

Section 9

Promoting International Strategies

1 Promoting international policies

(1) Promoting the Asia Broadband Program

As an action plan to build a broadband environment in Asia, the MIC, and related ministries, formulated the “Asia Broadband Program” in March 2003 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.” This program is treated as a subject to be steadily promoted in the “e-Japan Strategy II” and “e-Japan Priority Policy Program - 2004” as well.

The MIC arranged for cooperation to promote this program with nine Asian countries/regions to date, and reached an agreement on a cooperation arrangement in eight ICT fields in Japan, China, and the Republic of Korea. Furthermore, the MIC implements various R&D projects, human resources development measures, and policy dialogues based on these arrangements.

Furthermore, in order to accelerate the measures based on this program under strong public-private collaboration, the MIC convened the Asia Broadband Promotion Council starting in March 2004. In August of the same year, the council indicated the “measures that should be made into projects by fiscal 2005” and “projects that should be implemented or launched by fiscal 2005” with regard to fields to be promoted intensively and the concrete measures in the priority fields. Currently, the MIC is creating projects and implementing measures based on these indications.

(2) Bilateral and multilateral efforts

In the June 2001 Japan-U.S. summit meeting held at Camp David in the United States, a target was set to cooperate with each other for sustainable growth through Japan-U.S. dialogues, and multi-faceted discussions are held every year under the various meetings including vice-ministerial-level dialogues, public-private meetings, regulatory reforms, and competition policy initiatives.

In October 2004, the Japanese and U.S. governments exchanged written requests on regulatory reforms and competition policy in fields including telecommunications, with regard to Japan-U.S. regulatory reform and competition policy initiatives.

Furthermore, the Japan-EU action plan, which sets forth concrete fields and content for ten years of cooperation starting in 2001, was adopted in the Japan-EU summit meeting held in Brussels (Belgium) in December 1999. In June 2004, the “Joint Statement on Cooperation on Information and Communication Technology” was issued in the joint press statement of the 13th Japan-EU summit meeting.

In addition, in January 2005, Taro Asao, Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications, met with the Indian Minister for Communications and Information Technology when he visited Japan, and adopted and signed a joint statement on the future promotion of bilateral cooperation in the ICT field including promotion of the Asia Broadband Program.

(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 Third China-Japan-Korea ICT Ministerial Meeting was held in Sapporo, Japan in July 2004. From the viewpoint of further promoting cooperation among Japan, China, and the Republic of Korea in the information and communications field, the “arrangement for cooperation” that had been agreed to in 2003 was revised, and “cooperation on RFID tags/sensor networks” and other matters were included as new cooperative items.

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

The second phase of WSIS is scheduled to be held in Tunis, Tunisia in November 2005. The agenda includes consideration of a concrete method and a mechanism of implementation of the Plan of Action adopted at the first phase of WSIS held in Geneva (Switzerland) in December 2003, the basic principles of Internet Governance, and the financing mechanism for bridging the digital divide.

The Japanese government is planning to contribute as much as possible to the second phase of WSIS, in cooperation with the ITU and the wide-ranging international organizations.

Meanwhile, the Japanese government has been actively contributing by, for example, holding a WSIS thematic meeting on a ubiquitous network society in Japan in May 2005, and drawing up the proposal on foreseeable problems toward the realization of a ubiquitous network society and specific measures to overcome such challenges.

2 Promoting international cooperation

Information and communications are attracting high

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.

The MIC supports human resource development in the ICT field, assists with the formulation of ICT policies and systems through policy dialogue with information and communication ministries in developing countries, assists with development of information and communications infrastructure through implementation of joint international experiments and so on, and supports international and regional organizations that promote global cooperation for eliminating the international digital divide. At the same time, it contributes to the sustainable 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 World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly 2004 (WTSA-2004) was held in October

2004, and an agreement was reached on the standardization themes and frameworks for the next study period (2005 to 2008), including promotion of standardization activities concerning next-generation networks, reinforcement of efforts related to home networks and security, and strengthening of efforts in the Internet field, such as measures against spam (unsolicited e-mail). In addition, chairs and vice-chairs of the study groups (SGs), which conduct the concrete standardization activities, were appointed. From Japan, all candidates—two chairs and eight vice-chairs—were appointed.

In June 2003, the ITU Radiocommunication Assembly (RA-03) for 2003 was held in Geneva, Switzerland. In this meeting, the organization of ITU-R such as the structure of SGs was decided, SG chairs and vice-chairs were appointed, the working methods were reviewed, draft recommendations were approved, and proposed research themes for the next study period were approved.

Revision of a working method usually requires a two-phase procedure involving adoption and approval until a draft recommendation is approved. However, the “procedure for simultaneous adoption and approval,” which is a method to shorten the procedure to a single phase (simultaneous) procedure for speeding up, was introduced. As a result, the shortest period from formulation of a draft recommendation until it is adopted and approved will be shortened from the current seven months to three months.

Section 10

Development of Postal Administration

1 Efforts of Japan Post, etc.

(1) Outline of Japan Post

The government released the “Basic Policy on the Privatization of the Postal Services” in September 2004. The basic policy indicated that Japan Post will be privatized in 2007, and its privatization will be finally completed after a transitional period based on the five basic principles in advancing privatization of the postal services (revitalization, consistency, convenience, resource utilization, and consideration) in order to achieve the following interests of the people: (i) the potential of the four functions of postal services (over-the-counter services, postal services, postal savings and postal life insurance) will be fully demonstrated, high-quality and diverse services will become available at low prices through freer business management in the market, and maximum convenience will be achieved; and (ii) funds

that had been flowing into the public sector will flow into the private sector, and it will be possible to make use of people’s savings for revitalizing the economy.

The government submitted the necessary bills to the 162nd session of the Diet in April 2005 based on this basic policy.

(2) Entry into the correspondence delivery business

In conjunction with the launch of Japan Post in April 2003, the “Law Concerning Correspondence Delivery Provided by Private-Sector Operators” (Correspondence Delivery Law) went into effect, permitting the entry of private operators into the correspondence delivery business, which previously was monopolized by the state.

There are two types of correspondence delivery business: the general correspondence delivery business for “complete participation nationwide” and the special cor-