

Furthermore, in fiscal 2003 the MPHPT began comprehensive R&D on network-human interface, in which it is promoting R&D on such issues as a practical multilingual voice automatic translation system for network-connected mobile terminals and a technology for preventing the harmful effect of optical stimulus from visual contents on the human body.

If people come to require more diverse and higher-level services, then in place of technology like RFID tags that just attach static information to things, technology that perceives the conditions of people and things and the surrounding environment and transmits this dynamic information is going to become important. In March 2004 the MPHPT convened a research group on ubiquitous sensor network technology.

### (3) Advances in space communications

Space communications have many favorable features, such as the capacity to provide wide-area and simultaneous communications and their disaster-proof character, and they are used in a wide range of fields, including communications, broadcasting, and positioning technology. In consideration of the role that space communications should play in the information and communications infrastructure that will be rapidly developed and advanced in the future, in order to realize the space communications that will be required, the MPHPT is promoting the development of demonstration satellites and satellite experiments, including R&D on the quasi-zenithal satellite system, R&D on the ultra-high-speed Internet satellite, R&D on the Engineering Test Satellite VIII, and R&D on the Global Precipitation Measurement (GPM) initiative.

## Section 9

# Promoting International Strategies

### 1. Promoting International Policies

#### (1) Promoting the Asia Broadband Program

In order to clarify the objective of constructing a broadband environment in Asia, on the basis of the “e-Japan Priority Policy Program-2002” and the “Basic Policies for Economic and Fiscal Policy Management and Structural Reform 2002” (approved by the cabinet in June 2002), the MPHPT in July 2002 held the “International Conference for Asia Broadband Strategy”, sponsored by the Minister of the MPHPT, and issued the results as the chair’s summary in December of the same year. In the light of this paper, the MPHPT, together with related ministries and agencies, formulated the “Asia Broadband Program” in March 2003. This program is treated as a subject to make steady progress in the “e-Japan Strategy II” as well, and the MPHPT and related ministries and agencies are actively promoting various related efforts.

#### (2) Japan-UK Joint Statement on Information and Communications Technology

In July 2003, on the occasion of a visit to Japan by British Prime Minister Tony Blair, the leaders of Japan and Britain issued the Japan-UK Joint Statement on information and communications technology regarding cooperation between the two countries as the world’s leading ICT states. The two countries agreed to cooperate in realizing a ubiquitous network society, promoting the development of e-commerce, use of ICT in government and education, and building digital opportunities.

#### (3) Cooperation and collaboration by Japan, China, and the Republic of Korea

In September 2002 the First China-Japan-Korea ICT Ministerial Meeting was held in Marrakesh, Morocco, with the aim of promoting cooperation among Japan, China, and the Republic of Korea in the information and communications field and with the attendance of representatives from private companies and research institutes in the three countries. The Second China-Japan-Korea ICT Ministerial Meeting was held in Cheju, Korea, in September 2003, with the participants engaging in broad discussions on the development of Asia through the promotion of further cooperation among the three countries in the field of information and communications and agreeing on three-country cooperation in seven ICT areas from now on. The Third China-Japan-Korea ICT Ministerial Meeting is scheduled to be held in Japan in 2004.

#### (4) World Summit on the Information Society

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), which was held in Geneva, Switzerland, in December 2003 with the participation of more than 20,000 persons from 176 countries, including 54 government leaders and 83 ministers of information and communications, was sponsored by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) as an event of the United Nations with the aim of promoting the establishment and understanding of a common vision of the information society, issuing a declaration for the achievement of cooperative development toward the

realization of this vision, and formulating a strategic plan of action. As well as establishing a common vision of the information society at the summit level, the WSIS also formulated a declaration of principles and plan of action for the realization of this vision and so on.

Japanese Minister of the MPHPT Taro Aso made a statement at the summit, introducing Japan's efforts to promote broadband and realize a ubiquitous network society and emphasizing their importance. Minister Aso also explained that Japan was actively promoting the Asia Broadband Program and would contribute to the declaration of principles and plan of action.

A second phase of the WSIS, which among other things will undertake a follow-up of the Geneva plan of action, is scheduled to be held in Tunis in November 2005. Preparations for the second phase will take place from now on, but it is expected that studies will go ahead on the establishment of a fund to alleviate the digital divide and the form of Internet governance, which were the focal points of discussions in the first phase.

Japan is scheduled to contribute as much as possible for the second phase of the WSIS in cooperation with the ITU and a wide range of international organizations and others.

Regarding the form of Internet governance, in order to contribute to the international debate, including a working group that will be established from now on, the MPHPT is holding the Meeting for Information-sharing on Internet Governance with the aim of exchanging information with Internet-related persons in Japan.

## 2. Promoting International Cooperation

Information and communications are attracting a great deal of expectation as a form of infrastructure that, among other things, leads to economic development, the expansion of employment, and improvement of the national life. In developing countries, though, there are still, for example, about 30 countries in which the telephone diffusion rate does not even reach one unit per 100 persons, and the international digital divide is widening. Therefore, there is a growing need to construct information and communication networks around the world, including in developing countries.

As well as, among other things, supporting human resource development in the IT field, assisting the formulation of IT policies and systems through policy dialogue with information and communication ministries in developing countries, assisting the construction of information and communication infrastructure through the implementation of joint international experiments and so on, and supporting international and regional organizations that promote global cooperation for resolving the international digital divide, the MPHPT contributes to the continuous development of the information and communications field in developing countries in cooperation with such organizations as the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and the Japanese Bank of International Cooperation (JBIC), mainly through official development assistance (ODA).

## 3. Promoting International Standardization Activities

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) plays a central role in international standardization in the information and communications field. Within the ITU, the Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) and the Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R) engage in standardization activities. The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA) will be held in October 2004 and is scheduled to decide the setup of ITU-T study groups in the next study period (2005 – 08) and study topics, appoint the chairs and vice-chairs of study groups, review work methods, and so on. Japan also must consider its response to these issues as quickly as possible.

Also, giving proper consideration to the opinions of industrial circles and others, since standardization has been the subject of lively discussions in private forums in recent years, it is necessary to further strengthen cooperation among government, industry, and academia and, grasping a full picture of the issues relating to international standardization that Japan should tackle, not just the ITU-T, consider the standardization issues that should be promoted from now on. In light of these circumstances, with regard to Japan's response to the WTSA, the MPHPT's Telecommunications Council is scheduled to issue a partial report sometime in the summer of 2004.