

Speech for signing ceremony of JAXA-World Bank MOU

The new JAXA- World bank partnership for global environmental issues on the ground and in space

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Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), I would like to express our deepest gratitude that I have been honored with this opportunity to make a speech at the signing ceremony of the JAXA-World Bank MOU.

The World Bank has historically been a distinguished partner for Japan. In the last century, our partnership was in the field of development on the ground. In the 20th century, the Bank contributed significantly to the development of Japanese society through financing important infrastructure projects such as the bullet train (Shinkansen) and Tomei highway.

In this century, our partnership now embarks on a new phase. The keywords of the 21st century are environment and space. The Bank and JAXA have united to pursue the common agenda of tackling environmental problems, the most critical global issue. In particular, Japan will host the G8 summit this year, and environmental issues will be among the main topics. While the Bank has been addressing this issue on the ground, JAXA has been doing so in space. As I mentioned, the Bank contributed significantly to our development on the ground. Now, it is our turn to reciprocate. In our new partnership, the Bank and JAXA, supported by the Remote Sensing Technology Center of Japan, will work together to resolve the most critical global issue, environmental problems both on the ground and in space.

In this sense, we are most pleased that the Bank appreciated the usefulness of our ALOS data. I am also grateful for the support of the Remote Sensing Technology Center of Japan, our primary distributor of ALOS data, in endeavoring diligently to establish cooperation between the Bank and JAXA.

As you may know, the Advanced Land Observing Satellite, or ALOS, was launched on January 24, 2006. Since then, ALOS data has been used for disaster monitoring, cartography, and regional observation and resource surveying and will now be employed to address global warming. We are truly proud of ALOS. In Latin America in particular, ALOS is contributing to operational deforestation monitoring, and its derived information is utilized to investigate illegal logging. We hope that ALOS will make invaluable contributions to projects to adapt the climate change impacts in Latin American countries. This agreement will facilitate it through scientific and technical exchange including technical expertise and capacity building.

Finally, we believe that this MOU represents a significant first step in our new partnership to tackle our common agenda of global environmental problems both on the ground and in space. We fervently hope that our new partnership will bloom like the cherry blossoms, our national flower, here along the Potomac River.

Thank you!