

Radio Regulatory Council Draft Summary of Minutes (919th Meeting)

1. Date and Time

Wednesday, June 13, 2007, 15:00 to 16:23

2. Location

Conference Room 1002, 10th floor, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

3. Attendees (honorifics omitted)

(1) Members of the Radio Regulatory Council

Mitsutoshi Hatori (Chair), Takeo Inokuchi (Vice Chair), Junichi Hamada, Kashiko Kodate

(2) Hearing Examiner of the Radio Regulatory Council

Shuichi Nishimoto

(3) Secretary

Ikko Mitsui (Deputy Director, General Affairs Division, Telecommunications Bureau)

(4) MIC Representatives

Mori (Director-General of the Telecommunications Bureau), Kawauchi (Director-General of the Radio Department), Suzuki (Director-General of the Information and Communications Policy Bureau), and others

4. Minutes of the Meeting

(1) Motion for Challenging the Hearing Examiner Relevant to the Formal Objection to Type Designation on Broadband Power Line Carrier Communication Equipment

(Proposition No. 1 of March 23, 2007)

On May 24, an opponent challenged the appointment of the Hearing Examiner in regard to the formal objection of March 23, 2007 to type designation on broadband power line carrier communication equipment.

Aiming to ensure that deliberations are conducted fairly, the council asked Hearing Examiner Nishimoto to leave the room before Secretary Mitsui explained the facts. After deliberation, the motion for the challenge was dismissed.

(2) Blanket License for Specified Radio Stations Belonging to Nippon Airport Radio Service Co.,

Ltd.

(Consultation No. 20)

MIC gave an explanation and questions and answers were made as follows in regard to the blanket license for land mobile stations of Naha Airport's digital airport radio communications system for which Nippon Airport Radio Service Co., Ltd. (NAR) has applied. The council submitted a report that it is appropriate to grant the license, after deliberating on the matter.

a. MIC's Explanation

The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport and airline companies conduct a wide variety of services, including airport management and security, passenger guidance, cargo handling, and on-board cleaning, at airports. An airport radio communications system is used as an important communications means to perform these services smoothly and efficiently. Moreover, in the event of an emergency at an airport, the system enables the airport control tower to broadcast evacuation announcements to all people working on the premises as well as providing priority communications for firefighting efforts.

Since Narita International Airport first adopted such an airport radio communications system in June 1990, many airports have implemented the system, including Kansai International Airport in April 1994 and Naha Airport in May 1999.

Recent growth in air transport has increased not only airport service activities, but also the demand for radio communications needed to perform the activities. Under these circumstances, more and more airports are implementing digital airport radio communications systems that allow efficient spectrum use and communications of data as well as voice. For example, Tokyo International Airport adopted the digital system in December 2004, Chubu International Airport in February 2005, Narita International Airport in March 2005, and Kansai International Airport in May 2007.

With this consultation, MIC seeks the council's advice on granting a blanket license to land mobile stations that NAR plans to use mainly within Naha Airport. NAR, who has operated an analog airport radio communications system since 1999, applied for the license in order to implement a digital airport radio communications system.

The applicant, NAR, plans to establish radio stations to perform telecommunications activities by using 59 frequencies spaced 25 kHz apart from each other in the band from 415.525 MHz to 416.975 MHz. It expects to operate up to 620 stations under the blanket license. MIC examined the possibility of frequency allocation, and recognized that it complies with the each item under

Article 27-4 of the Radio Law.

b. Key Questions and Answers

There was a question of whether digital airport radio communications systems currently in place at various airports have had any problems. MIC answered that no incidents have been reported so far.

(3) Draft Partial Amendment to Basic Broadcasting Plan

(Consultation No. 21)

MIC gave an explanation in regard to the partial amendment to the Basic Broadcasting Plan, which pertains to the abolishment of the broadcasting types for international broadcasting. After deliberating the matter, the council submitted a report that the draft amendment is appropriate.

MIC's Explanation

In recent years, many countries have accelerated their efforts to enhance international television broadcasting in view of reinforcing their power to transmit and distribute information to the world. Meanwhile, TV broadcasting and Internet penetration has resulted in decreasing demand for HF radio broadcasting in some regions, for which effective measures need to be taken.

In order to flexibly respond to the changes in the media environment and invest resources effectively, the relevant part of the Basic Broadcasting Plan should be amended.

The Basic Broadcasting Plan stipulates guidelines for establishing broadcasting stations in order to facilitate systemic penetration and sound development of broadcasting. The proposed amendment is to abolish general broadcasting and regional broadcasting from the list of broadcasting types.

NHK provides two types of international radio broadcasting services: general broadcasting, which refers to radio program broadcast in Japanese and English for listeners around the world; and regional broadcasting, which refers to the provision of region-specific programs in the language used in the region. In terms of general broadcasting, the number of listeners to Japanese programs in North America, Hawaii and Europe has dramatically dropped, which is indicative of decreasing demand. NHK is thus preparing to abolish the service in the latter half of fiscal year 2007. Since there will be no international broadcasting as general broadcasting upon the withdrawal of the service, the division between general broadcasting and regional broadcasting should be abolished.

While amending the Regulations for Enforcement of the Broadcast Law that stipulates the grounds for the type classification, MIC is to change the Basic Broadcasting Plan by abolishing the two types and integrating the regions, the number of broadcasting services and the targets of the two types.

It must be noted that only the worldwide provision of programs in Japanese and English will be discontinued with this change. The same kind of broadcasting services will continue to be provided, except for North America and some regions.

Prior to the consultation, MIC invited public comment on this matter for one month, but received no comments.

(4) Authorization for Abolishment and Change of NHK International Relay Broadcasting Agreements

(Consultation No. 22)

MIC gave an explanation and questions and answers were made as follows in regard to authorization to abolish and change agreements that NHK has concluded with British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). After deliberating the matter, the council submitted a report that the abolishment and changes are appropriate.

a. MIC's Explanation

A total of 65 hours a day of international broadcasting is currently provided in 22 languages by using a domestic transmitting station in Yamata and nine overseas relay stations.

The relay broadcasting is roughly divided into two types: exchange-based relaying and lease-based relaying. The exchange based relaying is conducted by transmitting program data between NHK's transmitting facilities, which are maintained by KDDI, and such facilities of overseas broadcasters. NHK and its overseas partners broadcast the exchanged programs for the same amount of hours.

In contrast, the lease-based relaying is one-sided transmission, without exchanging and broadcasting the partner's programs. This method incurs the cost for relaying, while the exchange-based broadcasting does not require any additional cost. That is the biggest difference between the two.

These two types of relaying are currently in place, using the nine overseas relay stations as well as the direct transmission from the Yamata transmitting station. Consultation No. 22 was made

in view of abolishing and changing the agreements concerning the relay stations in Ascension, Singapore, and Canada.

The abolishment and change of the agreements are intended to address the following two issues for streamlining international broadcasting.

One of the issues is review of broadcasting hours. As we described in regard to Consultation No. 21, review of NHK's international broadcasting hours starts later this fiscal year. Specifically speaking, the Japanese programs for North America, Hawaii and Europe will be discontinued, while the hours of program provision will be reduced in other regions. The broadcasting hours of English programs will also be cut. Meanwhile, for Africa, South-West Asia and South-East Asia, international broadcasting in English will be continued.

Another issue is reduction in the numbers of transmission equipment. In order to curb the expected increase in maintenance and replacement costs for the aging facilities at the Yamata transmitting station, a plan to reduce the transmission equipment from 10 to 6 units is now being prepared. That will make it difficult to secure spectrum and facilities for the provision of international broadcasting of the partners under the agreements. To respond to these two issues, i.e., the review of broadcasting hours and the reduction in transmission equipment, the international relay broadcasting agreement with BBC and CBC should be abolished and changed.

If the council concludes that these measures are appropriate, the hours of broadcast in Japanese and English will be decreased starting in October 2007. This move will generate little impact, because the review is done on the broadcasting hours for the regions with decreasing demand for international radio broadcasting, including regions where an alternative, such as international TV broadcasting, is secured, and because some broadcasting services will be continued with lease-based relaying even after the abolishment and change of the agreements.

Broadcasting in languages other than Japanese and English will also be continued with lease-based relaying. There will be no impact from the abolishment of the agreements.

b. Key Questions and Answers

There was a question asking whether the decrease in the number of listeners of international radio broadcasting is attributable only to the trend of international broadcasting moving toward visual broadcasting, or also to possible decline in the overseas interest in Japan. MIC answered that the main reason must be the development of media that replace radio, and overseas interest in Japan is by no means decreasing. In order to help people overseas understand Japan better, the

ministry is considering enhancement of international television broadcasting by restructuring resources and allocating them on a priority basis.

(5) Other

MIC reported on the outline of NHK's settlement of balance and business report for FY 2006.

(Office responsible for the above wording: The Secretariat for the Radio Regulatory Council)