

Opening Remarks

by

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Distinguished Guests and Participants

Firstly, I would like to congratulate UNESCO PROAP, the United Nations University, Tokyo, the Ministry of Education of Japan or Monbusho and the Japan UNESCO National Commission for the very successful and efficient organization of this Regional Conference on Higher Education from 8 to 10 July.

It is indeed a privilege and great honor for a young regional organization like the Association of Universities of Asia and the Pacific to participate and co-organize this important and historical regional conference on higher education.

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The Association of Universities of Asia and the Pacific or AUAP is just two years old, being founded only on 28 July 1995 at Suranaree University of Technology, Thailand. From the 57 presidents, rectors and vice-chancellors who were signatory to the Constitution, the membership has increased to 165 from 20 different countries of the Asia-Pacific region.

The Association of Universities of Asia and the Pacific was formed in response to a recognition of the need to relate education to the life and aspirations of the people of the Asia Pacific region, and to preserve and enhance the cultural, social and economic development of society. The members of the Association co-operate at the regional level in order to contribute to the improvement of national systems of higher education, and to develop human resources and mutual understanding. The diversity of its membership constitutes a resource which can be drawn upon to the advantage of all concerned, especially for the development of individual institutions of teaching, research and service to the community. In all the activities of the Association, it strives to complement those of other international organizations like UNESCO, regional organizations like SEAMEO RIHED and ASAIHL and national bodies concerned with higher education.

The topic of this regional conference "National Strategies and Regional Co-operation for the 21st Century" is therefore also one of the major concerns of the member universities of AUAP. In support of this regional concern, AUAP had co-organized with national universities conferences discussing national strategies for meeting new challenges of tertiary education and networking as a mechanism to attain the desired goals.

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This year alone, AUAP co-organized in co-operation with international organizations like UNESCO, SEAMEO, ASAIHL, national governments and member universities three regional conferences and two national fora on important issues concerning tertiary education in the region.

The April Regional Conference hosted by Bunkyo University in Tokyo dealt with globalization of education and multimedia education for the Asia and the Pacific in the 21st century. Educators from 19 countries participated in the very successful conference with discussions on global education, multimedia education, environmental education and values, ethics and morals education – all issues also of concern and interest to UNESCO.

The second regional conference was in June in Manila on *Higher Education and Human Resource Development in the Asia-Pacific for the 21st Century*.

The third regional conference was also in June in Manila on *Promotion of the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications in Asia and the Pacific*

AUAP has initiated the Learning and sharing Forum in co-operation with the host university where the board meeting is held. The first national forum was held in April cosponsored by the University of Macau with the theme of *Higher Education in Macau, China and Japan*. The second national forum was co-hosted by Angeles Foundation University in the Philippines in June with the theme of *Challenges to Universities towards Global Education and Networking: the Philippine and Asia Pacific Perspective*

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In spite of the youth of AUAP, it has been quite active since its founding two years ago. The exchange of experiences and ideas, as well as the formulation of resolutions and recommendations presented during these regional and national conferences could serve as important regional inputs to the *1998 UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education* in Paris. AUAP would be very happy and honored to have its share of inputs and recommendations.

AUAP joins UNESCO in the perpetual pursuit of peace and development founded on equity, justice, solidarity, respect, tolerance for differences and freedom.

AUAP therefore supports UNESCO in strengthening regional co-operation in higher education in the region through its various programmes and activities. It also supports other UNESCO Programmes like UNISPAR in promoting linkages with industries by sponsoring continuing education programs in engineering and technology. This is accomplished through the Asia Pacific Continuing Engineering Education Network of AUAP

AUAP is also pioneering regional co-operation in the use of high technologies in telecommunication and information in making possible the two modes of education delivery of face-to-face and distance mode combined as one megatrend using multimedia technologies. AUAP has recently organized the Asia-Pacific Distance and Multimedia Education Network that would undertake these developmental and pioneering work on tertiary education delivery systems required of a borderless or global community in the 21st century.

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AUAP is therefore looking forward to the continued and even closer collaboration with and support from UNESCO, other regional and international organizations and national governments in its pursuit of meeting the urgent needs on higher education in the region.

In conclusions, I would like to reiterate my wish for great success of this Conference and the fruitful sharing of ideas and experiences of all paper presenters and participants-all for the improvement of Higher Education in the Asia Pacific Region.

Thank you.