries. Starting from this year, Kenya will receive Malawian personnel for training to provide know-how that Kenya has gained through JICA projects. Kenya is now in a position to assist other's capacity building. JICA sees this case as a success story of capacity building and development of ownership. It is JICA's policy to support such form of "South-South cooperation".

I also would like to introduce the valuable contribution of Japanese youth volunteers who are

dispatched to 72 countries through JICA programs. Many of them engage in supporting capacity building of personnel in the field of education, such as mathematics and science education, youth activities, and sports activities. The number of youth volunteers who have worked in this field has amounted to 3,400 since the first case in 1968.

JICA is also reviewing its education programs. One area which may have received insufficient attention in the past is non-formal education. We recognize that non-formal education should be given a due priority in extending assistance in order to achieve the targets of the EFA process. JICA is actually expanding its resources to be allocated to non-formal education to support adult literacy, life skills and so on. Take the case of Vietnam. JICA has started its project in the northern mountainous region to address community needs, focusing on promoting adult literacy. JICA is managing this project in cooperation with the *National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan* which advocates teaching methods learned on the basis of Japan's own experience. We expect that lessons to be produced from this project will be fed-back to future planning and lead to an expansion of JICA activities.

Let me now touch upon the issue of HIV/AIDS in education, to which keener attention has been given since the Dakar Framework of Action. JICA plans to dispatch, starting from next fiscal year, youth volunteers to Africa who will be working with local schools and communities focusing on disseminating information on HIV/AIDS. In their activities, we attach importance to close coordination with local NGO's as well as government authorities.

Japan will enhance efforts to more effectively address the education needs of developing countries. We intend to utilize our own experience for planning aid projects in such areas as pre-school education, education for the children with special needs, school health and school feeding. The Japanese Government is now ~~starts~~ discussing ways and means to reflect Japan's experience in its international cooperation and propose suggestions.

Mr. Chairman,

The international community is now more aware of the importance to address education needs of developing countries. G-8 Summit Leaders this year decided to set up a task force on education in developing countries to submit proposals at the next Summit meeting. Japan will work closely with other G-8 Summit members to mobilize international efforts for addressing world educational issues.

I once again would like to emphasize that Japan continues to attach utmost importance to education, especially basic education. Japan, and for that matter, JICA is firmly committed to the early realization of EFA and intends to work together with international community.