Statement

on the Tokyo International Conference on the Forest Governance Initiative
- Partnership for Global Contributions to Forest Conservation, Sustainable Forest Management, and Climate Change Mitigation -

October 25, 2017

We, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), co-organized the "Tokyo International Conference on the Forest Governance Initiative" that was held in Tokyo from October 24 to 25, 2017, in cooperation with the Forestry Agency of Japan and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO). This provided us with the opportunity to meet participants representing our partner countries, international and regional organizations, development partners, the private sector and civil society.

We recalled that the Forest Governance Initiative (FGI) was launched at UNFCCC COP 21 in 2015, where the Paris Agreement on Climate Change was adopted. The FGI was launched through the commitment of JICA and JAXA based on our recognition that forests will play a crucial role in achieving the objectives of the Paris Agreement as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Given this, the effective monitoring of changes in global forests is critical to reducing deforestation and forest degradation and improving forest governance.

We further recalled that the JICA-JAXA Forest Early Warning System in the Tropics (JJ-FAST), which was developed under the FGI, regularly monitors deforestation and forest cover changes in the tropical regions using the cloud penetrating technologies of the ALOS-2 satellite and provides open access to its findings with the aim of improving forest governance.

During the conference, we discussed the challenges faced by our partner countries and the international community in terms of improving forest governance using the tools of forest monitoring and forest management. We recognized that the effective use of satellite technologies, such as JJ-FAST and other satellite-based systems, combined with appropriate policy measures present many opportunities to address these challenges. More specifically, we wish to highlight the following findings:

- The currently available global satellite data, systems and tools (including Global Forest Watch, GLAD, SEPAL, and Open Foris) and various country-specific systems offer numerous opportunities for us to achieve effective forest monitoring and sustainable forest management.

- It is important to consider how we use satellite technologies in decision-making and action-taking on the ground since technologies or systems cannot provide a single solution for all forest-related challenges and climate change. To address deforestation and promote sustainable forest management, it is necessary to seek good forest governance by supplementing systems and tools with, among other things, effective policies, law enforcement, institutional arrangements, capacity building, and the necessary resources. Effective coordination among the related authorities, the private sector, civil society, and communities is also critical.
• The methods that a developing country employs to improve its forest monitoring and management can be defined according to its purpose, its needs, its deforestation patterns, and the available data and information. The county-led approach should be the center of this process.
• Development partners can enhance their contributions to the provision of support for developing countries' initiatives and global development agendas by further harmonizing their activities and modalities with other organizations and systems.
• JJ-FAST can be used as an effective tool for forest monitoring and management through its incorporation in national forest monitoring systems and management plans based on their needs and objectives. Further study would be beneficial in seeking an effective means of utilizing JJ-FAST in the enforcement of regulations designed to address illegal deforestation activities, the tracking of legally harvested wood and wood products, the conducting of appropriate concession management, and so forth.
• The functionality of JJ-FAST can be enhanced to allow it to be used more effectively by developing countries and all stakeholders in conjunction with other available systems and tools both complimentarily and comprehensively.

We reaffirmed our belief that forest conservation and sustainable forest management are indispensable to ensuring the sustainable development of the world as forests are intrinsically related to economic development, people's lives and livelihoods, food security, water sanitation, ecosystem conservation, and so forth.

In light of this, we need to accelerate our efforts to achieve sustainable forest management and implement climate change countermeasures, and the optimal way for us to do this is through the effective use of satellite technologies and enhanced partnerships among stakeholders. In this sense, we are extremely grateful for the invaluable contributions made by all those who attended the conference.

Believing that forests can change the world for the better, we call upon all participants here today to commit ourselves to working together under the FGI towards realizing a more sustainable and equitable world that leaves no one behind.

Tokyo, October 25, 2017

Co-organizers:
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)
in cooperation with:
Forestry Agency, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan and International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)

Witnessed by 144 conference participants from 24 countries and partner organizations.