



## Japan

Shionoya Ryu  
Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology



*In September 2008, the Honorable Shionoya Ryu was appointed as Japan's Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, a confirmation of his outstanding service in this ministry. This includes previous appointments as Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary, and as senior vice Minister and as parliamentary vice minister. Born in 1950, and a graduate of Political Science at Keio University, Minister Shionoya started his career in the Japanese House of Representatives in 1990 and has served as director of various committees on: environment; commerce, trade and industry; education, culture and sports; and economy, trade and industry*

### **Inclusive Education: Japan's Fundamental Ideas on Education**

Japan's educational system, through the steady efforts of its citizens and especially those concerned, has contributed considerably to the development of society by nurturing human resources, all the while realizing the idea of equal opportunity, raising the education level of the Japanese people and meeting the needs of the times. As result, Japan produced excellent results, such as the realization of a wealthy postwar economy and society and a secure standard of living.

"Academic freedom" is guaranteed under the Constitution of Japan, which states both that "All people shall have the right to receive an equal education correspondent to their ability, as provided by law," and that "All of the people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic or social relations because of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin." Thus, equal opportunity in education has been guaranteed.

The Basic Act on Education, which determines the basic doctrine and principles of education in Japan, was revised in 2006, for the first time in nearly 60 years, in order to deal with issues in education that have arisen through major societal changes, such as the progress of science and technology, the rising information-oriented society, internationalization, and the decline in the number of children along with the transition to an aging society. In addition to prohibitions on discrimination in education and financial assistance by both the national and local governments as basic idea of education, the revised Basic Act on Education newly stipulates support for persons with disabilities. It furthermore stipulates the concept of lifelong learning, which is explained that Society shall be made to allow all citizens to continue to learn throughout their lives, on all occasions and all places, and apply the outcomes of lifelong learning appropriately to refine themselves and lead a fulfilling life.

I have great expectations that the discussions at this conference will contribute to the further advancement of equal opportunity in education and inclusive education.