

Message from the Founder

First of all, the International Student Forum is based on the Multilingual & Multicultural Cyber Consortium (MMCC). It was established in 2009, and consists of students from eight universities in eight countries around the world.

The Forum was initiated in 2012, one year after the Great East Japan Earthquake unexpectedly occurred, and aims for students to discuss and think about world-wide issues from a global perspective beyond their national borders, languages, and cultures. This year we are holding the 7th Forum, or the 9th if those ones which was held overseas are included.

Fortunately, the Forum was accepted as one of the short-stay programs by JASSO this year such as the previous Forums. Thanks to the financial support of JASSO, we were able to invite 14 students from nine universities in eight countries. As a result, we were able to increase the number of participants from our partner universities in South America and North Europe. In addition, this is the first time for us to hold the Forum in English, instead of Japanese, as the ruling language.

On a daily basis, the MMCC has been conducting various virtual exchange programs via a video conferencing system. It is significant in order to globalize the environment of our campus. However, a virtual environment has limitations on developing our students' global minds and their international viewpoints. Therefore, I determined to provide an opportunity and invite students from overseas to meet, discuss, and work with our students directly once a year. I hope that it works in a good way not just to foster our students as global citizens, but also to provide them a chance to take the initiative to organize and operate an international event by themselves. I believe that it will become a valuable experience for reflecting on and working together for world peace with students from all over the world.

The keyword of the 7th Forum is "movement". Unfortunately, there are children who were bullied by their classmates because they moved from Fukushima, where nuclear power plants exploded because of the great earthquake. These children were forced to evacuate their hometowns, but there are cases where they are not been welcomed. We recognize this "movement" as a forced mobility and relate it with emigrants and refugees around the world who had to leave their hometowns for any number of reasons, such as war, disaster, political oppression, and religious persecution. Not a few of them suffer from discrimination.

If we want to solve these problems, a citizenship education for living harmoniously beyond borders, including languages, cultures, races and religions, will be necessary. The 7th Forum will, I believe, provide students with an opportunity to discuss and think about this issue. This Forum has been established not only by faculty members, but also Derek Matsuda Associate Fellow, and our students, who have voluntarily prepared this forum. I really want to express my gratitude to them.

In the end, I hope all the participants who are going to join the Forum get a new point of view and foster their abilities to work as a multicultural group during the program.

Founder of the International Student Forum Prof.
Shin MORIYAMA