MIC International Policy Division, Global ICT Strategy Bureau

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TOPICS

Japan's International Broadcasting Completely Transformed - Information on Japan and Asia Broadcast to the World Entirely in English 24 Hours a Day -

Background

"Why is it that, even though it has the world's second largest economy, Japan doesn't have that much of a presence?" "Why is it that one must rely on American and European media for information about Japan?" "Japan should make more of an effort to send out information to the world at large." Having received many comments such as this from both Japan and overseas, and also heard the opinions of the Telecommunications Council, MIC promoted the necessary measures in terms of what systems were in place in order to expand and strengthen international broadcasting aimed at foreign audiences, such as implementing a revision of the Broadcast Law in December 2007.

And so, finally, February 2, 2009, saw the start of "new international TV broadcasting" by NHK and Japan International Broadcasting Inc.

New International Broadcasting

(1) Making reception even easier by putting in place infrastructure

In addition to reception on the C-Band satellite antennae (2.5 to 3m diameter) that have been used until now, reception has also been made possible using Ku-Band satellite antennae (50cm diameter), thus gradually expanding reception areas. This has made reception easier than in the past. In addition, varied reception environments such as cable television and the Internet are also being promoted, and it is estimated that penetration will reach 110 million households by the end of this fiscal year.

(2) Moving towards a channel that has a special appeal to foreigners

(a) All-English broadcasting 24 hours a day

In order for this new international television broadcasting to get across an accurate image of Japan and Asia to the world, all broadcasting via news and information programs is in English.

(b) Creating new programs

The new international television broadcasting will repeat its 4-hour programming units six times a day. News and information programs will be broadcast at time when they can easily be caught by viewer all over the world. This will also give people an opportunity to catch up

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on programs they have missed.

(c) News and original programming will be produced in order to get people to know more about Japan. In order to make Japan known on a broad base, in areas such as politics and economics, traditional culture, as well as the latest information on fashion and "anime" which draw the interest of young people all over the world, a news program (live) will be broadcast every hour on the hour. Following the news, a varied information program specially for foreign audiences will be put together. Also, outstanding programs will be chosen from domestic programming, dubbed into English and broadcast on an occasional basis, and the plan is to request the cooperation of private and outside broadcasters in making and broadcasting programs, in addition to NHK, using part of the programming framework.

Previous international television broadcasting
(as of the end of fiscal year 2007)

An antenna with a diameter of 2.5 to 3m is needed to receive C-band broadcasts (24-hours a day broadcasting).

Current international television broadcasting
(as of the end of November 2008)

Areas where programming can be received using a Ku-band antenna (diameter of 50cm) (24-hours a day broadcasting). The plan is to expand this gradually to North America, South-East Asia, etc.

TOPICS

Results of World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-08)

Introduction

The Telecommunication Standardization Sector within the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) held the 2008 World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-08) in Johannesburg, South Africa, over a 10 day period from October 21 to October 30, 2008.

The WTSA is an important assembly which determines directions in standardization activities within the ITU's Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T), and it holds its meetings once every four years. The Japanese delegation to WTSA-08 consisted of 38 people (7 from MIC and 31 from the private sector), headed by MIC Director-General Kawauchi. In all, there were 770 delegates representing 99 countries and 12 international organizations.

Outline

The WTSA is an important assembly that investigates activity reports as well as proposed recommendations and resolutions submitted by the various study groups (SG) within the ITU-T and the Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group (TSAG). It also makes decisions on basic directions for ITU-T activities for the next study period (2009 to 2012) by revising operating procedures, reorganizing SGs, allocating study topics and appointing chairmen or vice-chairmen of the SGs and TSAG.

The main results from this assembly are presented below.

Main Results

(1) The SG structure in the next study period

Principally, study groups have been reorganized with relation to the topics shown below, and the structure for the next study period consists of 10 study groups (see figure).

(a) In conjunction with the sharing of network architecture to address

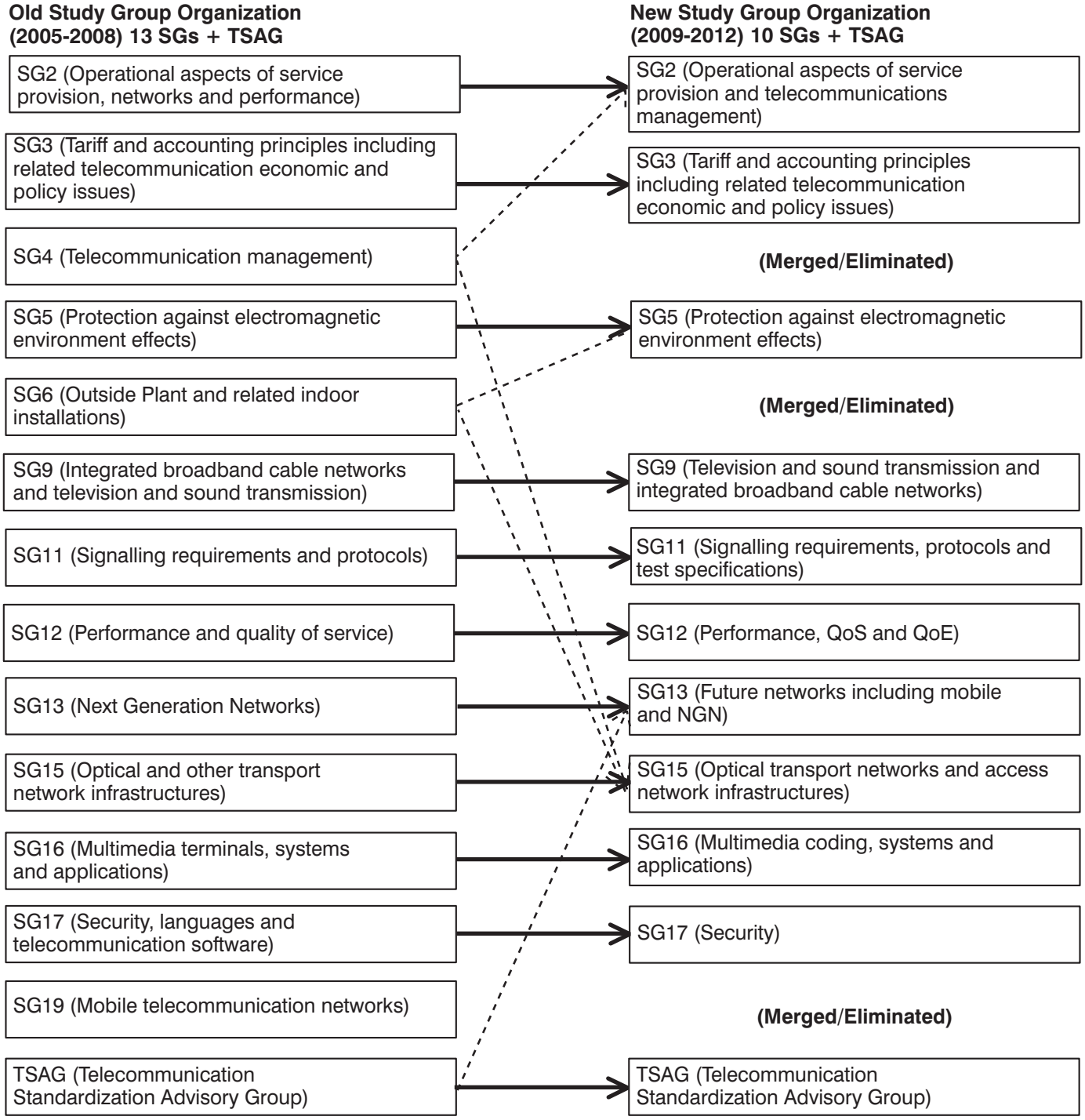
the advances in FMC (convergence of mobile communication networks and fixed communication networks), the SG13 (Next Generation Networks) and SG19 (Mobile telecommunication networks) were merged.

(b) For the overall study of transmission networks, including the installation, maintenance and securing of outside facilities, part of the SG6 (Outside Plant and related indoor installations) was merged with the existing SG15 (Optical and other transport network infrastructures).

(c) Following a request from developing countries, study topics were added to the existing SG11 (Signalling requirements and protocols), consisting of studying the securement of global mutual inter-connectibility of NGN products.

(d) With the growing awareness that standardization activities should not just be centered around technical topics, and that standardization activities that focus on user needs and actual services are also important, SG16 will now be in charge of standardization activities that will develop new services such as ubiquitous applications and home networks.

Figure: Study organization for the next study period



(2) Election of SG chairmen and vice-chairmen for the next study period

As the officer who drives the standardization activities of each study group over a four year period, there were two people standing for election from Japan as study group chairmen and 7 as vice-chairmen, and all were elected (see table). They included Yushi Naito of Mitsubishi Electric (Chairman of SG16 in charge of application development) who became the first person from one of Japan's integrated electronics manufacturers to assume a post of ITU's SG chairman.

Table

SG	Activities	Title	Name (organization)	
SG15	Optical transport networks and access network infrastructures	Chairman	Yoichi Maeda (NTT)	Reappointed
SG16	Multimedia coding, systems and applications	Chairman	Yushi Naito (Mitsubishi Electric)	Newly appointed
SG3	Tariff and accounting principles including related telecommunication economic and policy issues	Vice-Chairman	Seiichi Tsugawa (KDDI)	Reappointed
SG9	Television and sound transmission and integrated broadband cable networks	Vice-Chairman	Satoshi Miyaji (KDDI)	Newly appointed
SG11	Signalling requirements, protocols and test specifications	Vice-Chairman	Kaoru Kenyoshi (NEC)	Newly appointed
SG12	Performance, QoS and QoE	Vice-Chairman	Akira Takahashi (NTT)	Newly appointed
SG13	Future networks including mobile and NGN	Vice-Chairman	Naotaka Morita (NTT)	Reappointed
SG17	Security	Vice-Chairman	Koji Nakao (KDDI)	Newly appointed
TSAG	Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group	Vice-Chairman	Haruo Okamura (SCAT)	Reappointed

(3) Selection of new recommendations and resolutions

(a) Resolutions concerning countermeasures to climate change using ICT

With regard to countermeasures to climate change using ICT, proposals from various countries, including a proposal from Japan, were investigated, and resolutions were adopted including that, once the FG (Focus Group) review that is currently taking place is completed, a decision will be made by TSAG on how futures investigations will proceed at ITU-T, and that an approach would be constructed that would include the opinions of experts outside ITU-T members.

(b) Recommendation concerning the externality of networks

With regard to recommendation concerning premiums (the topping up of charges for developing countries with regard to connection charges from developed countries where the network installation is plentiful to developing countries) based on the externality of networks, recommendation was adopted, despite the opposition of Japan, the United States and Europe, that there is a need to investigate different methods for setting charges. Japan suspended the recommendation in order that it would not be applied.

(c) Resolutions in advance of the introduction of an ITU mark system (action ahead of standards certification and the confirmation of mutual connectibility)

It was confirmed that, rather than simply creating standards, it is important to ascertain mutual connectibillity based on standards, and that ahead of the introduction of the ITU mark system (testing for standards certification and mutual connectibility for products that conform to ITU-T recommendations), recommendations for mutual connectibility testing should be made as soon as possible. In addition, a resolution was taken that an investigation should take place, with regard to ITU-T, on the overall effect with regard to the ITU and manufacturers as well as compliance with the laws of individual countries of both domestic and international standards, with the results of the investigation being reported to the 2009 ITU Council.

(d) Others

As a way of dealing with the information gap between developed and developing countries, actions to correct

discrepancies in standardization and regional group activities were focused on, and resolutions were taken to vitalize these further in the future. Also, resolutions were taken to promote the participation of university researchers in ITU-T.

Conclusion

As has been outlined above, this year's WTSA-08 put a spotlight on users and services, and focused on securing mutual connetibility, offering support to developing countries and regional activities, as well as expectations on academic researchers, showing the new roles that ITU-T should fulfill and what kind of approach is needed to achieve this.

Taking into consideration these results from WTSA-08, we will continue to make efforts towards the development of Japan's telecommunications system and strengthening our international competitiveness, as well as continuing to make positive contributions to the ITU so that international standardization activities can occur smoothly.