



Prof. Nguyen Khoa Son,  
Vice-President,  
Vietnam Academy of Science and Technology

### Welcome Message

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

As you are aware, the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF-15) will be held from 10 to 12 December 2008 in Hanoi and Ha Long Bay, Vietnam.

This Forum is jointly organized and co-sponsored by the Vietnam Academy of Science and Technology (VAST), the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA). The idea of APRSAF was established in 1993 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.

Recently, as we all know that the world is facing the new food, fuel and finance crisis. Once again, the big question remains “Why do we invest in space?” Despite the fact that space has been more and more involved into our daily life, not so many people are aware of that.

That's why this time APRSAF-15 will be held under the main theme of “Space for Sustainable Development” with the aim to contribute toward solving problems not only of the Asia-Pacific region but also of the entire world. Again, through the cooperation in projects such as the Sentinel Asia Project, we can build up the capacities of member space agencies as well as realizing the ultimate goal of using space application to raise the standard living of the people.

As usual, the APRSAF-15 is going to have the plenary session and sessions of the 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, followed by a plenary session. Continuing the ideas discussed in the APRSAF-14 held in November 2007 in Bangalore, India, the APRSAF-15 will also focus on Sentinel Asia, the Disaster Management Support System in the Asia-Pacific Region. We propose to discuss its enhancement, based on the status report of Sentinel Asia STEP2 Project.

Other themes of the APRSAF-15 will be:

- Applications of space technology to tackle imminent global and regional environmental issues
- Further utilization of space to raise the standard of living of the people
- Utilization of a unique research environment in space to advance research and development
- Education and awareness of space to provide better opportunities to the youth who would play a key role in space development and utilization in the future

On behalf of VAST, the Vietnam Academy of Science and Technology, it's my great pleasure to invite you to participate in APRSAF-15, to exchange views and experiences toward future cooperation in space activities. I hope that APRSAF-15 will contribute to further cooperation in space activities in the Asia-Pacific region.