

Saturday, August 27 12:45-13:30 | Sarova Panafric Hotel "Simba"

Initiative for Improvement of Forest Governance: JICA-JAXA Early Warning System for Tropical Forests

Cohosted by Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)

1. Background

On December 1, 2015, JICA and JAXA announced the Initiative for Improvement of Forest Governance at the COP21 to UNFCCC in Paris. The initiative was to create a new early warning system for tropical forests that tracks deforestation and forest loss with JAXA's Advanced Land Observing Satellite-2 (ALOS-2).

Forest conservation is critical in the fight against climate change. However, the loss of tropical forests continues unabated due to illegal logging and other factors, and implementing measures to stop such losses is a global priority. The Early Warning System for Tropical Forests will maintain a constant watch on deforestation and forest loss in tropical regions of the globe and provide open access to its findings. The system, using ALOS-2, can monitor forest cover changes in tropical forests despite the cloud cover that is typically found in such areas. Currently preparatory work is underway and its trial version is expected to be available in late 2016.

With a resolution of up to 50 meters, the Early Warning System, when it becomes fully functional, will produce data that will be updated about every six weeks on average and uploaded to a website. It is expected that it will help countries with serious deforestation issues restrain illegal logging, and in the long term, help control the reduction of forests.

Similar efforts have produced encouraging results: With JICA's technical cooperation in Brazil from 2009 to 2012 and data gathered by ALOS, the predecessor to ALOS-2, illegal foresting was monitored and assistance was provided in near-real-time. Thanks to these, more than 2,000 incidents were discovered and the subsequent actions taken by the authorities contributed to a 40 percent reduction in the amount of forest area destroyed. The Early Warning System under preparation is built on this success and aims to contribute to the global conservation of tropical forests.

2. Objectives

This session aims to introduce the Initiative for Improvement of Forest Governance, which includes, as its activities, building the Early Warning System for Tropical Forests, capacity development of personnel for sustainable forest management in developing countries, and spreading knowledge about good practices on forest conservation around the world.

This session will give a demonstration of the pilot version of the system and provide an opportunity to discuss how to conserve tropical forests further.

3. Speakers

- Mr. Hiroshi Kato, Vice President, JICA
- Dr. Manabu Watanabe, Associate Professor, School of Science and Engineering, Tokyo Denki University, Japan
- Mr. Kenichi Shishido, Deputy Director General for Forestry and Nature Conservation, Global Environment Department, JICA
- TBD, Representative, Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Sustainable Development, the Democratic Republic of Congo
- Moderator: TBD, Mr. Henry Bonsu, International Broadcaster