

## Opening Statement

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President Designate

Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University

Distinguished professors and colleagues, ladies and gentlemen. I am very pleased that you are able to attend today this international conference on global education, sponsored by the Ritsumeikan Center for Asia Pacific Studies. We are very fortunate to have presenters at this conference from universities and research institutions of various countries and regions. Please let me extend my gratitude to you for taking the time out of your busy schedules and making the long journey to Beppu City. We are especially deeply indebted to the Honorable Hiroyuki Yushita, former Ambassador of Japan to the Philippines, and Dr. Yavaprabhas Supachai, Secretary General of the ASEAN University Network, for their ready consent to give keynote speeches today. Once again, I am extremely grateful to them.

As you may have heard, Beppu City is one of the most famous cities in Japan for its hot springs. By all means, please take this opportunity to enjoy a nice relaxing bath in the best hot springs in Japan. Also, Beppu City will be the location for the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, which is scheduled to open in April 2000. This new university is being built on the outskirts of the city on a hilltop, with a magnificent view of the city and Beppu Bay. Approximately 70% of the campus is finished, so if you have the time, we welcome you to join our tour of the construction site.

In the coming 21st century, it is important for universities to take a leading role in the sustainable development of this region where we live, the Asia Pacific region. Furthermore, in order for universities to carry out their role in meeting the demands of society, what is needed most is a network that will facilitate collaboration between universities rather than autonomous efforts by each university. For these next three days, through your enthusiasm and discussions, we hope to create a deeper mutual awareness both of the role that universities must play in the Asia Pacific region in the 21st century, and of the necessity for a university network. I wish all of you a successful discussion. Thank you very much.