Okayama Commitment 2014

-Promoting ESD Beyond DESD Through Community Based Learning-

We, over 650 participants representing learners, facilitators and managers of Kominkan-CLC, governments, civil society organizations, United Nations agencies, development partners, members of academia, the private sector and media from 29 countries have gathered in Okayama City, Japan from 9 to 12 October, 2014 at the Kominkan-CLC International Conference on ESD – Community Based Human Development for Sustainable Society - commit to continue and expand ESD through community-based learning.

Okayama City is a place where exchanges have taken place between Kominkan and CLCs during the DESD including the Kominkan Summit in Okayama in 2007; moreover, there has been historic support for Kominkan- and community-based learning in Japan.

1. **Our Commitments**

   Quality education and lifelong opportunities for all must have a central place in national learning systems as part of the EFA and SDG agenda.

   Rethinking education and learning to build inclusive and sustainable societies should give a key role to community-based learning.

   Community-based learning through Kominkan-CLCs and similar mechanisms will have to be carried out collaboratively with all providers and stakeholders in national learning systems to achieve ESD and broader SD goals.

   Therefore, in our respective individual and collective capacities we commit to

   1. Develop greater awareness and advocacy of the significance of ESD in Kominkan-CLCs and the roles of Kominkan-CLCs in promoting ESD

   2. Work together to improve and maintain strategic alliances between and among communities and stakeholders to develop a community of practice that addresses sustainable development challenges in local and global contexts

   3. Ensure the development of effective and functioning Kominkan-CLCs through on-going professional and institutional capacity development in order to help build the confidence of communities as active participants in the development process.

   4. Advance the innovative practices of ESD to ensure effective contributions to sustainable development through ongoing documentation and research, acknowledging the need to be responsive to the changing needs of society.

   5. Support and share good ESD practices through establishing resource centers and networks, especially with sister Kominkan-CLCs, in the context of lifelong learning for all (children, youth, adults, elderly, disadvantaged, etc.).
6. Empower communities to promote education on climate change, bio-diversity, food and nutrition security, resilience and disaster risk reduction management informed by the principles of ESD.

7. Promote literacy by providing flexible and relevant learning opportunities for indigenous peoples, differently abled, and other marginalized people in the community.

8. Nurture learning that promotes freedom of expression and develop skills in conflict resolution towards attaining a peaceful society.

9. Develop the capacities of youth for employability, life skills, and citizenship, and encourage youth leadership in Kominkan-CLC activities, providing greater sustainability and stability from generation to generation.

10. Give priority to girls and women to reduce gender gaps in literacy and build safe environments within family and the society and ensure equal participation of women and men in development processes.

11. Assist communities in securing material, financial, and technical support to identify issues and develop solutions to create sustainable communities that value and respect diversity of culture and life.

12. Engage policy makers to contribute to development of comprehensive and clear policies acknowledging bottom up and top down approaches that support Kominkan-CLC-based activities.

13. Mobilize funding and technical resources from community, corporations, and local and national and international sources.

14. Urge governments, policy makers, international agencies, and private sectors to support Kominkan and CLC-based activities that tackle local, national, regional, and global challenges through ESD.

15. Continue to collaborate with existing networks, such as UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities, UNESCO ASPnet, Uni-Twin, that share our commitment to ESD.

We assert to continue with determination and vigor our commitments in the post-2015 era to uphold the principles and support the practices of learning for community-based sustainable human development through Kominkan-CLCs. The job is not done with the adoption of the SDGs and new EFA goals and the related targets and indicators. The roles and contributions identified in this Commitment will guide our action.

We commit to continue and advance ESD beyond DESD.
2. **Context**

**The DESD as a response to the crisis of sustainability**
1. We face an urgent crisis of sustainability.
2. The UN DESD International Implementation Scheme has inspired people to actively participate in the creation of “a world where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from education and learn the values, behavior and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation.”
3. The realization of a sustainable society requires that the interlocking elements of the social, economic, environmental and cultural dimensions be recognized and addressed.
4. Recent increase in conflicts have significantly weakened the bonds of trust necessary to establish the foundations of a sustainable society.

**Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)**
1. ESD acknowledges and celebrates all forms of education and learning: formal, non-formal, informal and incidental in the context of life-long and life-wide learning for all.
2. Non-formal education and community-based learning provides opportunities for children, youth and adults to transform themselves and their communities through their individual and collective actions.
3. Multi-faceted approaches are necessary in ESD, which responds to issues with complex causes and outcomes.
4. ESD involves a holistic approach that embraces the dynamic interaction and complementarity of traditional wisdom and modern knowledge, the changing urban and rural environments, and skills development and learning that values ownership, citizenship, participation and empowerment.

**The Focus of the Kominkan-CLC International Conference on ESD**
1. Community-based learning institutions provide opportunities for individuals and communities to develop literacy, numeracy, life skills and livelihood skills necessary to establish connections and responses to global and local issues.
2. Institutions that facilitate community-based learning, such as Kominkan-CLCs, provide the space to talk about their concerns, raise people’s awareness, motivate them to respond and establish ownership of their responses, and support them to share their hopes for a more sustainable society.
3. Kominkan-CLCs are unique in its role as a meaningful platform to promote and achieve the vision of ESD through multi-stakeholder, collective, and inclusive approaches.
### 3. Roles and contributions of institutions that facilitate community-based learning

**Roles and contributions in general**

Institutions that facilitate community-based learning, such as Kominkan-CLCs and other similar organizations all over the world have made significant contributions towards attaining the vision of sustainable societies during the DESD,

1) As a “PLACE” for advancing ESD by promoting Participation, Learning, Action, Creation and Empathy, where people acknowledge and recognize each other, to help community members transition from non-participation to full commitment.

2) As a bridge between formal, non-formal and informal education by engaging community networks, schools and higher education institutions, administrative bodies, and corporate sectors.

3) As a provider of inclusive and flexible education for hard to reach and disadvantaged children, youth and adults providing second chance education opportunities.

4) As a facilitator of relevant and responsive learning approaches incorporating folk and indigenous knowledge and local history as a springboard for planning and action.

5) As a catalyst of innovative and effective learning that make use of technologies including mass media, social media, internet and other digital technologies.

6) As a weaver of intergenerational and multidisciplinary knowledge and cultural diversity contributing to peace and social cohesion, promoting mutual recognition of different positions and views.

7) As a capacity builder of community education professionals who can inspire learners to become lifelong learners.

8) As a hub that engages and empowers individuals by changing their mindset from thinking and acting for oneself to working for the benefits of the wider community.

**Roles and contributions under specific themes**

During the DESD, a number of critical cross-cutting issues such as peace, human rights, and equity have influenced and will continue to inform our commitments. These include ensuring peaceful and harmonious communities by promoting understanding between diverse peoples; reducing inequalities; protecting and advancing human rights; and addressing the deprivation of communities in learning opportunities to respond to poverty alleviation, lack of employment, health, and food and nutrition security.

We have been actively engaged in the following themes and wish to underscore the important roles and contributions that have been achieved:

1. **Environmental Conservation**
   
   We have supported citizens’ learning informed by the history and wisdom of our ancestors and lessons learnt from responding to environmental destruction. Furthermore, a collaborative science-based process has empowered communities to achieve environmental sustainability.

2. **Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)**

   We have developed and maintained resilient communities against natural and human-induced disasters through relevant learning and cultivating human relationships anchored on selflessness,
empathy and mutual-help.

3  **Income generation, Entrepreneurship, Community Development**
We have played a crucial role in the economic development of the community by promoting social enterprises supportive of self-sufficiency.
We have served as a catalyst in harnessing human potentials to participate in productive community enterprises, improving the well-being of families with greater ability to solve local issues and challenges.

4  **Cultural Diversity and Dialogue, Intergenerational Exchange**
We have facilitated empowerment of communities through intergenerational, inter-sectoral, and intercultural learning for all.
We have supported communities to discover, sustain, and create culture for the public value, while respecting diversity in gender, age, ethnicity, religion, and languages.
We have gathered local and indigenous wisdom and resources and utilized them for mutual learning.

5  **Literacies**
We have provided literacy learning opportunities as a human right to equip everyone with the basic knowledge and skills necessary for productive livelihood and in the improvement of community well-being.
We have opened space for creativity and at the same time pushed for new learning frontiers to make ESD universal. Technology, including use of ICT in literacy, has added significant new momentum to Kominkan-CLCs.

6  **Empowerment**
We have realized that different communities have different needs. Therefore we have created a comprehensive network system of stakeholders that continuously build self-esteem to make them active participants in the development process and address the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups to ensure the rights to decent life and gender equality.

7  **Policy Making, Management and Capacity Development**
Policy support for community-based learning has been ensured in some countries to develop a platform of community dialogues, networking and resource mobilization. We have created learning communities that promote autonomous actions and reaffirm local values and practices from the ESD perspective and developed capacities of community-based learning professionals and learners.

We acknowledge the achievements of previous regional and global events such as the Jakarta Statement: Nurturing a Care, Fair and Share Society through CLCs adopted in September 2014. We will use this Commitment as an opportunity to engage learners, managers, and governments in a dialogue towards developing concrete policies and actions.

We will engage with local, national and international forums that will contribute to the formulation of the post-2015 development and education agenda, to underscore the vital importance of community-based learning for sustainable human development. More specifically, we see the
forthcoming global conferences as opportunities for advocacy and re-affirmation of our commitment
to ESD: the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan in
November 2014, UN Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan in March 2015, the
World Education Forum in Incheon, Republic of Korea in May 2015 and the United Nations facilitated
discussions in the lead up to the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in September
2015.

We would like to thank Okayama City, the Executive Committee for Kominkan-CLC Conference,
Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Japan and other institutions and
people who worked to organize this Conference. We would especially like to express our
appreciation to the citizens and Kominkans of Okayama City for their warm hospitality.

Adopted on 11 October 2014, Okayama City, Japan
Participants of the Kominkan-CLC International Conference on ESD

(subject to minor editorial change)