Keynote Address of Prof. Hubert J. Gijzen, Ph.D
(Director and Representative of UNESCO Office, Jakarta)
on the Occasion of the
“National Workshop on Reorienting Teacher Education towards EFA and ESD in Indonesia” (Jakarta, 10-14 July 2012)

Honorable Prof. Musliar Kasim, Vice Minister of Education and Culture,
Madame Dr Ella Yulaelawati, Director of Community Education Development,
Distinguished representative from the Japanese Embassy,
Prof. Arief Rachman, Executive Chairman of the Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO,
Prominent Experts, School Principals and Teachers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Selamat Pagi dan Salam Malaikum

It is a great pleasure for me to join you in this important Workshop, and to share some thoughts on the subject in this opening session. I would like to thank the Japanese Government for the generous financial support to this project, and UNESCO Asia and the Pacific Regional Bureau for Education for leading the implementation of this project in the region. Our warm appreciation also goes to the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture and the National Commission for UNESCO for successfully organizing this event.

Ladies and gentlemen,
The organization of this National Workshop comes at a unique moment in time. A time when we are heading towards the end of the MDG period in 2015, which had set, amongst others, an international commitment to achieve Education for All (EFA). The year 2015 also marks the end of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). Just 2 weeks ago, world leaders gathered in Rio de Janeiro to discuss the global challenge to attain sustainable development, via a transition towards a Green Economy; it is also a time when discussions about a new Post-2015 UN Development Agenda have started.

It is a good time therefore to make up the balance of what has been achieved, but also to look forward and to discuss how the remaining and new challenges can best be addressed.

We still face significant challenges in the education sector globally that need to be urgently dealt with. This relates to achieving inclusive and quality EFA globally, and to curricular and didactic adjustments needed to tailor the education needs to the 21st Century challenges.

The transition towards a green economy requires that we educate and train the human resources and prepare society at large for such sustainable future. This requires thorough revisions of job qualifications and corresponding learning objectives of educational programmes at all levels. This requires both curricular and didactic review and overhaul of programmes.

A continuation and full integration of ESD should be advocated, also after 2015, possibly under a new slogan “Educating for a sustainable future”. This new slogan would also recognize the inclusiveness of such approach - ESD is often limited at basic education, while “Educating for a
sustainable future” would mean a comprehensive educational approach in life-long learning at all levels.

To be able to have a life of quality for everyone, we need to work together to achieve progresses in fostering peace and tolerance, in promoting gender equality and the rights of marginalized people, in reducing poverty, and in improving health. No less important are also the need for us to achieve progresses in improving environmental protection and climate protection, in responsibly using non-renewable and natural resources, and in sustaining and securing food production. Education is a key engine in addressing all these challenges.

Teachers have a key role in instilling in their students a deep awareness and understanding on the urgent need to pursue inclusive and sustainable development that in the future would result in a multiplier effect on what students and graduates, could do to improve the quality of life, and to make the transition towards Green Societies happen. In reorienting teacher education towards EFA and ESD, a strong commitment needs to be forged to improve the quality of education. The EFA and ESD values of human rights, gender equality, tolerance towards diversity, and intercultural understanding, as well as perspectives that are essential for sustainable living need to be integrated in the education system.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

UNESCO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Environment have recently started a Piloting “Green Schools” programme; this programme, which has a regional approach, builds on the very successful Adhiwiyata programme. While initial activities have started in South Kalimantan, the programme envisages a further expansion towards other regions in Indonesia, and towards other countries in the Region. The idea is that the various pilots in different countries would be collaborating in a so called learning alliance, where joint learning and exchange of best practice is promoted. The programme considers two main dimensions. The first dimension is the curriculum, in which ESD related subjects on for instance the environment, waste management, hygiene and health, food and nutrition, and disaster preparedness will be addressed; and the second dimension relates to the School based Management practices which need to complement the curricular one (the curriculum ‘says what we should do’, the SBM ‘does what we say’). This leads to joyful ESD learning approaches, which at the same time could help to reduce school drop out and as such contribute to QEFA.

As a priority, endeavors need to be made to secure educational access for the most deprived children, including for children in remote areas, and of impoverished families, and children affected by conflicts and natural disasters. The same holds for children with special needs. This again requires that teachers are well prepared to address these specific segments in society.

Integrating QEFA and ESD concepts in the school curricula, teaching-learning materials and lesson plans will deepen understanding of common concerns and issues that includes relevant universal, as well as local and indigenous values and knowledge.

The principles of EFA-ESD need to be mainstreamed in education policies, strategies, programmes and structures, and concrete implementation needs to be made. Teachers need to be supported by a synergy of networks among relevant Ministries, NGOs and the private sector partners that support EFA and ESD. A synergy of networks is also needed for sharing of knowledge among countries on
effective provisions of inclusive quality education, as well as on scientific and technological advances.

UNESCO stands committed to assist you in synergizing the knowledge, approaches, principles and skills of EFA and ESD, in order for teachers to be able to more effectively contribute to promote inclusive human development and sustainability through education.

I wish you a most successful Workshop, and I look forward to hear about the outcomes of your deliberations! Thank you.

Jakarta, 10 July, 2012
Hubert Gijzen