Opening Remarks by Akio Takemoto

UNU-IAS RCE Global Service Centre

4 February 2021

Global RCE Webinar

Good Morning/Afternoon/Evening distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. I am Akio Takemoto, Programme Head of United Nations University, Institute for the Advance Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS).

***Welcome and appreciation to the host RCE***

First of all, I’d like to extend my warmest welcome to all the participants who are gathering from around the world. It is our great honor and pleasure to jointly organise this Global RCE Webinar, entitled “Achieving the SDGs: action through learning in the time of global crisis” with RCE Scotland. I’d like to express my sincere appreciation to RCE Scotland for their passion and great efforts in making this very important event possible.

***Pandemic and the Global RCE Network***

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused human suffering and economic destabilisation and has aggravated existing issues including poverty and inequality. Years of progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has partly reversed and the grim crisis is still unfolding.

During these challenging times, RCEs have functioned as a platform for communication and collaboration among various sectors in each local setting to deal with complex issues emerged from and exacerbated by the pandemic.

The global RCE network has also continued to take actions. Last year, the Regional RCE Meetings were organized virtually in every region; and were attended by more than 700 people in total. They exchanged experiences and practical solutions within the network and beyond.

In January this year, 4 new RCEs were officially acknowledged, and the global RCE Network which started with 7 RCEs in 2015, now adds up to 179 RCEs.

I am convinced that RCEs as multi-stakeholder networks can and will play further a pivotal role in building back better and realizing more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable societies.

***Global RCE Service Centre***

Now, the RCE community is in a phase of transition and transformation. The ‘Roadmap for the RCE Community 2016-2020’ has come to an end.

It’s now time to redesign and rethink our strategies in alignment with the international frameworks; including Agenda 2030 as well as ESD for 2030, while reflecting on achievements and remaining challenges in order to seize the momentum of its growing roles in their local contexts and scale up.

The Global RCE Service Centre has been creating the new Roadmap for the RCE community in consultation with the Ubuntu Committee of Peers for the RCEs. We plan to publicise the draft and receive comments and suggestions from RCEs in March, and finalise it in June. We would be grateful for your contribution to the development of new roadmap which will show the updated vision, goals, and strategic directions we want to achieve collectively.

***Closing***

UNU-IAS is committed to continuously support and facilitate the vibrant RCE network as the Global RCE Service Centre. We highly appreciate the continuous support of the Ministry of the Environment of Japan.

Today’s webinar will be a great opportunity to facilitate dialogue and learning and strengthen the Global RCE Network for cooperative actions towards achieving the SDGs.

I hope this meeting produces meaningful and fruitful discussions.

Thank you for your attention.