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COMMUNICATIONS NEWS

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Digital Opportunity Forum (Asian Diversity and the Role of Japan) Held

The "Digital Opportunity Forum" was held for two days on November 5 and 6, 2001, in Tokyo (Keidanren Kaikan), sponsored by the DOT Force Japan Consultation Committee (Secretariat: Center for Global Communications [GLOCOM], International University of Japan), and supported by MPHPT, etc.



resentation titled "Strategy for Building 'Electronic Government' in Japan" on Japan's current measures and a strategy for creating electronic governments. After

The forum was held for the purposes of:

- i) Reporting the activities of the G8 DOT Force, which was founded under the auspices of the Okinawa Charter on the Global Information Society, with the aim at encouraging active engagement of governments, industries and non-profit organizations (NPOs) in the digital divide problem; and
- ii) Discussing what Japan can do to support and contribute to developing countries in the IT field.

At the forum, discussions were made among speakers from Japanese and developing countries' governments, industries and NPOs.

From MPHPT, Mr. Kaoru KANAZAWA, Vice-Minister for Policy Coordination (International Affairs and Telecommunications Bureau), gave an introductory remark at the forum (See the next page), and Mr. Jun OKAYAMA, Director, Government Information Systems Planning Division, participated as a guest speaker.

In the introductory remark, Vice-Minister KANAZAWA referred to a danger that existing economic and social inequalities will worsen in countries that are not involved in the IT revolution and

not participating in an information society, and that this will create a gap between "information haves" and "information have-nots," the so-called "digital divide." He continued, "Therefore, we must act quickly to bridge our own digital divide and create conditions under which everyone can participate in and benefit from IT, the so-called 'society of digital opportunity.'" "Regarding our efforts to bridge the international digital divide, it is important to build partnerships and cooperation among governments, the private sector and non-profit organizations (NPOs). Also, that it is imperative that developing countries themselves demonstrate full ownership and tackle the digital divide," he emphasized. In addition, for developing countries to be able to close the digital divide, he focused on the necessity for priority to be given to the development of communications infrastructure, and that policy steps must be taken to ensure that competition is encouraged in the communications sector and a regulatory framework established to reflect the cultural diversities of each nation.

Director OKAYAMA, at the Session "e-Government Strategies and Prospects in Electronic Administration," made a pre-

the presentation, he discussed with ex-

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International Policy Division,
International Affairs Department,
Ministry of Public Management, Home
Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications
1-2, Kasumigaseki 2-chome,
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8926, Japan

- We welcome your comments by:
feedback-newsletter@soumu.go.jp
Fax: +81-3-5253-5924
Tel.: +81-3-5253-5920
- MPHPT information is available at:
<http://www.joho.soumu.go.jp/eng/>

perts, including Mr. J. B. Kristiadi, Deputy Minister for State Administrative Reform/Secretary of the Indonesian Telematics Coordinating Taskforce, on

the future of electronic governments.

At the session, opinions were exchanged on the need for reflecting the demands of citizens, users of e-govern-

ments, in realizing electronic governments, and on the significance of digitalization of national and local governments.

Introductory Remark

by Kaoru KANAZAWA, the Vice-Minister for Policy Coordination (International Affairs and Telecommunications Bureau) in the Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications

Good afternoon. First, may I thank you for your kind introduction.

I very much appreciate being invited to the Digital Opportunity Forum, and as a representative of our ministry, I would like to make a few introductory remarks.

Last year at the Kyushu-Okinawa Summit Meeting, the Okinawa Charter on the Global Information Society stated that information and communications technology “is one of the most potent forces in shaping the twenty-first century.” Not only is it becoming a vital engine of growth for the world economy, as a tool to help individuals and societies use their knowledge and ideas, but it is also expected to be a key element in enabling people to lead better lives. Indeed, it will be instrumental in bringing about an enormous transformation of society and economy.

When used wisely, IT also has the potential to offer developing nations opportunities to achieve broader development goals such as reduction of poverty and promotion of health care and education. But there is a danger that existing economic and social inequalities in countries that are not involved in the IT revolution and not participating in the information society, will worsen, and that this will create a gap between “Information haves” and “Information have-nots,” the so-called “digital divide.”

Of course, bridging this gap is not only an international issue but a domestic issue as well. We must act quickly to eliminate our own digital divide and create conditions in which everyone can participate in and benefit from IT, the so-called “society of digital opportunity.”

In Japan, we recognize that we have responsibility to share our expertise on IT with developing nations. Also the most appropriate way to promote IT is by worldwide cooperation. Therefore, in July of last year, the Government of Japan presented a comprehensive cooperation package for addressing the issue of the international digital divide over the next five years.

At our ministry, we are moving forward based on the concept of “promoting international harmonization and contribution,” which is prescribed in our IT Basic Law and the e-Japan Priority Policy Program. We are involved with the G8 Digital Divide Task Force and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), and are promoting the creation of policies and institutions, the development of human resources, and the transfer of technology for IT through a broad international coalition and bilateral cooperation.

I would like to take this opportunity to outline the latest IT policies in Japan. In our country, based on strategies such as the e-Japan Priority Policy Program, we aim to become the most advanced IT nation in the world within the next five years and are promoting a comprehensive range of IT policies.

In October, our Minister, Toranosuke Katayama, announced the “National Broadband Initiative” and the “Program for Promotion of Central and Local e-Government.” These are the visions of the future being promoted by our ministry, which has main responsibility for IT policies. The e-Japan Priority Policy Program noted that to achieve the goal of becoming the world’s most advanced IT nation, two elements are especially important:

First, nationwide access to high-speed and ultrahigh-speed Internet networks,

Second, bringing about central and local e-Government by fiscal year 2003 (“two thousand and three”).

These initiatives define the target and schedule for developing the two key elements. We believe that setting up this initiative and program will promote the IT revolution. We intend to create an environment that is conducive to the transformation of our social and economic structure.

As for our efforts to bridge the international digital divide, it is important to build partnerships and cooperation among governments, the private sector and non-profit organizations (NPOs). In addition, it is imperative that developing countries themselves demonstrate full ownership and tackle the digital divide. For developing countries to be able to reduce the digital divide, it is necessary for priority to be given to the development of communication infrastructure. Also, policy steps must be taken to ensure that competition is encouraged in the communications sector and a regulatory framework established to reflect the cultural diversities of each nation.

This forum will enable everyone from governments, the private sector and NPOs in developing countries and Japan to meet and exchange views on how to bridge the international digital divide. It is also an excellent opportunity to build partnerships and mutual understanding.

Finally, I would like to conclude by noting that this forum offers a valuable opportunity for making more people aware of the necessity and importance of bridging the digital divide. I hope that it will serve as an impetus for the activities of the DOT Force when they are actually implemented.

Thank you.

“Study Group on New Business Methods and Grand Design of the Competitive Environment for the New Information and Communications Era” Held

The “Study Group on New Business Methods and Grand Design of the Competitive Environment for the New Information and Communications Era” (Chair: Mr. Junichi HAMADA, Dean, Interfaculty Initiative in Information Studies, and Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Information Studies, University of Tokyo) held by MPHPT has met since August 2001. The purpose of the study group is to deliberate on the competitive environment for the telecommunications business field in response to new business methods for an information and communications era.

Major themes the study group plans to cover are as follows:

1. Course of deliberation

The study group convened its first

meeting on August 10, 2001, and has met seven times to date. Of these meetings, the second through fifth meetings were devoted to presentations from businesses and other relevant associations (18 corporations and associations) in relation to prospective business methods for the coming deployment of broadband communications. These presentations have then served as a basis for discussions by the members of the study group and relevant businesses.

The major themes compiled this time have been taken from deliberations at meetings to date, and made public at this time in order to ensure transparency of further deliberations.

2. Major themes (for details, see the Japanese language website:

<http://www.soumu.go.jp/s-news/index.html>)

- i) The basic perspective on the policy of fair competition in the future
- ii) Vertically integrated business methods and a competitive environment
- iii)-1 The desirable environment for fair competition in the network layer
- iii)-2 The desirable environment for fair competition in the platform layer, etc.
- iii)-3 The desirable environment for fair competition in the terminal layer
- iv) New regulatory frameworks for the telecommunications business

Public Comments Invited on Issues Concerning NHK’s Subsidiaries, Etc.

MPHPT is being deliberating on the desirable status of Japan Broadcasting Corp. (or Nippon Hoso Kyokai: NHK), including i) the desirable status of NHK’s subsidiaries, etc. and ii) NHK’s services including content distribution over the Internet. Upon compilation of “identified issues on the status of NHK,” MPHPT invited public comments from the Japanese nationals, etc. from October 18 through November 8, 2001, via mail, fax or e-mail.

MPT has been hosting the “Study

Group on Broadcasting Policy” since May 2000. The mission of the meeting is to study overall broadcasting policies including conceptual review of broadcasting as well as roles of commercial and public broadcasting, based on a changing environment surrounding broadcasting such as the progress of digitalization for all broadcasting media and the advancement of the Internet.

At the study group, the following items are deliberated:

1. Conceptual review of broadcasting

(convergence of communications and broadcasting)

2. Roles of public broadcasting (NHK’s Subsidiaries, etc., the status of services of NHK including content distribution using the Internet, etc.)
3. Roles of commercial broadcasting (principles limiting multiple ownership of mass media, etc.)

Regarding these issues, the study group held public hearings for relevant industries, etc.

The First Meeting of the “Study Group on Information Security Business and Collaboration between Public and Private Sectors” Held

MPHPT hold the first meeting of the “Study Group on Information Security Business and Collaboration between Public and Private Sectors” on October 24, 2001, in order to contribute to advancement of information security in a networked society by looking to the future. This study group will last until May 2002.

Themes to be deliberated by the study group include:

- i) Development trends in the information security business market;
- ii) Roles of the information security business in enhancing information security measures; and
- iii) Specifying of domains the information security business cannot cover on a commercial business basis.

In general, it is considered that most of systems and functions necessary for ensuring information security in Japan could be provided through business activities of the private sector. However, all information security systems and functions are not covered by the private sector. Thus, domains not covered by private businesses are to be complemented by governmental support mea-

asures or private sector initiatives on a voluntary basis, resulting in invulnerable information security.

Because the information security business is still in its infancy, its future course of development and roles to be played in providing information security measures for the networked society as a whole are not foreseeable. It is not clear what domains cannot be covered by the private information security industry and how to cover those domains through what measures, furthermore, to date, efforts to cope with those issues are not necessarily sufficient.

In addition to themes listed above, with the purpose of presenting useful reference materials to promote information security policies, this study group will carry out research and study on measures to cover domains, such concrete frameworks as establishment of incident response teams (IRTs), which are necessary in implementing secure information systems, however, not covered by the information security industry alone.

[Outline of research and study themes]

1. Current status and future trends of information security industry in Ja-

pan

- Trends in and the structure of the information security market
 - Future direction of the information security industry and its market size
 - Promotion measures for the information security industry
 - Points to be considered upon use of information security business and assessment/evaluation thereof
2. Surveillance on overseas cases concerning incident response teams (IRTs), computer emergency response teams (CERTs) and information sharing and analysis centers (ISACs)
 3. Domains the information security business cannot cover on a commercial business basis and measures to cover thereof (including such concrete frameworks as establishment of IRTs)
 - Measures for ensuring information security at national and local governments
 - Measures for ensuring information security in the private sector (including the telecommunications and broadcasting industries)

Toward the Introduction of a Wireless Access System to High-Speed Internet

Inquiry into “Technical Conditions for a 5GHz Wireless Access System”

MPHPT inquired of the Telecommunications Council (Chair: Mr. Yoshihisa AKIYAMA, Chairman of Kansai Electric Power Co., Inc.) concerning “technical conditions for a 5GHz wireless access system.”

With the expansion in user demand for the high-speed Internet, the aim of the inquiry is to make possible a simple, low cost wireless access system.

With the widespread use of the Internet in a wide variety of social activities and demands for broadband access networks, there has been a huge increase in user needs for wireless access systems. Against this background, a wireless access system has been introduced that uses the 2.4GHz band, quasi-millimeter wave and millimeter wave bands (22/26/38GHz).

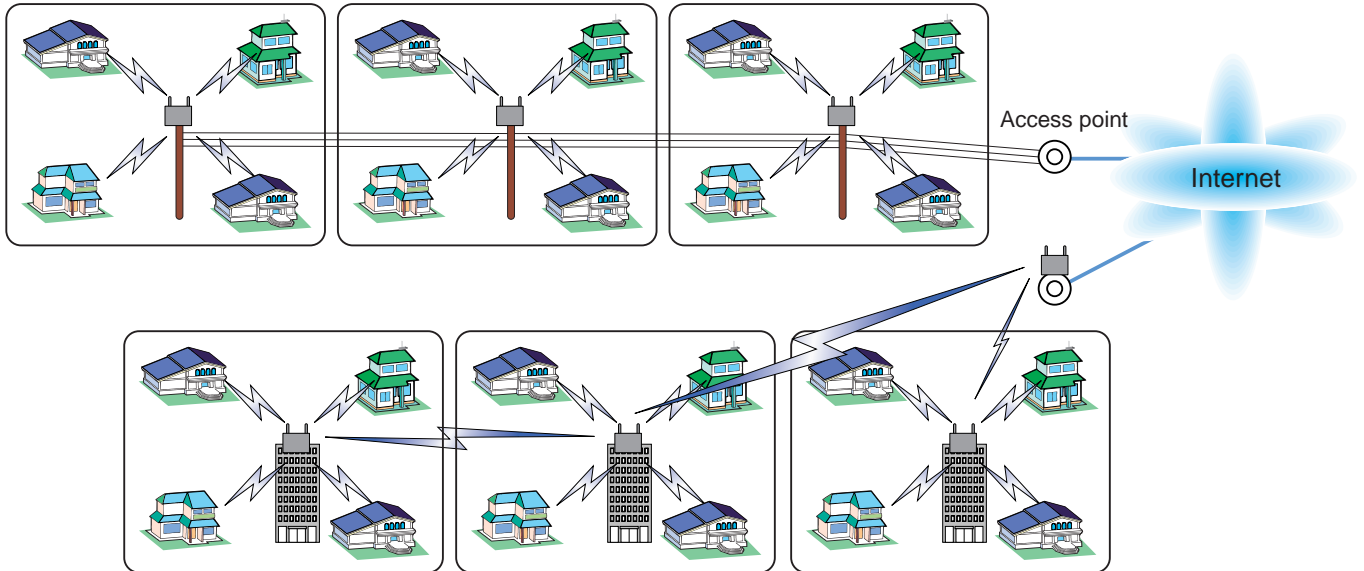
Further, as use of the Internet increases, a system in which the Internet can be accessed both at a high speed and in a simpler, low-cost way is desired. In addition to the existing 5.2 GHz-band wireless LAN system for indoor use, in March 2000, an inquiry was made of the Telecommunications Technology Council concerning the possibility of using the 5.3GHz system in response to de-

mands for outdoor use. Subsequently, the final report from the council concluded that frequency sharing with earth exploration satellite systems or meteorological radar would be difficult (October 2000).

However, needs for an outdoor-use 5GHz wireless access system remain as strong as ever. In addition to studying whether a section of the 5GHz band (4900-5000MHz) can be used, technical conditions necessary to realize a wire-

less access system utilizing said frequency band and conditions for sharing said frequency band among existing systems were inquired of the Telecommunications Council and a report is scheduled to be compiled by March 2002.

5GHz-band Wireless Access System *



* Expected transmission rates of several Mbps per user

Special Training Course “Promotion of Local Informatization” Held

Since FY2000, for the purpose of supporting local governments’ international cooperation measures in the IT field and of gaining mutual understanding between Japanese local governments and foreign counterparts, MPHPT has been holding the Training Course “Promotion of Local Informatization.”

In FY2001, the second Training Course was held from October 14 through 24, 2001 with participation of 25 local government officials from nine mostly Asian countries.

The training comprised lectures on MPHPT’s policy measures to promote local informatization, technical visits to IT-related facilities and practical IT training using PCs. It is expected that the trainees, after returning home, will play a leading role in promoting IT in the local governments they work for.



Special Training Course “Introduction of IT into Local Governments”