Study Group on ICT Policy for Addressing Global Warming—1st Meeting
Summary of Minutes

1. Date and Time

Wednesday, September 26, 2007; 16:30–18:00

2. Location

Special Conference Room 1, 8th floor

3. Attendees (honorifics omitted; in Japanese alphabetical order)

(1) Study Group Members

Susumu Ito (Tokyo University of Science), Naoshi Ohno (Development Bank of Japan), Masayuki Saita (NEC Corporation; Proxy: Noriyuki Nakayama), Yoshinori Sakai (Tokyo Institute of Technology Graduate School), Atsuhisa Takahashi (Fujitsu Limited), Tetsuo Takemura (Hitachi, Ltd.), Yoshio Tsukio (University of Tokyo), Miwako Doi (Toshiba Corporation; Proxy: Hideki Kobayashi), Yukio Nishikawa (Toyota Motor Corporation; Proxy: Shunsuke Iwakawa), Hirokazu Nishiyama (Japan Broadcasting Corporation; Proxy: Junichiro Kawano), Takashi Hanazawa (Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation; Proxy: Shiro Nishi), Kumi Fujisawa (Think Tank Sophia Bank), Yuichi Matsushima (National Institute of Information and Communications Technology), Takashi Matsuyama (Kyoto University Graduate School), Makoto Miwa (Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd.; Proxy: Hiroyuki Yamanaka), Yasuhiro Murota (Shonan Econometrics Inc.), Shunsuke Mori (Tokyo University of Science), Yutaka Yasuda (KDDI Corporation; Proxy: Masashi Usami), Shinichi Yamada (NTT Data Corporation); Representatives from the Climate Change Policy Division, Global Environment Bureau, Ministry of the Environment (Attending as observers)

(2) MIC Representatives

Nakata (Director-General of Policy Coordination), Matsumoto (Director-General for Technology Policy Coordination), Matsui (Deputy Director-General of Minister's Secretariat), Suzuki (Director, General Policy Division), Kodama (Director, Technology Policy Division), Fujimoto (Director, Information Applications Promotion Office), Monma (Director, Innovation Strategy Office), Nonaka (Assistant Director, Information Applications Promotion Office), Taira (Senior Officer, Technology Policy Division)

4. Agenda

(1) Opening

(2) Opening address by MIC

(3) Introduction of study group members

(4) Outline of study group meetings

(5) Disclosure of study group meetings

(6) Appointment of chair and designation of vice chair

(7) Discussion

- Progression of study
- Comments by study group members and discussion
- Other

(8) Closing

5. Proceedings

(1) Opening

(2) Opening address by MIC

Director-General of Policy Coordination Nakata and Director-General for Technology Policy Coordination Matsumoto made opening addresses.

(3) Introduction of study group members

(4) Outline of study group meetings

The secretariat explained the draft outline of the study group meetings (Reference 1-1) and it was approved.

(5) Disclosure of study group meetings

The secretariat explained the document about disclosure of the study group meetings (Reference 1-2) and it was approved.

(6) Appointment of chair and designation of vice chair

Based on the outline of the study group meetings, Mr. Tsukio was appointed chair. Chair Tsukio then designated Mr. Mori vice chair.

(7) Agenda

- Progression of study

The secretariat explained the issue of global warming and ICT, based on Reference 1-3. The secretariat described the establishment of a working group, based on Reference 1-4, and the document was approved. The secretariat explained the future schedule of the study (Reference 1-5) and it was approved. Chair Tsukio appointed Deputy Chair Mori chair of the evaluation working group and Mr. Matsuyama chair of the technology development working group.

- Comments by study group members and discussion

The main comments made by the members of the study group are as follows:

- Although ICT has improved convenience, we must consider its rebound effects on the environment. Therefore, evaluation is not an easy task. Compiling the best practices of eco-friendly ICT utilization and sharing them with the world may bring about a greater synergy.
- Some solutions contribute to reducing environmental burdens and securing safety and security while some impose burdens on the environment. We need to consider how such solutions should be evaluated so that they may be widely understood.
- The report from a past study group (Study Group Concerning the Effect on the Global Environment of a Ubiquitous Network Society) overlapped the reduction in energy consumption by ICT utilization and the reduction in energy consumption due to changes in industry structure and ICT utilization by other industries. The evaluation working group should work on this issue.
- To make the report of this study group as easy as possible for the general public to understand, the working groups should consider making proposals that people can translate into specific actions and presenting simple and clear concepts, such as "factor X."
- It would be helpful if we could provide incentives to motivate households to use ICT more actively and enthusiastically.
- It may be possible to examine issues from the urban planning perspective, such as centralizing residential areas to reduce environmental burdens, but the mandate of this study group is to present a certain direction, rather than discuss system reforms to achieve such a goal.
- It may be helpful to prepare both long-term (up to 2050) and short-term roadmaps as our message for the Hokkaido Toyako Summit.
- The evaluation working group has three tasks, but there is a time constraint on ensuring consistency among the three. In order to achieve a breakthrough of some sort, focusing on things that can be translated into specific actions may be a viable option.
- People seem to think that ICT is basically convenient and enjoyable. The essence of ICT must be communicated, i.e., ICT is friendly to the environment depending on the way it is used.
- The reality is that businesses know that they should contribute to reducing environmental burdens but find it hard to work on it. Ways to optimize ICT to solve environmental problems should be presented to encourage them to take action.

- There is a growing expectation for technological innovations to greatly contribute to solving environmental problems. The two working groups should discuss such innovations in cooperation.
- Social infrastructures as a whole, as opposed to environmental programs introduced by individual companies, may lead to a greater reduction in CO_2 emissions. Japan should take the initiative in constructing such infrastructures.
- To make an environmental contribution, incentives related to software, such as environmental rating, are as important as environmentally friendly hardware.
- Reportedly, efforts to reduce CO_2 emissions are made primarily by businesses so households should step up their efforts. Lifestyle changes at the household level are important, but household actions from the same perspective as those of businesses are also key. For example, microfinance for proactive use of environmentally friendly ICT may be an option.
- The utilization rate of e-government is still 1%. While young people are the main users of ICT in Japan, people over 60 are the main users in Finland. We should figure out ways that allow people of all age groups to use ICT.
- A society with a low birthrate and aging population and an information society are closely related to each other. This study group should consider that point as discussions are conducted. For example, a grayer society has a greater number of single-person households, but the resulting changes in power consumption have not been discussed. We may need to present a direction of some sort on this point as well.
- While domestic issues are important, presenting recommendations to the global arena is also necessary. We should consider how Japan can make a global contribution.

- Other

The secretariat informed the group of the date and time of the next meeting.

(8) Closing