



UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSITY

UNU-IAS

Institute of Advanced Studies



CITY OF KITAKYUSHU

International Symposium on Inspiring Sustainable Lifestyles -Based on the viewpoint of ESD-

In conjunction with the 6th Asia-Pacific Regional Centres of Expertise on ESD Meeting

20-22 October 2013

Kitakyushu, Japan

1. Background

The world is experiencing unprecedented challenges with the growing global population expected to use more natural resources to achieve economic growth, while imperiling moral social values and degrading the environment. In the search for solutions in the context of sustainable development (SD) there is a general consensus that these challenges have to be addressed and problems tackled in a cooperative manner by all sectors of society, and that Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is a pathway towards creating sustainable societies by reshaping people's thinking and behaviors.

A resolution on the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD 2005-2014) was adopted at the 57th United Nations General Assembly in 2002, based on the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. In response, the United Nations University (UNU), in collaboration with other UN agencies and the Ubuntu Alliance, spearheads advocacy and promotion of Regional Centres of Expertise (RCE) on ESD and their networking. Currently, there are 117 RCEs operating globally and the Asia-Pacific region is a home to 44 RCEs. RCE Kitakyushu, a responsible member of the Global RCE community, shares and contributes to the UNDESD vision of 'creating a world where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from education and learn the values, behaviors and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation'.

As the final year of the UNDESD is swiftly approaching, there is a need to identify what have been achieved during the Decade and what remain as challenges in the contexts of education as well as development agendas beyond 2014. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) outcome document "The Future We Want" reaffirms that ESD is to be further promoted and sustainable development to be integrated more actively into education beyond the UNDESD (para. 233). The outcome document also emphasizes the importance of societal shifts towards sustainable consumption and production (SCP). The 10-Year Framework Programme (10YFP) on Sustainable Consumption and Production, which was adopted at Rio+20, has identified sustainable lifestyles and education as one of the five initial programmes to further promote the implementation of sustainable consumption and production. RCEs endeavor to build capacities and raise public awareness towards sustainability issues through strategic partnerships and collaboration.



UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSITY

UNU-IAS

Institute of Advanced Studies



CITY OF KITAKYUSHU

2. The Kitakyushu Transformation

Kitakyushu has contributed to the economic development of Japan as one of the great four industrial areas since the early 20th century when Yawata Steel Works started. Especially, after the 2nd World War, Kitakyushu played an important role in bringing prosperity back to Japan as base of heavy industry. The smoke with seven colors belching forth from the forest of factories became a symbol of prosperity, and also it made citizens feel proud but at the same time exposed to the threat of air pollution to the detriment of children's health. Kitakyushu faced a serious pollution problem.

Then the local association of housewives was the first to stand up to call for a solution of the problems of serious pollution. Through the 'We Want Our Blur Sky Back' as a motto, they who were concerned about the health of their families called for improvement to companies and government. This local activity expanded to citizens, companies, and administrations and the collaboration efforts among them let the conquest of pollution

It was just the starting point of ESD activities in Kitakyushu. Based on such experiences, various projects have been promoted including social, economic sections. In addition, the industry, academia, and government worked together to formulate a Grand Design of the Environmental Capital with the basic idea of "Creation of a city with true wealth and prosperity, inherited by future generations" to aim the World Capital of Sustainable Development in 2004.

Such efforts were appraised high by globe. Kitakyushu received the Global500 of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the first among Japan's local governments in 1990, and was awarded solely the UN Local Government Honors at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992. Furthermore, in 2011, the OECD selected Kitakyushu as one of the world's model cities for Green Growth and was selected by a state of Japan as Future City that works on to improve sustainable society in forefront.

The specific actions that resulted in the United Nations University's acknowledgement of RCE Kitakyushu were led by getting interests of citizens in ESD through these experiences. Kitakyushu ESD has the great feature of mainly composed of citizens and is of the belief that citizens' participation is the starting point of ESD. In March 2013, *Manabito* ESD station was opened as the base of activities by the collaboration of 10 colleges to spread activities and the efforts that foster human resource to realize sustainable society as base of ESD is now go on.

3. Scope and Themes of the Symposium

Sustainable societies cannot be achieved without thinking of others, now and in the future, and questioning what is taken for granted in the current unsustainable world. The Tohoku earthquake and nuclear accident in 2011 upset the common sense and threw



UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSITY

UNU-IAS

Institute of Advanced Studies



CITY OF KITAKYUSHU

many tasks on creating sustainable society to the nation and the globe. Sustainable lifestyle is about values, behaviors and livelihoods that aim for economic prosperity and at the same time protecting the natural environment without jeopardizing social equity, justice and human rights. This is where the role of ESD comes into play as the link among the pillars of sustainability – environment, society and economy – underpinned by gender equality, poverty alleviation, and commitment among community members in the pursuit of creating sustainable societies.

The symposium theme ‘Inspiring Sustainable Lifestyles’ entails empowerment of community stakeholders including individual citizens to take initiatives for them to address environmental and social problems and improvement of the overall quality of life. This societal transformation requires new forms of learning that equip individuals with critical and systemic thinking and problem-solving skills as well as strong partnerships among the public and private sectors, academics and citizens.

The symposium would also attempt to capture the experiences of the Kitakyushu’s Green Growth Strategy as well as the experiences of the Asia-Pacific RCE community of practice on issues related to ESD. Cases to be presented and discussed at the symposium include those in the context of Schools, Youth, Biodiversity, Community and Disaster Risk Reduction with a special focus on multi-stakeholder partnerships and community empowerment. These thematic issues will also be discussed at the 6th Asia-Pacific RCE Meeting in addition to issues on strengthening collaboration among the members of the RCE community.

4. Objectives

The International Symposium on ‘Inspiring Sustainable Lifestyles’ is open to the public and composed of three parts: (a) keynote speech; (b) case presentation by RCE members; and (c) panel discussion. The major objectives of the symposium are:

- ♦ Sharing good learning cases on ESD in light of the identified thematic areas by Asia-Pacific RCEs;
- ♦ Discussing issues on encouraging ESD in local communities through multi-stakeholder partnerships; and
- ♦ Learning lessons and discussing pertinent ESD issues for creating sustainable societies.

The 6th Asia-Pacific RCE Meeting, which is limited in participation to the Asia-Pacific RCE community and stakeholders, is aimed at:

- ♦ Strengthening collaboration among Asia-Pacific RCEs;
- ♦ Making contributions to the global RCE movement through the preparation of the 8th Global RCE Conference including thematic, operational and strategic discussions; and
- ♦ Discussing potential pathways to make contribution to the Global Action Programme on ESD (follow-up to the UN DESD after 2014).



UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSITY

UNU-IAS

Institute of Advanced Studies



CITY OF KITAKYUSHU

There will also be organized Eco-field visits to places that showcase ESD practice and learning. The aim is to see and observe actual demonstrations on how Kitakyushu promotes, practices and delivers ESD in the communities, which is part of the learning process.

5. Dates and Venues

The International Symposium on Inspiring Sustainable Lifestyles will be held in the afternoon of 21 October at the Kitakyushu International Conference Center. The symposium will be comprised on three parts: keynote speech, case presentation and panel discussion. This will be a public symposium and RCE members are invited to either present good RCE cases or be a panelist for discussion. The workshop to interact with local stakeholders of RCE Kitakyushu is also planned as part of the symposium. RCE members are also invited to participate in the Eco-Life Stage, the greatest eco event in Western Japan and *Manabito* ESD Station as the base of activities of ESD by the collaboration of 10 colleges for communication with students in the morning of 20 October.

The Asia-Pacific RCE Meeting will be held at Nishinippon Institute of Technology Kokura Campus on 20 and at Kitakyushu International Conference Center on 21 October.

On 22 October, the visits to the area where promotes sustainable society with three pillars: Resource Circulation, Reduction of Carbon Footprints and Coexistence with Nature and local schools that work on environmental activities will be also arranged, details of which will be announced in due course.

6. Organizers and Supporters

RCE Kitakyushu

United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS)

7. The Programme

See the attached programme