Reporting on Education for Human Rights, Peace, Democracy, International Understanding and Tolerance"

1.

The Constitution of Japan clearly states, in its preamble, as follows:

"We, the Japanese people, acting through our duly elected representatives in the National Diet, determined that we shall secure for ourselves and our posterity the fruits of peaceful cooperation with all nations and the blessings of liberty throughout this land, and resolved that never again shall we be visited with the horrors of war through the action of government, do proclaim that sovereign power resides with the people and do firmly establish this Constitution. Government is a sacred trust of the people, the authority for which is derived from the people, the powers of which are exercised by the representatives of the people, and the benefits of which are enjoyed by the people. This is a universal principle of mankind upon which this Constitution is founded. We reject and revoke all constitutions, laws, ordinances, and rescripts in conflict herewith. ".

In the Article 2 of the Basic Act on Education, the objectives of education are stipulated as to "foster an attitude, in the public spirit, to actively participate in the building of society and to contribute to its development", and to "foster an attitude to respect other countries and to contribute to world peace and the development of the international community.

The School Education Law specifies, in the Article 21.3, that the general education given in the form of compulsory education shall be carried out so as to achieve such objectives "to cultivate an attitude, through having willingness to deepen the understanding toward foreign culture, to respect for other countries and to contribute to peace and the development of the international society".

4.

As regards the Education for All (EFA), the Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education was drawn up in 2008. The plan considers the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) one of the important educational principles in Japan.

As regards the Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), the Liaison Conference of related ministries and agencies formulated the Action Plan in Japan for DESD in 2006.

Concerning human rights education in Japan, the Law on the Promotion of Human Rights Education and Human Rights Awareness-raising was enacted, and the

Basic Plan for Human Rights Education and Awareness-raising was adopted by the Cabinet in 2002 for further promotion. As an example related to human rights education in school, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) set up a research study forum on the approaches to teaching human rights education, which announced in 2008 its third report on the Approaches to Teaching Human Rights Education. In 2009, a nation-wide survey was conducted covering all prefectural and municipal boards of education and schools as to implementation of this topic in school.

5.

The followings are the committees related to education for human rights and peace:

○ Research Study Committee on the Approaches to Teaching Human Rights Education

The committee, composed of external collaborators to the Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau, MEXT, makes proposals on the contents and methods of human rights education in school.

[Members: university lecturers, those related to boards of education, and teachers]

○ Round Table for UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD)

The UNDESD Liaison Conference of related ministries and agencies, participated by various stakeholders from the government, NPOs, educational organizations, private companies and others, set up a forum where information-sharing and exchange of opinions regarding UNDESD are enhanced.

7-(a)

In social studies classes, it is compulsory to learn about peace and human rights.

Moral education and the “period of integrated study” cover peace and human rights in many cases.

Peace and human rights are taught by cross-curricular approaches integrating Japanese, social studies and sciences, and by approaches based on moral education and other subjects.

7-(b)

Education for peace and human rights in a broad sense is included in all of pre-service teacher training, in-service teacher training and head teacher training. At the national level, the National Center for Teachers' Development conducts trainings for leaders engaged in international understanding activities and human rights education. At the prefectural level, situation differs from one locality to another.

Teacher training in Japan includes compulsory career-based training and optional/voluntary training. Whether the participation is voluntary or mandatory depends on what objective the training is conducted for and by whom it is conducted. Prefectural boards of education are obliged to conduct induction training for beginning teachers and tenth-year training for experienced teachers. On the other hand, prefectural education boards offer training opportunities where teachers can participate on a voluntary basis.

13-(a)

There are 550 UNESCO Associated Schools (ASPs) in Japan as of December 2012, each of which implements quality education featuring four themes as follows:

○ Understanding of UN systems to address global issues

Themes are picked up from such global issues as poverty, starvation, unemployment, literacy, cultural understanding and gender inequality, and they are studied from local, national and international perspectives.

○ Understanding and promotion of human rights and democracy

Starting from understanding to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other related documents, students are to expand their awareness, based on each personal experiences, not only of the rights of others but also of their duty and responsibility (i.e. such issues related to human rights as racial discrimination, prejudice, democracy, mutual respect, civil responsibility, tolerance and non-violent dispute).

○ Cross-cultural understanding

Students are to promote understanding of different customs, traditions and values while collaborating with students and parents of other countries, national citizens, immigrant groups, embassies and cultural centers of other countries.

○ Environmental education

Students are to study environmental issues which their resident area is facing (such as pollution, energy, forest protection, marine and atmospheric research, soil erosion, natural resources conservation, desertification, greenhouse effect, and

sustainable development) and to think about ways to solve them and the role of science for the future of mankind.

13-(b)

The National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan (NFUAJ) carries out extensive activities as a federation of 270 UNESCO associations throughout Japan. The main activities include: the World Terakoya Movement to support education in developing countries; the world and regional heritage activities to protect and preserve neighboring cultural and natural heritage in Japan and abroad; the "Heritage for the Future" Movement to pass Japanese cultural heritage on to future generation; and the youth development activities to foster international understanding among young people.

The Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU), based in Japan, implements various regional programmes to promote capacity-building and mutual exchange in the fields of education and culture mainly for the Asia-Pacific countries, with close collaboration of UNESCO under its principle that "the peace must be founded upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind".

13-(c)

The Interuniversity Network Supporting the UNESCO Associated School Project Network (ASPUnivNet) is a network of the universities who support the activities of the UNESCO Associated Schools (ASPs) as their partners. It aims to assist schools when becoming ASPs (application and activities), to provide intellectual resources held by universities for use in the activities of ASPs, to help them network with other ASPs in Japan and abroad, and to foster cooperation between local educational institutions and ASPs. As of January 2013, ASPUnivNet is joined by 17 universities including both national and private ones throughout Japan.

13-(d)

The Liaison Conference of related ministries and agencies for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) set up the Round Table for UNDESD as a forum participated by various stakeholders from the government, NPOs, educational organizations, private companies and others in order to enhance

information-sharing and exchange of opinions regarding UNDESD

13-(e)

The following is a typical example of relevant exchange programmes, research projects and workshops:

The Japan Association for International Education has conducted a three-year programme (2010-2013) for development of common educational materials and curriculum usable in Japan, Korea and China, called "Japan-Korea-China Joint Development of Curriculum and Materials for Education for International Understanding". This research project was joined by 6 Korean, 5 Chinese and 23 Japanese participants. Divided into 5 groups according to 5 themes: "ramen in Japan, Korea and China", "daily culture and livelihood culture", "difference in behavior patterns", "globalization and immigrants" and "understanding of history", they developed educational materials for international understanding to be used in elementary and junior high schools. The outcomes were compiled in a report.

Through the Japanese Government budget, Japan-U.S. Educational Commission has conducted the Japan-U.S. Teacher Exchange Program for ESD since 2010 and in total 268 teachers joined in this program, Regarding China and Korea, the United Nations University has implemented the International Educational Exchange of teachers for more than ten years and 3,300 teachers of Japan, China, and Korea has joined the programme.

14.

The National Institute for Educational Policy Research (NIER) launched the Study on Education for Sustainable Development in School in 2009, and has been engaged in the project for three years. In March 2010 an interim report was compiled, and in March 2012 a final report was published. At the same time in 2012, an ESD framework was developed and distributed nation-wide in the form of leaflet. In the near future, it is scheduled that English version of the final report (an abstract) and of the leaflet will be carried on the NIER website.

As abilities to be developed through ESD, the study places emphasis on "systematic thinking" (ability to understand the background to problems and phenomena from multi-dimensional and comprehensive standpoint); "values related to sustainable development" (ability to show respect for people, diversity, non-exclusiveness, equal opportunity, and environment); "ability to think of alternatives"

(critical thinking); “ability to collect and analyze information”; and “communication skills”. These abilities and skills are to form the foundation of peace and human rights education.

The objective of the project was to clarify how to conduct case studies of ESD implementations in school. As concrete methods two broad approaches were proposed in the study, namely, a standpoints-oriented approach which aims to develop capabilities/abilities based on ESD principles, and a check-sheet type approach which aims to clarify the significance of each case study from ESD standpoints (from the interim report). In the final report, an ESD framework was developed, and in order to verify its effectiveness, case studies based on the framework are being conducted.

This is a joint study project participated, not only by the NIER staff members, but also by university professors and other intellectuals, and government officers in charge of curriculum research. It is assumed, therefore, that the outcomes of the project will be reflected in peace and human rights education in Japan.