

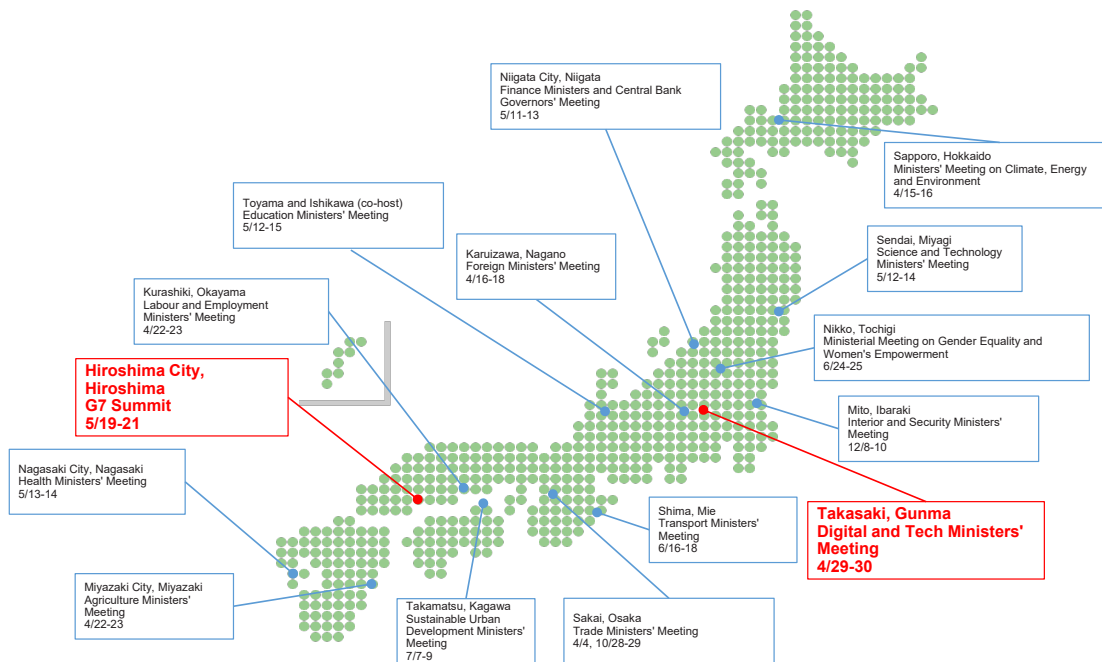
Policy Focus G7 Digital and Tech Ministers' Meeting in Takasaki, Gunma

1. Overview of G7 Digital and Tech Ministers' Meeting in Takasaki, Gunma

On April 29 and 30, 2023, MIC, the Digital Agency, and METI held the “G7 Digital and Tech Ministers' Meeting in Takasaki, Gunma.” The meeting was one of the ministerial meetings related to the G7 Hiroshima

Summit, which was held from May 19 to 21 of the same year. Invited countries and relevant international organizations participated in the meeting, in addition to the G7 members.

Figure 1 G7 Summit and related ministerial meetings



2. Results of G7 Digital and Tech Ministers' Meeting in Takasaki, Gunma

(1) Discussions thus far

International policy coordination is indispensable for the world as a whole to reap the benefits of digital technologies, leading to economic growth and the creation of jobs. Discussions on the digital economy have been ongoing within the framework of the G7 and G20, since the G7 ICT Ministers' Meeting in Takamatsu, Kagawa in April 2016 with Japan serving as Chair. The promotion of digital technologies has continued to be discussed as an

even more important issue in the face of significant changes in society due to the impact of COVID-19, even after the G20 Ministerial Meeting on Trade and Digital Economy in Tsukuba, Ibaraki was held in June 2019. In May 2022, the Meeting of G7 Digital Ministers was held in Germany to discuss issues the G7 should work together on in order for digital technologies to lead to further socio-economic development.

(2) Overview of the results of G7 Digital and Tech Ministers' Meeting in Takasaki, Gunma

The goal of this year's meeting was to demonstrate a united response as agreed up by the G7 in digital fields such as DFFT (Data Free Flow with Trust), digital infrastructures, Internet governance, and AI, while also aiming to accelerate efforts in digital fields through collaboration with the Global South. Held under the co-chairs of Takeaki Matsumoto (Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications), Taro Kono (Minister for Digital Affairs), and Yasutoshi Nishimura (Minister for Economy, Trade and Industry), the aim of the meeting was to work toward achieving a strong recovery from the severe impact of the spread of COVID-19 and the Russian invasion

of Ukraine on the global economy, and in light of the crises currently unfolding such as trends among authoritarian countries and the modulation of the global economy. Participants discussed six topics: (1) promoting cross-border data distribution and free distribution of reliable data, (2) building secure and resilient digital infrastructures, (3) maintaining and promoting a free and open Internet, (4) promoting innovation and emerging technologies in the economy and society, (5) promoting responsible AI and AI governance, and (6) setting competition policy in digital markets. As a result of these discussions, the “G7 Gunma Takasaki Ministerial Digi-

tal and Tech Declaration” (including five annexes) was adopted. The main points of the ministerial declaration on each of these six topics are described below.

(1) Promoting cross-border data distribution and Data Free Flow with Trust (DFFT)

Participants established an international framework to implement DFFT (IAP), and agreed on the “G7 Vision for Operationalising DFFT and Its Priorities.”

(2) Building secure and resilient digital infrastructures

Participants formulated a vision for the future of networks in the Beyond 5G and 6G era, with elements such as high-capacity and low-latency communications, energy efficiency, multi-layered networks, openness, and interoperability, and agreed upon the “G7 Action Plan for Building a Secure and Resilient Digital Infrastructure.”¹

(3) Maintaining and promoting a free and open Internet

Participants agreed upon the “G7 Action Plan for Open, Free, Global, Interoperable, Reliable, and Secure Internet.”²

(4) Promoting economic and social innovation and emerging technologies

Participants agreed to ensure interoperability of digital infrastructures, address software vulnerabilities in the digital supply chain, and use governance methods that are friendly to innovative technologies and innovations. Participants also agreed to hold further discussions on the use of digital technologies such as the metaverse.

(5) Promoting responsible AI and AI governance

Participants recognized the importance of promoting the interoperability of AI governance in different countries and regions in order to promote a common vision of trustworthy AI based on democratic values, and agreed upon the “Action Plan for Promoting Global Interoperability of AI Governance.” Participants also agreed to hold a forum to discuss generative AI as soon as possible.³

(6) Setting competition policy in digital markets

Participants agreed to hold a Digital Competition Summit this fall to share information on common issues in designing and enforcing existing laws and new legal systems in the digital competition fields.

Figure 2 G7 Digital and Tech Ministers' Meeting in Takasaki, Gunma



¹ Participants welcomed efforts to diversify suppliers in the ICT supply chain, and continue to discuss market trends toward an open and interoperable approach. Participants agreed upon the importance of developing, implementing, and maintaining multi-layered networks consisting of terrestrial and non-terrestrial networks, undersea cables, and other elements, and agreed to deepen cooperation with fellow countries.

² Participants agreed that the G7 would promote a global and undivided Internet, oppose any intention or action toward division, and jointly counter activities such as Internet shutdowns and network restrictions by authoritarian countries. Participants also agreed that they would cooperate with various stakeholders and work together toward the success of the IGF 2023 Kyoto Conference. Participants also agreed that existing measures against disinformation should be compiled as a set of practices and published at the IGF 2023 Kyoto Conference.

³ Participants also recognized the need to gain a quick understanding of the opportunities and challenges posed by generative AI technologies and to promote safety and reliability in the development of these technologies, agreed to establish a forum at G7 to discuss the possibility of using generative AI in a responsible manner, as well as AI governance, intellectual property rights protection, transparency, and measures against disinformation that international organizations such as the OECD and GPAI have used amid the rapid growth of generative AI.

(Reference)

Discussions at the G7 Hiroshima Summit (main points of the summit communiqué)

Based on the results of the G7 Digital and Tech Ministers' Meeting in Takasaki, Gunma, the “G7 Hiroshima Summit Communiqué” issued on May 20, 2023, stressed the importance of global governance for emerging technologies such as AI and the metaverse in the digital

AI:

Relevant ministers were directed to launch the “Hiroshima AI Process” through a G7 working group in collaboration with the OECD and GPAI and in an inclusive manner, for discussions later this year on generative AI including topics such as governance of generative AI, protection of intellectual property rights, promotion of transparency, combating of disinformation, and the responsible use of technologies.

Metaverse:

The potential of immersive technologies and virtual spaces, such as the metaverse, that can provide innovative opportunities and promote sustainability in all industrial and social sectors was recognized, and relevant ministers were directed to consider joint approaches in this area, including interoperability, portability, and standards, with the support of OECD.

field, support for efforts to realize DFFT, as well as the need to build secure and resilient digital infrastructures and address digital disparities. The main points of the summit communiqué are summarized below.

DFFT efforts:

The establishment of the Institutional Arrangement for Partnership (IAP) was approved to realize DFFT.

Secure and resilient digital infrastructures and the digital divide:

A commitment to deepening cooperation with the G7 and fellow countries to support and strengthen network resilience by means such as extending secure undersea cable routes was confirmed. Views on aspects and opportunities related to open configuration and security were also exchanged, in light of the early introduction of Open RAN with Japan serving as G7 Chair. The need to close the digital divide was recognized, and the G7 commitment to support other countries to expand digital access was reaffirmed under the principles of equity, universality, and affordability.