



**Symposium on Globalization and the Future of Youth in Asia**

Creating working opportunities and enabling environment for young people

Summary of the Two-day Symposium

Prof. Kazuo Takahashi, *International Christian University; Visiting Professor, UNU*

1. The implications of globalization have elevated the importance of partnership and sharing in many dimensions than ever before.
  - (1) During the session on the voices of the youth, there was a statement with regard to meaning of engaging in work that satisfaction from achieving something can be obtained from work. There was also a remark that work expands acquaintances and through such human relationships the young are enriched. Sharing and partnership through work is important.
  - (2) This is an issue that has been pointed out in various forms, but training, education and employment would have to be integrated and need to establish partnerships among themselves, in order to address the new challenges of globalization. Otherwise, we shall never be able to resolve the employment issues of the youth.
  - (3) Sharing only the best practices may not solve the problems. What is important is to share not only the success stories but also the unsuccessful ones. From the mistakes I think we can find some diamonds. In order to share the failures international organizations and especially in this arena the ILO, corporations, trade unions, governments, researchers and other players in the society would have to come together to establish partnerships.
  - (4) Someone raised the question as to which should be more respected, the employment of senior citizens, or that of the young people. The answer to it was that this was not a binary decision to be made and that what was important is to combine the two. The young people need to learn, and the ones that are going to be the teachers are the senior citizens. So how we link and combine these two groups is very important.
2. From a sociological perspective, the young people are diversified. This may be also true for those who are studying sociology and literature. However, from the perspective of the economists, there is more or less an even pattern in which we see more uniform problems prevailing in societies. In other words, on the one hand, when you look at the social policies, you need to have a variety of menus available. Whereas from the viewpoint of the economic policy, be it macroeconomic policy or the microeconomic policy, you need to pursue coherent policies. That being the case, on one part, diversified menus for social policies should be offered and coherent macro and micro policies covering whole range of



- social policies. But here again, you need to link the two so as to integrate the two in a society.
3. Globalization has made the corporations reduce their investment in training for their employees, and it has been pointed out that even here in Japan, in a society where companies have been investing in training their employees, such investment would decline. It is important to integrate education, training and employment, but probably the education system is not going to change drastically. If the companies have no choice but to lessen their investment in human resources training, and if the educational systems are not going to change drastically, whether it be through government policies or other means, we need to embed the gap. Countries are to compete in finding solutions for this in the current globalization.
  4. The future of youth employment will become more unstable than in the past in the environment of market globalization. Social instability is adding to the intrinsic instability of the youth, creating a multiplier effect that make the youth very unstable. This increasing instability has made some youth to become reclusive in the form of NEETs, and maybe extreme examples of youth shying away can be found in the shape of terrorism. The challenge is how we go about converting this amplified instability into productive dynamism.
  5. In the session on the voices of the youth, statements were made to the effect that whether it being marriage or child bearing on the part of women, or future instability, they think that things will be fine as long as they can pursue professional careers. The adults are not to force preformed menu of lifetime education to the youth, because they need to find answers for themselves. The career process as at present was established to agree with the age progression solely of the men. However, Ms. Sadako Ogata who assumed the post as the President of JICA in her mid-seventies described herself as living the “woman time.” She headed the UNHCR after she had completed raising children and looking after elderly family members, and when she had found herself in a situation when she could invest all her hours in the profession that she wanted to pursue. So when you say career track, there should be multiple numbers of career paths for the youth. The young people may explore ways to engage in productive activities. Even if we set up curriculum for lifelong education, it may not be followed by them. I think we need to trust the young people more so that they could make contributions in creating systems for them.
  6. Within the theme of “globalization and youth employment,” one thing has become crystal clear. Companies that are the main actors in employment and the government that set the overall framework in the society, and the trade unions, the youth, and the scholars, all of these players cannot come up with a clear picture of the future. They are exploring in the dark. This two-day symposium is very important amidst this uncertainty. We need to ascertain what is understood and



what is not, and to hold on so as not to be cast out from the fast track, market-oriented globalization that is accelerating its speed. We need to acquire additional wisdom that would help to control globalization. To do so, we should chip in our own knowledge and expertise, and I think we need to repeat this symposium as we had this time.