

*14<sup>th</sup> ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief*  
*Welcome Speech by Shingo Yamagami,*  
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On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to welcome all of you to Tokyo. My gratitude goes to all who have made this meeting possible, especially to our colleagues from China and Myanmar, the co-chairs of this meeting.

At the outset, I would like to convey my deep condolences to those who suffered from the flood in Malaysia since last year and the recent plane crash off the coast of Indonesia.

Given the expanding impact resulting from scale and frequency of natural disasters, it is incumbent upon all of us to enhance cooperation on disaster risk reduction and build resilience of communities around the world.

Japan's emphasis on disaster risk reduction is based on its unforgettable experiences, including the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami of 3.11 in 2011. Japan is determined to play a leading role in the international cooperation on disaster risk reduction and disaster relief while sharing our experiences and lessons learned. This is, indeed, our "Proactive Contribution to Peace" in action.

The year 2015 will be a milestone for international cooperation in this regard. In March, the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction will be held in Sendai, Tohoku and the post-Hyogo Framework for Action is expected to be adopted. This ARF ISM is being held at the right time, just before the international community will agree on the new guidelines for disaster risk reduction. I hope our discussions of today and tomorrow will prove to be a valuable input and impetus to the Sendai conference.

I myself was given the privilege of chairing the ARF Space Security Workshop last October. Through such a valuable experience, I renewed my recognition as to what we can achieve together by our joint-work at the ARF. Through building confidence among the participants, the ARF is gradually functioning as an action-oriented and practical forum.

Disaster relief and risk reduction are promising areas for such practical cooperation. Along with the ARF-DiREx, this ISM provides an useful opportunity for policy makers and practitioners to learn from each other and explore further cooperation. I am convinced that our candid exchange of ideas and information here in Tokyo will have a positive impact on the ARF, hopefully leading to the improvement of regional security environment.

Therefore, let me conclude my welcoming remarks by appreciating your active participation.

Thank you very much.

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