

## **Opening Remarks on ‘Dialogue and Society’**

### **Junko Hibiya (President, International Christian University, Tokyo)**

International Christian University was delighted to host the Linguapax Symposium on the theme of literacy in multilingual society, at the close of 2012. As President of ICU it was a particular pleasure to welcome so many guests from various parts of the world. An affiliate activity of UNESCO, the Barcelona-based organization Linguapax is notable for its promotion of multilingualism and awareness-raising about endangered languages of the world. This chimes well with our university’s mission as a bilingual (Japanese and English) university with a vigorous sense of social commitment to justice, peace and global citizenship. May I highlight the fact that our university has a long tradition of student activity for UNESCO and the UNITED NATIONS. Likewise, not only does our Institute for Educational Research and Service sponsor a long-established literacy research group but also the concerns of literacy studies and multilingualism are reflected specifically in various courses offered in the ICU curriculum.

Finally, may I draw attention to the location of this event. The symposium was held at Kiyoshi Togasaki Memorial Dialogue House, on the verdant ICU campus: a building completed in August, 2010. The building was named after Kiyoshi Togasaki, the first Chair of ICU’s Board of Trustees. Mr. Togasaki was also the first Japanese president of Rotary International and contributed significantly to international cooperation and understanding after World War II. It is appropriate that the founding mission of ICU should echo through the Linguapax symposium and ICU is honoured to be part of that moving spirit of cooperation, dialogue and understanding.