

## REMARKS FOR ADMINISTRATOR BOLDEN

### SERVIR-MEKONG LAUNCH

Aug. 31, 2015

It's great to be here and it's my pleasure to join all of you for this wonderful occasion.

Thanks to USAID and the entire international *SERVIR* team for their ongoing partnership and friendship. It's a real pleasure to welcome the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) and its partners -- Deltares, Stockholm Environment Institute and Spatial Informatics Group -- to the *SERVIR* network.

It's also great to come here and see our *SERVIR* friends from RCMRD (Regional Center for Mapping of Resources for Development) and ICIMOD (International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development).

We're accomplishing a lot together and the fact that we are able to launch this important new hub in the *SERVIR* network is certainly tangible proof that what we're doing is working.

We get a lot of questions about our Earth observation work at NASA. In fact, a lot of people aren't even aware that it's such a core function of the agency. You know, our astronauts and Mars rovers seem to take a lot of the headlines.

But make no mistake, NASA is deeply committed to Earth science and the value it provides people around the globe. We have been since our founding.

The success of the *SERVIR* network is proof of that and I want to officially welcome *SERVIR-Mekong* to join *SERVIR-Himalaya*, *SERVIR-Eastern and Southern Africa* and the Applied Sciences Team projects in Mesoamerica, as part of a growing movement around the world.

Together, we are all playing a contributing to the effort to help bring our space-based science down to Earth for real time, real world applications that are changing the lives of people where they live.

The more this network expands, the more opportunities we have to test and showcase our newest Earth observation satellites. Missions like Global Precipitation Measurement (*GPM*), Soil Moisture Active Passive (*SMAP*) and others are now returning massive amounts of data and more Earth science missions are on the way.

It's been my honor to visit each of the *SERVIR* hubs and I can tell you that the enthusiasm in this network is truly inspiring. The demand-driven approach of *SERVIR* is unique in the space world. It's bringing space to village.

I never doubted that there was a hunger for more information and ways for people everywhere to make a difference in their home regions, but the tools that *SERVIR* has provided have really started something special.

The International Space Station also is becoming a platform for Earth observation, through the *ISERV* test bed camera used by *SERVIR* end users. Other instruments aboard the Station, including *RapidScat* to monitor ocean winds and the Cloud-Aerosol Transport System (*CATS*) to measure clouds and pollution are also contributing to the wealth of Earth science data available to the public. We like to say about the Station that “we’re working off the planet, for the planet” and I think that equally applies to *SERVIR*.

Here in the Mekong region, there's been a lot of growth and development. There's a need to know more about the land cover and to monitor floods, droughts and precipitation.

The great thing about *SERVIR* is that it takes all that information from our incredible fleet of Earth observation satellites and strengthens the capacity for people to use the data in ways that are important and useful to them.

I can't think of anything more gratifying to demonstrate why our space program is vital to everyone on this planet.

Just as the Space Station has become a model of international cooperation among nations who have many differences, so has *SERVIR* become a network not just of hubs, but also of regions and people. In the end, that's what matters. It's critical for us to recognize that when we speak of *SERVIR*, USAID and NASA, we're talking about the incredible people such as you here today.

NASA's rockets are amazing. The rovers on Mars are incredible. The fact that we've reached the edge of our solar system with *Voyager 1* and have now "touched" Pluto with *New Horizons* would have been unthinkable even very recently. But in the end, all this matters because it touches people. It inspires them. It changes lives. It helps us all reach for something bigger and challenges our own vision of our potential and capacity to innovate.

I'm so proud of the *SERVIR* network and how it is addressing global issues in both a regional and local way and demonstrating how we can all share information productively across borders. You're challenging all of us to look at our world and its problems and develop the tools for a brighter future.

As someone who has had the privilege of orbiting our planet and viewing it from space, I can tell you – it's pretty small!

It's a beautiful, fragile thing and when you see it without borders floating in the deep dark of space, it looks unified – a habitat of a single human species.

Back here on the surface, we need to realize that it's the most important planet we currently study – or may ever study, for that matter. For everyone who can't go to space, the recent photos of our home planet from the NASA camera aboard the Deep Space Climate Observatory (*DSCOVR*) remind us once again that we all live on one incredibly beautiful interconnected planet.

So thank you again for all of your hard work. Congratulations to USAID, ADPC and all of your partners for the continued vitality of the *SERVIR* network and a strong launch for this new hub. I'm very pleased that USAID continues to be a strong partner to ensure *SERVIR*'s continued success by engaging its regional and bilateral missions. It's not just a Washington thing – we're on the ground with this work where it's happening!

I look forward to hearing many good things about the activities taking place in this region and getting to know another strong and productive member of the *SERVIR* family: *SERVIR-Mekong*.

Thank you.