

**First RCE Thematic Conference: Towards Achieving the SDGs
5-7 December, 2017, Okayama, Japan**



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Institute for the Advanced Study
of Sustainability

**Introductory Session
RCE Network Towards Achieving SDGs
5 December, 2017, Okayama, Japan**

Presenter: Mr. Naoya Tsukamoto (Project Director, UNU-IAS)

Mr. Naoya Tsukamoto presented on the progress of the RCE (Regional Centres of Expertise on ESD) Network towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the development of the RCE Network, the roadmap and strategy after 2015 and introduced the First RCE Thematic Conference.

Mr. Tsukamoto spoke about how the RCE Network, in both its informal and formal capacities, plays a role in connecting regional communities, with support from various stakeholders including universities, schools, museums, government, civic organisations, media and NGOs. Its core elements include four pillars: Governance, Collaboration, R&D, and Transformative Education.

He then presented a timeline of the RCE Network to date. In 2005, the goal was to establish 100 RCEs, an ambitious goal at that time. In 2017, the number of RCEs continues to grow, even after the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), with the current figure standing at 158. RCEs can be found in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, North America, South America, however the number is limited in regions such as the Middle East and the Francophone regions, partly due to language barriers.

In terms of RCE-related activities, each conducts its own diversified activities, with regular opportunities to come together at a variety of levels to meet and share best practices (such as National, Regional, Global, Thematic, and Youth conferences). In 2017, regional conferences were held in Lusaka, Zambia (7th African Regional Conference), Vancouver, Canada (6th Americas Regional Conference), Delhi, India (10th Asia-Pacific Regional Conference) and Dortmund, Germany (Europe Regional Conference 2017), where issues such as refugees and skills training for Sustainable Development (SD) were discussed, with initiatives developed from the discussions.

On a communications front, 2017 saw many enhancements on the RCE Portal and increasing engagement on social media such as the RCE Facebook page, which reached a milestone of over 1,000 'likes'. The monthly RCE Bulletin continues to keep those across the network informed, and the RCE publications, of which more are coming soon, can also be accessed on the RCE Portal.

The roadmap sees the alignment of RCE activities together with the SDGs, the Global Action Programme on ESD (GAP), and the establishment of a framework through education utilising the RCE Network and ProSPER.Net. Three strategies form the road map of the RCE Network (2016-2020); strengthening governance, enhancing capacity development and strengthening the impact of actions and processes with international platforms.

Mr. Tsukamoto gratefully acknowledged RCE Okayama, Okayama University and the city of Okayama for their efforts and support in organising the First RCE Thematic Conference. He spoke about the potential synergies among the SDGs and how the RCEs can make important impacts by thinking globally based on local experience, whilst acting locally linking with the global agenda – a benefit and key characteristic of the RCE Network. He reiterated the importance of Goal 4 and how education is an indispensable element for enacting the other 16 goals. RCEs are ideally designed to implement education into SD in their communities, putting them in an advantageous position to enact the goals. By utilising this, the activities of RCEs will be ever more influential and effective going forward.