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Results of the Asia-Pacific Broadband Summit

-- Toward accelerated deployment of broadband platforms and realization of a ubiquitous network society --

On July 1 and 2, 2004, the "Asia-Pacific Broadband Summit (ABS)" was held in Bangkok, Thailand, in commemorating the silver jubilee of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT). Ministers, etc. in charge of telecommunications from 32 countries, including Rep. ASO Taro, Minister for Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications of Japan, attended the ABS.

[Outline of the Summit]

1. At the ABS, in order to widely spread broadband in the Asia-Pacific region, an agenda consisting of the five pillars, including awareness about the significance of broadband, human resources development and human capacity building, and a concrete action plan for collaboration among APT countries were adopted.

2. Minister ASO in his statement presented a variety of measures for realizing the agenda to be taken by Japan in accordance with the "Asia Broadband Program," introduced the "u-Japan Initiative," and highlighted the importance of realizing a ubiquitous network society.

3. In addition, Minister ASO held meetings separately with Pol. Lt. Col. Thaksin Shinawatra, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand; Dr. Surapong Suebwonglee, Minister of Information and Communication Technology, Thailand; Union Minister of Communications and Information Technology, Mr. Dayanidhi Maran, India; and others, exchanging opinions for strengthening future collaborative ties in the ICT field including deployment of broadband platforms.

At those meetings, Minister ASO was requested to attend the ASEAN + 3 Ministerial Meeting (TELMIN) to be held in Bangkok in August 2004, and the ministers reached an agreement that Japan would actively participate in and col-

Minister ASO gives an opening address at APT Ministerial Conference on Broadband & ICT Development.

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laborate regarding the ASEAN + 3 TELMIN.

Note: Asia Pacific Telecommunity is a regional international organization in the Asia-Pacific region specializing in telecommunications.

Address by Minister ASO at APT Ministerial Conference on Broadband & ICT Development

[1. Preamble]

Your Excellencies, Honorable Government Representatives, Distinguished Participants and Guests:

It is my great honor, today, to have the opportunity to address the APT Ministerial Conference on Broadband & ICT Development. It is always a pleasure to visit this city. On behalf of the Government of Japan, I'd like to express my gratitude for the warm hospitality extended by Your Excellency Surapong SUEBWONGLEE and government officials of Thailand, as well as the citizens of Bangkok. I would also like to pay my deepest respects and gratitude to the people who have worked effortlessly to convene this APT Ministerial Conference, including Mr. Amarendra Narayan, the Executive Director of the APT.

[2. Development of ICT in Asia-Pacific region during the 25 years since the beginning of the APT]

As you are well aware during the 25 years since the beginning of APT, the economy of the Asia-Pacific region has undergone significant socioeconomic development, especially in the essential manufacturing industry. Today, the GDP of this region exceeds eight trillion dollars making it the center of the world's largest production bases. Additionally, the information and communications technology (ICT) has been developing at a dramatic pace and as such ICT is now an indispensable tool in our daily living. I believe that the ICT revolution matches the industrial revolution of the 18th century. I also believe that riding on the wave of this ICT revolution, is the key for the further development of economic activities and just as the role of ICT for the development of social economy is, therefore, significant.

[3. Diffusion and promotion of broadband environment]

In January of 2001, Japan developed its national ICT strategy called "e-Japan Strategy." The goal of the Strategy is "Japan shall become the world's most advanced ICT nation by 2005" and therefore, Japan has been actively building both network infrastructures and implementing competition policies. As a result of such efforts we have already realized and almost achieved our goal for 2005: that is, a world's highest-speed and lowest-priced broadband platforms for users. Furthermore, the "e-Japan strategy II" was developed in July 2003 in order to focus on the promotion of actual use of broadband infrastructures. The goal of "e-Japan Strategy II" is "for Japan to become the world's most advanced ICT nation by 2005, and continue to be the world's most advanced ICT nation beyond 2006." To this end, both the public and private sectors in tandem have been working to attain the goal.

[4. Toward realization of a ubiquitous network society]

In addition, I have recently announced an initiative entitled "u-Japan." ("u" is an abbreviation of the word "Ubiquitous".) Under this initiative, new policy measures are included for construction of an invigorated Japan by 2010, which will enable active participation in our society by all people, from children to the elderly and also for people with disabilities. In the age where senior citizens are increasing and the number of children decreasing, the initiative aims to utilize ICT to make an environment where people who require nursing care can lead the same vigorous lives as those without. I expect that a new information society will be created through the realization of the ubiquitous network society, in which socioeconomic activities are supported by "networks available for anyone at anytime, anywhere." I believe that people in such a society will enjoy "sustainable economic growth" and a "secure and safe society." To this end, in collaborating with countries in the Asia-Pacific region, the Government of Japan will make efforts to realize the ubiquitous network society.

[5. Development of the "Asia Broadband Program"]

Currently, although the trade volume between Asia, North America, and Europe is almost balanced, the volume of information transmission between Asia and North America, Asia and Europe, are smaller than that between North-America and Europe. The Asia-Pacific region, with its huge population and cultural diversity, shows immeasurable potential for growth. Accordingly, it is necessary for us to transmit information from the Asia-Pacific region ourselves. This will enable us to turn ourselves into a world information hub as well as the industrial hub in this 21st century. To this end, in March 2003, MPHPT developed an action plan to realize the "Asia Broadband Program" upholding goals for preparing a broadband environment in the Asia-Pacific region. MPHPT has already begun specific activities in this region, including the "North-South Submarine Fiber-Optic Cable Link Project" in Vietnam which connects 2,000 km from north to south by fiber-optic cable. In addition to the network infrastructure, Japan has been making efforts to promote broadband applications and human resources development. I am confident that the promotion of this Program will contribute, not only to the development of the Asia-Pacific region, but also to the future development of other regions, as a model for international harmonization in the ICT field.

[6. Contribution of Japan through APT]

The Government of Japan holds the view that the role of APT is significant in making the Asia-Pacific region an information hub. Japan will further continue to contribute to invigorating APT activities. Specifically, I would like to propose three support measures; namely, first, is an increase in human capacity building; second, support for international joint research projects; and, third, support for pilot projects including telecenters in rural areas. These support measures will be accorded higher priorities in implementation. With regard to training courses, I am aware of the importance of Human Resources Development (HRD). In addition to the exist-

ing technical courses, MPHPT will employ new fields such as ICT policies, broadband, security and e-Government. Furthermore, MPHPT will, not only receive trainees into Japan, but also will actively introduce distance learning, or e-education, and hold seminars in countries in the Asia-Pacific region, to enable as many people as possible to participate in the training courses. In implementing ICT researcher and engineer exchange programs for fostering advanced researchers in the ICT field, MPHPT will actively add new programs focusing on broadband as themes. This will further thereby contribute to the development of broadband in the Asia-Pacific region. Aside from those efforts, since the narrowing of the digital divide is still a very important matter to be solved, MPHPT will carry out activities to support pilot projects such as rural tele-centers, as part of efforts to ensure accessibility in rural areas. I strongly hope and recommend that these activities will be included in the Bangkok Agenda which will be adopted tomorrow.

[7. Conclusion]

I firmly believe that activities of the APT, the only international organization specializing in telecommunications in the region, based upon the strong collaboration between the APT and other organizations will greatly contribute to the realization of a broadband society and ubiquitous network society in the Asia-Pacific region. In Thailand, as the proverb says "Khwamsamakhi Khuu Palang," in English, they say "United, they get more power," it is very important that we in the Asia-Pacific region challenge and collaborate together in the new information and communications field. Together with relevant organizations, Japan will strive to bridge the digital divide in the region. I would like to conclude my address by expressing my hope for the coming day when the Asia-Pacific region leads the world and I will also promise to cooperate as much as possible in the realization of the agenda items included in the Bangkok agenda.

Thank you.

Release of "Information and Communications in Japan: White Paper 2004"

The Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications (MPHPT) presented a report on the "Information and Communications in Japan: White Paper 2004" to the Cabinet meeting held on Friday, July 6, 2004 and released the White Paper to the public.

Since 1973, the White Paper on information and communications has been compiled by MPHPT annually in order to gain national understanding of the current status of information and communications in Japan and the trends of the Japanese information and communications policies. The "Information and Communications in Japan: White Paper 2004" marks the 32nd issue.

Japan is seeing rapid progress in improvement of the information communications infrastructure, such as the availability of the world's lowest-priced and highest-speed broadband services. Terrestrial digital television broadcasting was inaugurated in the three major metropolitan areas of Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka in December 2003, and intelligent home appliances and RFID tags that utilize networks are gradually coming into use. These developments are leading toward the realization of ubiquitous networks to which all users can freely access and exchange all types of information anytime, from anywhere and from any appliance.

In light of this situation, MPHPT featured the building of a ubiquitous network society spreading throughout the world in this year's White Paper, and analyzes the current status of evolving network infrastructure, the expectations of individuals and businesses for ubiquitous networks, and the issues concerning the realization of an optimal ubiquitous network society in the future and its economic impact.

Results of the 2004 Session of the ITU Council

The 2004 session of the ITU Council was held at the ITU Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, from June 9 through 18, 2004. 46 Council Member States and some 230 observers attended the ITU Council, including Mr. ISHIDA Naohiro, Director-General of International Affairs Department, Telecommunications Bureau, and Mr. NISHIHARA Akira, Director of International Organization Division, MPHPT.

[Outline of the Council]

1. ITU Reform

i) Establishment of a "Council Oversight Group (COG)"

A new COG was established that oversee the implementation status of the Group of Specialists (GoS) concerning the ITU Reform, including the review of the process of preparing the budget, the execution of a CHF 4.8-million budget. Japan was elected as an Asia-Pacific administrative region member of the COG. Henceforth, it is expected that incentives of Member States for defraying contribution units would be heightened

through improved transparency of common expenditures and the clear accounting for the satellite network filing cost recovery, etc.

[Members]

Americas: Brazil, Mexico
Western Europe: France, Spain
East Europe/CIS: Romania, Russia
Africa: Morocco, Uganda
Asia-Pacific: Japan, Iran

Current chair of the COG (Portugal), Chair of the GoS (U.S.), Chair of the Council Group on the Financial Regulations (Canada)

ii) Reorganization of the ITU budget

The GoS recommendation proposes to reorganize the ITU budget into a biennial regular budget, primarily financed by contributions to cover the core expenses; and a biennial supplementary budget, funded by variable income, such as the satellite network filing cost recovery. Japan, however, expressed concerns that in the current financial crisis of the ITU, such reorganization would cause a serious problem. Other Member States also showed concerns about the reorganization. In response to such concerns, the Council concluded that at this session, the Council did not adopt the reorganization plan.

The 2004 session of the ITU Council

2. Reform of TELECOM (exhibition and forum)

Since the first TELECOM in 1971, the TELECOM WORLD has been held in Geneva. The private sector-led ITU TELECOM Board decided to hold the next TELECOM WORLD in 2006 in Hong Kong, China. European Members, however, presented a question on the credibility of the TELECOM Board, proposing that a Council Group should be set up for deliberating upon TELECOM events. To this proposal, Japan, Korea and other Members stated that since the TELECOM events are supported by the private-sector participations, the Council should diligently pay due respect to the decision of the TELECOM Board. The Council concluded that the Board should be deliberate upon the TELECOM reform as in the past.

3. Schedules of major conferences of the ITU

i) 2005 Council

With respect to the schedule for the Council in 2005, the Secretariat proposed that the next session of the Council would be convened in June as in the past. To this proposal, European Members including France, Australia and the U.S. insisted September for a cause of the GoS recommendation on the review of the process for preparing the budget. Against this, Japan, Russia and African Member States expressed that June or July should be preferable because September would conflict with the WSIS preparatory period. After discussions on the schedule, the Council reached an agreement to hold the next session in July 2005 (July 12 through 22, 2005).

ii) World Radiocommunication Conference 2007 (WRC-07)

Iran proposed that because the year 2006 is a busy year for the preparation of the Plenipotentiary Conference, etc., the schedule for the Conference Preparatory Meeting (CPM) should changed to March 2007. After discussions on the schedule, the Council reached an agreement to hold the CPM in March 2007, and the Radiocommunication Assembly (RA) and WRC in October 2007.

iii) Plenipotentiary Conference 2006 (PP-06)

Turkey expressed that Turkey would host PP-06. Subsequently, the Council reached an agreement that details should be coordinated with the Secretariat.

iv) World Telecommunication Development Conference in 2006 (WTDC-06)

It was presented that Qatar had invited WTDC-06. The Council agreed to convene WTDC-06 from March 7 through 15, 2006.

4. Satellite network cost recovery

With respect to the huge amount of non-payment of the processing charges for satellite network filings under the satellite network filing cost recovery methodology, the Ad Hoc Group proposed a draft charges. However, since sufficient discussions were not made on the draft, the U.S., Japan, Australia and Thailand showed opposition to the draft. Subsequently, the Council concluded that the amount of charges should remain intact. The handling of cancelled filings was decided to be continuously deliberated upon.

5. World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)

In order to accelerate the preparation for WSIS, the Council adopted resolutions to i) expedite efforts of the ITU and Member States for implementing the Plan of Actions developed at the WSIS Phase I, and ii) encourage the ITU, Member States and the private sector to participate in the preparatory process for the Phase II. Japan presented a question about the input method to WSIS from host countries of regional preparatory conferences, etc. A chair (Russia) of a Council Working Group replied that such host countries are allowed to directly input into WSIS.

In addition, Japan during coffee break made explanations on the holding of meetings on a variety of themes concerning a ubiquitous society to Asian countries including China, Korea, Thailand

and Malaysia, the U.S. and France, and gained their understandings and supports.

6. Internet

At the Council, Internet-related activities of the ITU in the past year were reported on ENUM, domain names, IP networks, holding of relevant workshops, participation in organizations of ICANN, the Internet governance, etc. Japan stated that i) the ITU had played and would play a significant role in the telecommunications field in the past, at present and in the future, ii) Japan recognizes the significance of discussions at the WGIG on the Internet governance, and iii) Japan expects ITU's contribution to the Internet governance.

"Promotion Conference on 21st Century Network Key Technology Research" Convened

MPHPT convened the first meeting of the "Promotion Conference on 21st Century Network Key Technology Research" on June 15, 2004. The purpose of the Conference is to establish at the earliest possible stable key technologies necessary for realizing an innovative and high-performance ultrahigh-speed/large-capacity network in the 21st century that would respond to a sudden rise in the traffic volume of the future ubiquitous network society and can be used conveniently by consumers with ease-of-use anytime, anywhere without restraints.

At the Conference, "quantum info-communications technology," "nano-ICT network technology" and "next-generation photonic network technology," and ICT technologies across boundaries between and converging those three fields are positioned as the "21st century network key technology." While developing interactions among technologies, the Conference will, with regard to high-performance network key technologies to be realized during the period from 2010 through 2015, deliberate upon a comprehensive R&D strategy from the short- to mid-term viewpoints.

Concrete themes to be deliberated upon in each field are as follows:

With regard to the "quantum info-communications technology" that would enable ultralarge-capacity communications surpassing conventional optical communications and cryptographic communications ensuring absolute security, the Conference will deliberate upon i) how to deploy practical quantum cryptography, and ii) priority R&D themes to be addressed in the next five years toward realizing quantum info-communications network.

With respect to the "nano-ICT network technology," R&D will, making active use of effects based upon nano-scale structures and materials, be carried out on ultrahigh-performance network technologies, etc. targeting drastic advancement in performance of high transmission capacity, high processing capacity, low power consumption, miniaturization, etc. For instance, an R&D strategy will be deliberated upon transmission and node technologies, etc.

Regarding the "next-generation photonic network technology," the Conference will deliberate upon i) high-speed and large-capacity photonic networks to be required in the ubiquitous network era, and ii) R&D themes, etc. for realizing thereof.

The Conference will set up three working groups corresponding to those three fields for strategically deliberating upon such R&D themes. Subsequently, considering outputs of deliberations upon interactions among the three fields, the Conference will compile its findings by around June 2005.

Personnel Change

(Limited to telecommunications-related assignment)

The following personnel change was made on July 2, 2004:

Mr. HORIE Masahiro, Director-General of the Information and Communications Policy Bureau (former Councilor, Cabinet Secretariat; Advisor to Assistant Chief Cabinet Secretary)