



Dr Hiroki Matsuo
Chairman of Space Activities
Commission of MEXT

Welcome Message

To the participants to the 15th session of the Asia-Pacific
Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF-15) in December

It is my great honor to serve as General Chairperson of the 15th session of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF-15) with Prof. Son and announce to you that the APRSAF-15 will be held from 10 to 12 December 2008 in Hanoi and Ha Long Bay, Vietnam.

It will jointly be organized and co-sponsored by the Vietnamese Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), Vietnam Academy of Science and Technology (VAST), the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), and 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. APRSAF has held fourteen annual meetings organized jointly by the MEXT, JAXA, and co-host organizations of countries participating in APRSAF, to discuss current space-related issues and possible cooperation among countries especially those in Asia-Pacific region.

While the APRSAF has been an active forum to promote concrete cooperative activities to resolve common problems at the regional level, the APRSAF-15 will be held under the main theme entitled "Space for Sustainable Development" with the aim of contributing toward solving problems of the world for sustainable development of countries in the Asia-Pacific region through enhanced use of space-based systems, activities and services.

The APRSAF-15 is proposed to have a plenary session, and 4 working groups (WGs): Earth Observation (EO) WG, Communication Satellite Applications (CSA) WG, Space Education and Awareness (SEA) WG and Space Environment Utilization (SEU) WG. Especially, at the plenary session, a summary report will be presented on the Sentinel Asia Project, which was initiated as a disaster risk management system in the Asia-Pacific region after the APRSAF-12, and participants will discuss second phase of the Project. Other topics will be informed in due course.

Once again, I look forward to seeing you in Hanoi and Ha Long Bay for exchanging lively views toward future cooperation in space activities, and hope that the APRSAF-15 will contribute to further cooperation in space activities in the Asia-Pacific region.