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TOPICS

Results of Visits to Indonesia and Vietnam by MIC State-Secretary Naito

MIC State-Secretary Masamitsu Naito visited the Republic of Indonesia and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam from January 5 to 10, 2010. During his visit, he met with high-level officials from the information and communications ministries as well as executives from telecommunications operators, exchanging views on strengthening of the cooperative relationship in the field of ICT between Japan and Indonesia and Vietnam.

In Indonesia, State-Secretary Naito held a meeting with Mr. Tifatul Sembiring, Minister for Communication and Information Technology. Aside from exchanging views regarding the importance of training of personnel, they agreed to promote cooperation between the two countries in better use of ICT, in fields such as education, disaster prevention and climate change.

In Vietnam, there were meetings with Dr. Do Trung Ta, the Prime Minister's Envoy on ICT and Mr. Le Nam Thang, Vice Minister,

Ministry of Information and Communications, and it was agreed that the two countries would cooperate on the training of personnel, construction of an e-government system, and the building of policies and systems in the field of ICT.

State-Secretary Naito proposed that forum for exchange of views among the private and public sectors in both countries be set up, from the perspective of promoting cooperation with both countries. More specific details regarding this forum will be discussed in the near future.

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TOPICS

Announcement of Comprehensive Measures for the Promotion of Terrestrial Digital Broadcasting (4th Edition)

MIC has revised its Comprehensive Measures for the Promotion of Terrestrial Digital Broadcasting, having put in order the measures that need to be taken ahead of the cut-off date for the shift to terrestrial digital broadcasting on July 24, 2011, and announced the changes at the latest meeting of the Terrestrial Digital Broadcasting National Movement Headquarters.

1. Background

The plan with regard to terrestrial digital broadcasting is to complete the shift to terrestrial digital broadcasting and stop analog terrestrial broadcasts by July 24, 2011.

In July 2008, MIC put in order the measures that should be implemented ahead of the shift to terrestrial digital broadcasting, and compiled these as its Comprehensive Measures for the Promotion of Terrestrial Digital Broadcasting.

The Comprehensive Measures for the Promotion of Terrestrial Digital Broadcasting have now been revised following inclusion of the necessary expenses in the second supplementary budget for fiscal year 2009 as well as the proposed budget for fiscal year 2010, and were announced at the latest meeting of the Terrestrial Digital Broadcasting National Movement Headquarters.

MIC will strive to implement the Comprehensive Measures in cooperation and coordination with all those involved, so that everyone in the country will have completed the shift to terrestrial digital television in July 2011, and will be able to continue enjoying watching television.

2. Main revisions

• Extension of promotion of digital television through the use of

eco-points

• Using DTV Support Center (DigiSuppo) to implement information meetings and consultations on reception, as well as home visits for the elderly and the like

• Implementing support for renewal of communal reception facilities

• Implementing support for new areas which have difficulties in viewing

• Promotion and support of temporary introduction of a digital-analog conversion service

1. Actions in order to gain the understanding of the Japanese people with regard to terrestrial digital broadcasting

1. Thorough provision of the necessary information

As a first step towards getting those people who are viewing analog broadcast to prepare for the shift to terrestrial digital broadcasting, every effort must be made to provide repeatedly households that are viewing analog broadcasts with detailed information. In particular, due care must be taken to ensure that the information will properly reach the elderly and others that are hard to reach with information.

(1) Thorough publicity using broadcasts
MIC will make broadcasters take

the initiative in strengthening actions through their own broadcasts, such as making people understand that the analog broadcasts they are currently receiving will be coming to an end.

Already, use of the “analog logo” is being implemented on a regular basis, and broadcasters will be working to take more concerted action such as inserting subtitles informing people of the end of analog broadcasts as well as broadcasting information screens on the end of analog broadcasts.

Actions will also be taken to inform the public on every possible occasion using various media other than broadcasting.

(2) Holding information meetings and visiting individual homes

In order to enable all people to take measures for the shift to terrestrial digital broadcasting, and in order to have adequate community-based surveys, consultations, and support, DTV Support Center (DigiSuppo) has been established in all of Japan's prefectures and administrative areas (52 in all). These support centers are holding a total of 70,000 information meetings and consultations in the course of fiscal year 2009, and are also visiting the elderly individually at home. In fiscal year 2010 as well, a full range of actions will be

taken including improved information meeting and consultations that will be geared to individual sensibilities and regional conditions, as well as more individual home visits for the elderly.

(3) Coordinating with local public bodies

The government will be cooperating with locals such as local public bodies, community associations, and social workers, so that measures can be taken for correct information on reception means to reach every single person including households that are made up of only elderly people or other households that are hard to reach with information.

(4) Preventing mistaken purchases of analog equipment, and the like

Action will be taken on an ongoing basis so that people do not mistakenly purchase analog receivers, thinking that they will be able to receive digital broadcasts on them, by asking both analog receiver manufacturers and retailers to apply warning seals to their products.

Action will also be taken to distribute information pamphlets, with the cooperation of local electrical retailers.

(5) Developing a popular movement

In order to boost actions to gain the understanding of the people concerning terrestrial digital television as a popular movement, actions will be taken including organizing events across the country, calling to people, and showing information videos in places where there are large crowds of people.

2.Countermeasures to deal with malicious commerce

Along with including warnings on web pages and at information

meetings, the various involved ministries will coordinate to prevent malicious commerce. Also, in cases where harm has been done through malicious commerce, that information will be rapidly shared and will be provided to media organizations, so as to prevent a recurrence in coordination with relevant organizations.

II. Actions on the receiving side

1.Penetration of receivers

(1) Promotion of the penetration of digital television using eco-points
The penetration of digital televisions is being promoted with the giving of points (eco-points) that can be exchanged with certain products, for the purchase of energy-efficient digital televisions until the end of 2010.

(2) Promotion of the distribution of simple tuners

In order to respond to the needs of those people who want to continue using their analog television receivers, the distribution of simple, low-priced tuners with minimum features that can be connected to analog television receivers in order to watch digital broadcasts will be further promoted.

(3) Promotion of the penetration of easy-to-use equipment

In order to expand the base of the people who watch digital television, MIC will continue to encourage efforts by manufacturers in terms of the remote control that comes with equipment for watching digital broadcasts, to promote the development and penetration of simple products that are easy to use, even for elderly people, and to work towards educating viewers.

(4) Support of people who are suffering from economic

difficulties

Between fiscal year 2009 and fiscal year 2011, support will be provided for the purchase of receivers to households that are exempt from NHK reception fees.

2.Promotion of installation in communal reception facilities

(1) Promotion of digital upgrade of facilities in remote area communal reception facilities

Looking ahead to the complete upgrade of all of 20,000 remote area communal reception facilities, the rapid upgrade will be promoted by strengthening coordination with local governments as well as NHK, with ongoing support of autonomous communal reception facilities, in line with planned upgrades of facilities managed by NHK.

Furthermore, along with greater support in fiscal year 2009 for new installations for communal reception facilities as part of digital viewing measures, and the putting in place of transmission routes, there will be cases of support in fiscal year 2010 for digital reception through the installation of cable television, rather than relying on improving facilities, with action being taken to promote upgrades through the use of these support measures.

(2) Promotion of upgrade in communal reception facilities for poor reception countermeasures

(a) Working towards the upgrade of facilities

Work will be strengthened such as holding information meetings and responding to the move to digital for owners of facilities, administrative unions and the like, based on close coordination with the relevant sectors, and centering on the DigiSuppo. Also, MIC will speed up information provision on the state of reception to households that will newly be able to receive direct broadcasts and to those that will continue to

experience reception difficulties. In addition, MIC will revise the administrative records that compile the latest information concerning communal reception facilities for poor reception countermeasures.

Furthermore, with regard to reception difficulties at public facilities, the relevant organizations are working towards completion of measures for the shift to digital of public facilities in areas with reception difficulties by the end of December 2010.

(b) Support of facility upgrades and the like

In order to work towards the promotion of consultation between the parties involved in making facilities digital, MIC will implement the necessary reception surveys, post the results of the surveys on the Internet, and provide information on standard upgrade methods and costs.

Also, with regard to the communal reception facilities for poor reception countermeasures, where the shift to digital has not progressed, support will be provided to speed up upgrades to digital.

In addition, a simple dispute resolution system will be set up to provide consultation as well as arbitration and resolution by the third party in the event of difficulties in consultations between the parties.

(3) Promotion of upgrade in communal reception facilities for apartment buildings

(a) Working towards the upgrade of facilities

Work will be strengthened such as holding information meetings and responding to the move to digital for apartment building management companies, apartment buildings management unions and the like, based on close coordination with the

relevant sectors, and centering on the DigiSuppo. In addition, there will be a revision of the administrative records for sharing information related to dealing with the move to digital.

(b) Support of facility upgrades and the like

By providing information on standard upgrade methods and costs, and supplying stickers to display on apartment buildings that have completed measures for the shift to digital, MIC will provide these parties with indirect support in coordination with those working in real estate.

Also, with regard to communal reception facilities at apartment buildings that have not yet progressed to digital, support will be provided so that when the upgrades happen the burden of the residents is not overly great.

3.Addressing the shift to terrestrial digital broadcasting in public facilities

With regard to addressing the shift to terrestrial digital broadcasting in public facilities, the relevant organizations have been given a target of completing the shift to digital in all public facilities by the end of December 2010. Furthermore, with regard to addressing the shift to digital in schools, the government is providing support during fiscal year 2009.

III. Actions on the broadcasting side

1.Installation of digital relay stations

(1) Promoting the installation of relay stations

MIC is providing support for the installation of relay stations in areas with unfavorable conditions in order to proceed steadily with the installation of relay stations by the end of 2010, as shown in the relay station roadmap. Support is also being provided for measures

for difficult reception and new digital stations for the late developing private broadcasters. Action is being taken to broaden reception areas for digital broadcasting by providing support in the fiscal 2010 budget for the installation of relay stations on the islands of Kita Daito and Minami Daito in Okinawa Prefecture, both of which are in remote locations.

(2) Measures for poor digital reception

With regard to households (estimated at a maximum of 350,000) which, despite being able to receive analog broadcasts, will have difficulties in receiving digital broadcasts, a series of surveys was conducted and the results taken into consideration to formulate plans for measures by area (new installation of relay stations and communal reception facilities, etc.), and the first version of the plan for measures for areas with poor reception of terrestrial digital broadcasts was announced in August 2009. This plan will now be revised and action will be taken so that plans for measures are formulated for all areas by the end of 2010. In order to move these measures forward smoothly, in addition to the existing support for the installation of relay stations and new installations of communal facilities for remote areas, there will be new support in fiscal year 2010 for individual reception through measures such as high-performance antennas for areas with poor digital reception. With all of this support, the measures will, to the extent possible, be implemented by the spring of 2011, with the aim of reducing to a strict minimum the number of households with poor digital reception.

2.Measures for digital interference

MIC will strive to grasp on an ongoing basis the state of occurrence of digital interference in cooperation with broadcasters. With regard to digital interference at relay stations that started operation before the end of fiscal year 2008, the areas and households actually experiencing the interference were ascertained in full by the end of August 2009.

With regard to areas where the occurrence of poor reception due to interference has already been ascertained, a plan for countermeasures has gradually been formulated on the state of interference, the content of countermeasures, the time of implementation, and the agents responsible for implementation, based on individual issues, and in some areas the countermeasures have already been implemented taking into consideration the plan for countermeasures.

Furthermore, in fiscal year 2009, the measures for supporting interference countermeasures have been expanded, and a greater choice has been offered of possibilities for ways of dealing with the occurrence of interference. Support measures to deal with large-scale interference will be further expanded in fiscal year 2010.

3.The use of cable television and the like

(1) Cable television

(a) Planned and appropriate shift to digital in cable television

Promotion of shift to digital remains under way so that, as early as possible in the period leading up to the end of analog terrestrial broadcasts, and by December 2010 at the latest, measures for the shift to digital will have been completed at all of the cable television facilities.

(b) Promotion of the introduction of a retransmission service for

terrestrial digital broadcasts only Looking ahead to the rapid introduction of a retransmission service for terrestrial digital broadcasting only, cable television operators are moving towards service menus that are easy-to-use for their viewers and investigating conditions for provision, and the introduction of these services will continue to be promoted.

(c) Promotion of the temporary introduction of a digital-analog conversion service

With regard to the temporary introduction of a retransmission service that converts terrestrial digital broadcasts to analog, along with requesting of cable television operators the temporary introduction of a digital to analog conversion service, with the operation timeframe until the end of March 2015, support will be provided for the introduction of digital to analog conversion equipment in cases where communal reception facilities introduce cable televisions.

(2) IP re-transmission

MIC will continue to encourage broadcast operators that use telecommunications services so that, with technical upgrades to the service and easy-to-use conditions for viewers, service is being provided as widely as possible until the end of 2010 and the implementation timeframe road map can be announced.

4.Temporary measures for poor reception areas using satellites

With regard to the households with poor digital reception (a maximum of 350,000) that present difficulties in taking measures both physically and in terms of expense, a system will be constructed to provide them temporarily (for 5 years) with terrestrial television programming using broadcast satellites, and

this will start operating in March 2010 (the operation will last until the end of March 2015). Also, the support will include both the transmission and reception sides.

With regard to the areas that will be the target of temporary use of satellites, actions are being taken so that they will be able to view broadcasts using a terrestrial broadcast infrastructure in the future.

IV. Actions with regard to the end of analog broadcasting

1.Procedures for the end of analog broadcasting

(1) Plan for the end of analog broadcasting

From the perspective of avoiding confusion among viewers, and enabling the smooth end of analog broadcasting in July 2011, MIC will put in place an environment for the smooth implementation of broadcasters' actions based on the following:

- Not have any difference between regions in the timing of the end of broadcasting;
- Gradually strengthen actions ahead of the end of broadcasting.

(2) Rehearsing the end of analog broadcasting

A limited area rehearsal of the end of analog broadcasting will be conducted in the city of Suzu in Ishikawa Prefecture, in order to ascertain the issues and measures that will come up with the end of analog broadcasting.

2.Putting in place a system for the end of analog broadcasting, and the like

(1) A promotional system with coordination between relevant people at the regional level

In order to end analog broadcasting smoothly, the relevant people from MIC, broadcasters, local municipalities, retailers, constructors, cable television operators, manufacturers and the like are

coordinating with each other to put together a promotional organization to create measures in each prefecture, and formulating individual plans of action, with ongoing efforts to implement these action plans in a steady fashion.

(2) Disposal and recycling

Awareness will be promoted concerning the continued use of analog television receivers even after the end of analog broadcasting, and steps will be taken for their disposal and recycling in cooperation with the ministries concerned. Also, with actions such as using eco-points to pay for the recycling fees, the recycling of analog television receivers will be brought forward to the end of 2010.

(3) The government's promotional plan

Looking ahead to the smooth end of analog broadcasting, the government organized a conference with the participation of relevant cabinet ministers for promoting measures for the completion of the transition to digital broadcasting (chaired by the Chief Cabinet Secretary) in April 2009, with a view to promoting terrestrial digital broadcasting.

3.Switching of channels following the end of analog frequency use

Along with the steady implementation of a "repack implementation plan" (for redistribution of terrestrial frequencies) that has identified

the switching order by relay station, ways of providing viewers with information, and systems for implementation, support will be provided for local research and the provision of information on the necessary reception conditions for implementing the switching of channels, putting in place a consultation system, as well as the work on switching transmitters for relay stations.