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COMMUNICATIONS NEWS

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"PTC Tokyo Bay Mid-Year Seminar 2003" Held

From May 27 through 28, 2003, at Hilton Tokyo Bay, Urayasu City, Chiba Prefecture, the "PTC Tokyo Bay Mid-Year Seminar 2003" was held by the Pacific Telecommunications Council (PTC) and the Pacific Telecommunications Council Japan Committee (PTCJ).

At this Seminar, some 150 experts participating from the industrial, academic and government sectors gave speeches and carried out panel discussions, under the theme of "New Frontier of Information Communications -- Challenge from Asia," with the aim to discuss the outlook for new development in the Asian region that has the potential, with an eye on revitalization of the currently stagnant ICT industry.

Mr. KATO Norifumi, Senior Vice-Minister for Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications, at the Seminar gave a keynote speech entitled the "Realization of ICT Society from Asia," explaining efforts of MPHPT to develop ICT in Asia, such as preparation of a broadband environment for making Asia the world's ICT hub taking into consideration the current status

of ICT in Asia.

In this keynote speech, the Senior Vice-Minister emphasized significance of contributing to bridging of the digital divide and expansion of information distribution, and explained the "Asia Broadband Program" (http://www.soumu.go.jp/joho_tsusin/eng/Resources/asia_broadband.pdf), an Action Plan adopted by the Japanese government in March 2003, as one of the MPHPT efforts for supporting the addressing of challenges in the Asian ICT field.

In this Program, setting 2010 as the target year, a common goal in Asia is to invigorate information flows within the region to make Asia as a whole a global information hub, through the realization of seven goals, including i) to enable all people in Asia to gain access to broad-

band platforms, ii) to construct international intra-regional broadband networks with sufficient bandwidths for linking directly countries/economies in Asia. This Program describes measures to be taken for realizing those Goals, containing "Measures for preparing network infrastructures" that specify "support for preparation of network infrastructure in developing countries/economies" and "network infrastructure technology development" through ODA, and "Relevant measures for introducing and diffusing broadband platforms" that specify

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Mr. KATO Norifumi,
Senior Vice-Minister for
Public Management,
Home Affairs, Posts and
Telecommunications, at
the Seminar gives a
keynote speech.

"assurance of network security," "promotion of applications," "support for digital archives," etc. Also this Program states that henceforth these measures, as strategic pillars for making Asia a global information hub, shall be implemented with priority by FY2005.

Vice Minister KATO referred to the strengthening of cooperation with China, the Republic of Korea and ASEAN member states, and the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), a UN event to be held in Geneva in December 2003. He stressed that it is vital

that not only the Japanese government but also each government, both Japanese and foreign private enterprises, NGOs and international organizations shall collaborate for further development of Asia through ICT.

"ITU Council 2003" Held

The "ITU Council 2003" was convened from May 5 through 16, 2003, in Geneva, Switzerland. At this Council, about 300 people from 46 Members of the Council and Observer Members, including the eight-person Japanese delegation headed by Mr. ISHIDA Naohiro, Director-General, International Affairs Department, MPHPT.

Although this year is the year to approve the draft biennial budget (2004 – 2005) for ITU, due to the delay in submission of the draft biennial budget from the Secretariat to Members of the Council, the Council reached a conclusion that it is difficult to approve during this session of the Council and the Council will convene the Extraordinary Session of the Council from October 27 through 29, 2003. At the Council meeting, debates were made on the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), etc.

I. Outline of the Council meetings

1. Structure of meetings

The Council this year consisted of the Plenary Meeting, the Standing Committee on Finance and the Standing Committee on Staff Matters. In the earlier part of the agenda debates were made centering on items of the Standing Committee on Finance and the Standing Committee on Staff Matters, in the latter half the Plenary Meeting.

2. Major agenda items

The draft biennial budget, a main item of the Council agenda, based upon the financial plan adopted by the Plenipotentiary Conference in Marrakesh in autumn 2002, was developed by the Secretariat. The draft biennial budget for 2004 - 2005 took several months to complete, based on an equilibrium basis of revenues and expenditures in consideration of reduced revenues caused due to the declining number of contribution Units from some Member States including European countries and increasing



expenditures caused by growing activities of development projects, etc. Western countries, however, denied approving the draft budget at this session of the Council because of the insufficient time to deliberate the draft budget due to the delay of its submission. They proposed to convene the extraordinary session of the Council in autumn 2003, instead. In response to this proposal, APT Member States including Japan submitted a compromise proposal to temporarily approve the draft budget with conditions for approving the budget as early as possible, in consideration of costs for convening the extraordinary session and unfavorable effects on the preparatory process of WSIS. Because of conflicts between the two parties, voting was carried out and, as a result of this vote, it was decided that the extraordinary session of the Council from October 27 through 29, 2003, will be convened and the draft budget will be deliberated anew.

The Group of Specialists (GoS), which has been considering the review of the financial management of ITU, estab-

lished pursuant to a decision of the Plenipotentiary Conference in Marrakesh, submitted twenty-one recommendations to the Council. Nine near-term recommendations out of those recommendations, excluding those concerning languages, were approved. It was agreed to establish the Council Oversight Group (COG) for overseeing execution of recommendations so as to verify the execution. COG is to be comprised of Brazil, Bulgaria, Iran, Kenya, the Republic of Korea, Portugal, Russia, Senegal, Switzerland and the U.S.

Deliberations were made on the establishment of Council Working Groups based upon various decisions adopted at the Plenipotentiary Conference in Marrakesh. It was decided that the Chair of WG concerning the review of International Telecommunications Regulations (ITRs), a pending issue, is to be assumed by Egypt.

Many Members of the Council, including Switzerland and Tunisia that are to host WSIS in December 2003 and 2005 respectively, called for active par-

ticipations of all stakeholders, including ITU, Member States, Sector Members, other international organizations, etc., for the success of WSIS. Debates were also made on TELECOM, the satellite network filing cost recovery methodology, Internet domain names, etc.

II. Comments

The Council this year, in response to results of the Plenipotentiary Conference in Marrakesh in autumn 2002, had many agenda items to be discussed. In particular, MPHPT came to recognize the

severe financial situation of ITU, because there are Member States that reduced the number of contribution Units at the Plenipotentiary Conference in Marrakesh.

In response to the Western countries' proposal to postpone debates on the draft budget and to convene the extraordinary session of the Council, APT Member States including Japan jointly submitted a proposal to temporarily approve the draft budget, in consideration of costs for convening the extraordinary session and unfavorable effects on the preparatory

process of WSIS. Regardless of the result of the vote, it was a positive situation that APT Member States in unison worked for the coordinated collaboration in the voting process. The Japanese government will continue contributing to a wide range of ITU activities, such as ITU TELECOM WORLD 2003 in October 2003, the extraordinary session of the Council and WSIS in December 2003.

"National Conference for Promotion of Terrestrial Digital Broadcasting" Established

[Purpose of the Conference]

On May 23, 2003, the "National Conference for Promotion of Terrestrial Digital Broadcasting" was established by all stakeholders involved in terrestrial digital broadcasting, aimed at the active promotion of terrestrial digital broadcasting. The Conference is consisting of executives from almost all relevant industries, industrial associations and ministries, etc. At the inaugural meeting, a

"Declaration for Promotion of Terrestrial Digital Broadcasting" was adopted.

[Structure of the Conference]

Chair: Mr. YAMAGUCHI Nobuo, Chairman, the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry

[Major activities]

1. Acceleration of efforts to promote digitalization of terrestrial broadcast-

- ing
- 2. Realization of collaboration concerning practical efforts to implement joint public awareness campaigns, etc.
- 3. Follow-up to the "Action Plan for the Promotion of Digital Broadcasting"

"Declaration for Promotion of Terrestrial Digital Broadcasting"

-- Terrestrial TV will evolve with Digitalization --

The information environment in which everyone can easily obtain necessary information is indispensable for cultural way of life, same as the rich natural environment and social infrastructures in which people can feel safe. Terrestrial TV broadcasting is a core element comprising information environment has been bringing about rich living conditions, which support foundations of citizens' lives.

It is a vital issue that terrestrial TV broadcasting shall evolve with digitalization so as to continue to maintain a useful information environment for daily lives toward the future, in response to advanced and diversified needs of Japanese nationals.

This Conference at the inaugural meet-

Members:	
Terrestrial TV broadcasters (NHK, all commercial terrestrial TV broadcasters):	128
BS TV broadcasters:	7
Other organizations, etc. relating to broadcasting:	25
Manufacturers:	16
Retailers (Nippon Electric Big-Stores Association, Electrical Products Association of Japan, etc.):	7
Newspapers (5 newspapers with a nationwide circulation and 5 local papers):	10
Advertising agencies and magazines (DENTSU, Inc., HAKUHODO Inc., etc.):	10
Communications industry associations and consumer groups:	5
Economic organizations (Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Japan Business Federation, Japan Association of Corporate Executives, etc., including regional economic organizations):	162
Local governments (prefectural governors, etc.):	52
Ministries and agencies (MPHPT and observers from NPA, METI, etc.):	7
Total: (As of May 23, 2003)	429

ing hereto declares that we will:

make efforts to address the digitalization of terrestrial broadcasting, while the government and relevant industries pay due respect to the standpoint of users;

make successful the "Action Plan for the Promotion of Digital Broadcasting";

promote development of terrestrial digital broadcasting in unison with concerted efforts of all relevant parties, to promote the digitalization of terrestrial broadcasting under the following Action Policies

Action Policies

- All relevant parties shall promote digitalization of terrestrial TV broadcast-

ing considering its further social functions, with unbundling of content and broadcasting facilities, and will make efforts to realize advanced services with interaction between broadcasting.

- Offerings of attractive broadcast content and service deployment special to digital broadcasting shall be actively implemented; in addition, supply and diffusion of devices for receiving digital broadcasting shall be facilitated.
- All relevant parties shall make concerted efforts to conduct publicity activities for terrestrial digital TV broadcasting.
- Toward termination of analog TV

broadcasting in CY2011, relevant parties shall make active efforts to i) steadily implement measures for change of analog frequencies, ii) expand area coverage of digital TV broadcasting services, and iii) reduce poor reception areas.

- Collaborative linkage shall be established between terrestrial digital TV broadcasting and e-government/e-local governments.
- In order to promote terrestrial digital TV broadcasting, the government shall take support measures such as budget allotment, etc.

May 23, 2003

National Conference for Promotion of Terrestrial Digital Broadcasting

Correction

In Vol. 13 No. 24 of MPHPT News, there were two typos (http://www.soumu.go.jp/joho_tsusin/eng/Releases/NewsLetter/Vol13/Vol13_24/Vol13_24.pdf).

[Highlights of the survey results]

"• The second largest number of Internet users

The number of Internet users was 694.2 million, an increase of 134.9 million over the previous year. This number is the second largest following the U.S.

- The population coverage rate surpassed the 50% line for the first time.

The population coverage rate was 54.5%, growing by 10.5 percentage points over the previous year.

- The population coverage rate rose from the 16th rank in 2000 to the 10th."

shall be read as

"• The second largest number of Internet users

The number of Internet users was 69.42 million, an increase of 13.49 million over the previous year. This number is the second largest following the U.S.

- The population coverage rate surpassed the 50% line for the first time.

The population coverage rate was 54.5%, growing by 10.5 percentage points over the previous year

- The population coverage rate rose from the 16th rank in 2000 to the 10th."

We apology for the inconvenience that may have been caused by these errors.

Editorial staff of MPHPT News