

Dr. Tetsuhiko Ikegami
Chairman
Space Activities Commission (SAC)
Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), Japan

Welcome Message
To the participants of the 18th session of the Asia-Pacific
Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF-18) in December

It is my great honor to serve as General Co-Chairperson of the 18th session of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF-18) together with Mr. Joseph Hui and to announce to you that the APRSAF-18 will be held from 6 to 9 December 2011 in Singapore.

This Forum will be jointly organized and co-sponsored by the Singapore Space and Technology Association (SSTA), Centre for Remote Imaging, Sensing and Processing (CRISP) of the National University of Singapore, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA). The APRSAF was established in 1993 in response to the declaration adopted by the Asia-Pacific International Space Year Conference (APIC) in 1992, to enhance the development of each country's space program and to exchange views toward future cooperation in space activities in the Asia-Pacific region. The APRSAF has held seventeen annual meetings thus far organized jointly by MEXT, JAXA, and the co-host organizations of the countries participating in the APRSAF, to discuss current space-related issues and possible cooperation among countries mainly in the region.

While the APRSAF has served mainly in the past as an active forum to promote cooperative activities in order to resolve common and timely issues shared in the region, the APRSAF-18 will be held under the main theme entitled, "A regional collaboration for tomorrow's environment", with the aim of improving the quality of life of people through enhancing use of space-based systems, activities and services.

The APRSAF-18 will have a plenary session, and four working groups (WGs): Earth Observation (EO) WG, Communication Satellite Applications (CSA) WG, Space Education and Awareness (SEA) WG and Space Environment Utilization (SEU) WG.

At the plenary session, we will be submitting a summary report from the Sentinel Asia (Disaster Management Support System in the Asia-Pacific Region), SAFE (Satellite Applications For Environment) and STAR (Satellite Technology for the Asia-Pacific Region) programs.

On March 11, North-Eastern Japan was afflicted by an unprecedented earthquake and tsunami and we would like to express our appreciation to you for your heartwarming support and encouragement. We also recognize that observation from space has proved to be very helpful in mitigating the disasters. Therefore, enhancing the programs on comprehensive disaster management as one of the Space Service topics is a timely and urgent topic in our region. Other topics will be notified in due course.

As you know this year is the fiftieth anniversary of Human Space Flight and we are preparing for a special event with astronauts in the Asia-Pacific region.

Once again, I look forward to seeing you in Singapore in order to exchange lively views on future cooperation in space activities, and hope that the APRSAF-18 will contribute to further cooperation in space activities in the Asia-Pacific region.