



Congratulatory Message on the 10th anniversary of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities from the Mayor of Okayama City

I would like to extend our sincere congratulations on the 10th anniversary of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities.

Since its establishment in 2013, the GNLC has played a central role in the international networks, connecting the learning cities around the world and creating diverse learning opportunities including the International Conference on Learning Cities (ICLC), for which I would like to express my deepest respect.

Today, global issues such as climate change, loss of biodiversity and social inequality are becoming more serious in many parts of the world, and the social environment that supposed to ensure a bountiful life for future generations is being damaged year by year.

We recognize that lifelong learning is a key to solving these various global issues and building a sustainable society. Okayama City has positioned "Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)" as a pillar of lifelong learning and has been working on ESD since 2005 with the aim of realizing a sustainable society by helping individuals to proactively view various local issues as their own problems, learn from each other, and change their perspectives and behavior.

Currently, we have established 37 *Kominkans* (Community Learning Centers) as bases for ESD activities, where anyone in any generation can learn throughout their lives, and have been fostering human resources who can work to create a sustainable society.

Referring to our relationship between the GNLC and Okayama city, I was invited to participate in the 2nd International Conference on Learning Cities, which took place in Mexico City in 2015, and presented the "ESD Okayama Model" at the Mayors' Forum. In 2016, Okayama City registered to become a member of the GNLC, and in 2017, received the UNESCO Learning City Award in recognition of our city's ESD efforts.

It has been very beneficial and gratifying for us to interact with a diverse range of like-minded stakeholders and have the opportunity to exchange and disseminate information toward the creation of a sustainable society within the framework of the GNLC.

Okayama City will continue to further collaborate with the members of the GNLC, and will work towards solving global issues and realizing a sustainable learning city as an ESD-leading city.

We sincerely hope that the GNLC will continue to contribute to the expansion of the network of sustainable learning cities around the world and to the enhancement of lifelong learning initiatives in each city.

Mayor of Okayama City, Japan

Masao Omori