

The Joint Declaration of
UNESCO ASPnet International ESD Events for Students and Teachers
Platform for Students

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People around the world have been making huge efforts to solve both global and regional issues. It is true that societies have made good progress when it comes to wars, conflicts, the environment, culture, energy and food. However, today we still face many problems. For these reasons, we, as ASPnet high school students, are committed to learning from one another, taking into account our diverse regional backgrounds, with the aim of learning more about the world's important issues.

We are now at the end of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, which began in 2005. Throughout the past 10 years, we have learned the importance of mutual learning and of developing a shared attitude towards global issues. This has been achieved in the clear belief that Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is essential to the success of sustainable development around the world. As a result, it seems that the world is looking to us, the younger generation, to commit ourselves to solving these problems — now more than ever.

Today, in November 2014, we have come together here in Okayama City, Japan, as high school students from thirty-two nations, representing a new generation of ESD. Our discussions began with familiar issues under the themes of “What factors do we believe block sustainability in everyday life and society?” and “What is important when it comes to promoting sustainability?”

Subsequently, we discussed what we mean by ‘development’, and here we agreed on the diversity of its applications.

We shared the opinion that, as high school students, we need to take the lead in respecting the environment, our culture, our traditions, and other human beings – regardless of their age or where they live. We need to spread our ideas as widely as we can through a range of demonstrable activities and to do this in a responsible way. To achieve our aims, we believe that it is important for us to start with small actions in our immediate vicinities. For example, we can cooperate with our friends, promote recycling and participate in volunteer activities, all the while demonstrating to an increasing number of people the range of enjoyable opportunities that ESD provides. This will interest other people, in ESD and in the younger generation as a result of our unique, creative projects. In short, we agreed there are many things we can do together.

Based on these discussions, we then exchanged opinions and ideas to explore what we, as high school students, can and should do now and in the future. Finally, we arrived at the following five conclusions:

1. We are not helpless but our abilities may be limited. However, we are keen to cooperate with each other, to make full use of the opportunities that exist for learning about sustainability, and to disseminate information on ESD.
2. We are conscious that every single one of us, as high school students, are human beings living on Earth. As such, we need to be conscious of the environment and the natural world around us. In the longer term, we need to take responsible actions in specific ways to encourage ESD where it is not yet taught in schools.
3. Each of us has a responsibility to share and respect a variety of lifestyles, cultures and opinions by fostering connections with each other so that we can promote mutual understanding and inspiration.
4. People need to learn how to connect or communicate with each other more, to know what peace and human rights are, and what the individual can achieve through education. This should consist of topics such as gender equality, human rights, peace, and awareness raising. In all of this, we need to be conscious of the important role that education plays.
5. Every one of us needs to be conscious of all the above-mentioned and make every effort to develop clear personal objectives.