Transcript of the Congress

Welcome Speech

Mituhiko Araki

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Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. It is my great pleasure to meet you here and to talk on Virtual Universities, one of our rosy possibilities in the future.

My research center, the Kyoto University Research Center for Higher Education, has become engaged in this topic more and more deeply recently. Actually, some concrete steps were made this summer; i.e. we decided to take part in the Malaysia-Japan e-Learning network project. This project is carried out in cooperation with Multimedia University in Malaysia, CIMS (Center for Information and Multimedia Studies) of Kyoto University, Waseda University in Tokyo, and NTT-X that takes care of technical issues. The purpose of the project is to establish cooperative compliance systems under different hardware circumstances and to test interoperability of the contents developed at different sites.

Under this purpose, development of the platform that facilitates handling of hand-written students' reports for science education is one of the key issues. Prototype lessons will be planned when the technical circumstance is set up. Since our center is very small, our contribution will be limited, but we are positive in performing our portion. Let me introduce some of the members of this symposium. First, there are three panelists. Prof. James Wilkinson, Director, Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, Harvard University. Prof. Ken Kempner, Dean, School of Social Science and Education, Health and P.E., Southern Oregon University. Prof. Jose Alejandro Ramirez, Chief of Department for Educational Science, Universidad de las Americas, Puebla. There are two commentators, Prof. Aya Yoshida, National Institute of Multimedia Education here. And Prof. Sheldon Rothblatt, University of California, Berkeley. Prof. Rothblatt was the former Director of the Center for studies in Higher Education and former Dean of the Department of history.

Now I would like to call on our Prof. Tsunemi Tanaka for preliminary lecture.