

Earth Observation Summit, Thursday, 31 July 2003

Strengthening International Cooperation on Earth Observation

Address by Kisaburo TOKAI

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It is my great pleasure to participate in the Earth Observation Summit, and to have this opportunity to speak to all of you.

Our increased awareness of the importance of global environmental issues led to the first Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

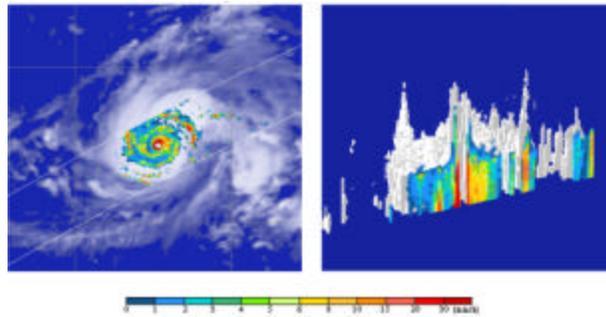
The importance of strengthening international cooperation on Earth observation was pointed out in major international conferences such as the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg last year and the Third World Water Forum held in Japan this March.

I suppose such efforts contributed to the results of the G8 Summit in Evian. The consistent message is that it is essential for us to consolidate our efforts and to resolutely take the next steps. Today's Summit represents a timely and excellent opportunity for us to begin to respond to that message.

Japan considers that enhanced Earth observation is essential to solve global environmental issues. We have emphasized such perspective in our S&T policies and countermeasures against global warming. We have endeavored in developing the Integrated Global Observation Strategy (IGOS). Such existing efforts must be assessed and coordinated with our respective policies, and form the cornerstone of any future efforts on global Earth observations.

Mr. Chairman, now I would like to introduce Japan's major efforts in Earth Observation.

Regarding the Earth observation satellites, the Tropical Rainfall Measuring Mission (TRMM), which was jointly launched by Japan and the United States, have recently succeeded in making the first ever global and three-dimensional space-based observations of precipitation. We are planning to continue this important effort by promoting the Global Precipitation Measurement (GPM).

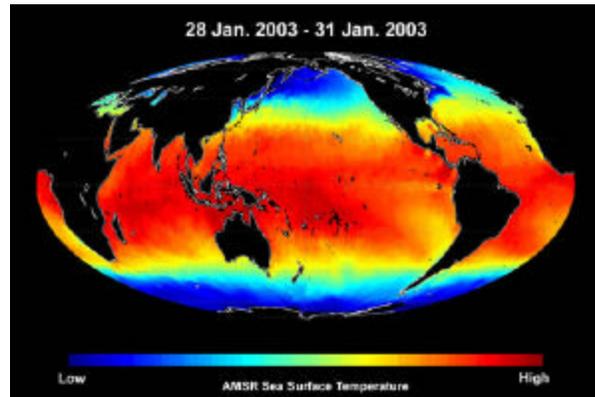


Typhoon “JELAWAT” observed by TRMM/PR at 2 August 2000.

I would also like to mention that, last December, Japan successfully launched Midori II (also known as ADEOS-II), an advanced Earth observation satellite. In the future, we will develop a new satellite (GOSAT) to observe greenhouse gases.



ADEOS-II Overview



Four-day averaged global sea surface temperature (SST)

As for marine observations, the marine Earth research vessel “Mirai”, which means “future” in Japanese, plans to make a scientific voyage in the southern hemisphere, and to undertake numerous marine observations in about 500 locations.

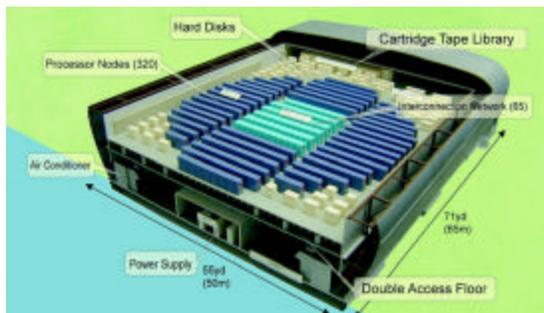


MIRAI (Delivered in 1997)

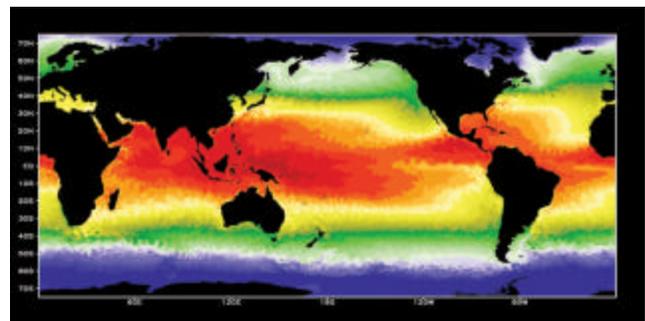
In the field of disaster management, observation data is especially useful to immediately grasp damages from disaster. In this respect, we will try to minimize data gaps by launching Advanced Land Observing Satellite next year and to join the International Charter on Space and Major Disasters.

Furthermore, a good geospatial data infrastructure is essential to position observation data. Japan is internationally committed to develop sound spatial data infrastructure through conducting geodetic surveys and developing Global Map data.

Now, I would like to mention to the fastest super-computer in the world, the Earth Simulator. By strengthening international cooperation on Earth observation, we think that the Earth Simulator can provide a significant contribution to solve global environmental issues.



Artist's view of the Earth Simulator



Ocean global simulation results(sea surface temperature).

Japan has been sharing the benefits of Earth observation with a number of countries – mainly in the Asia-Pacific region. We have trained necessary experts and established the necessary data systems on site. We will continue our efforts on capacity-building in developing countries.

Mr. Chairman, may I finish by confirming that, in anticipation of many productive discussions and studies in the coming months, we will host a Ministerial conference next spring in Tokyo to put our efforts together. We will do our best to ensure that the gains from this event are substantial. I am confident that our success will contribute to an improved understanding of our planet and will lead to a more secure environment. This will be our legacy for future generations. I would like to conclude my speech expressing my sincere gratitude to the Government of the United States of America for hosting this Summit, and by asking all of you present for your future cooperation on agreed goals.

Thank you very much.