

Section 9

Promotion of International Strategy

1 Promotion of international policy

(1) Promotion of the Asia Broadband Program

As an action plan to build a broadband environment in the Asia region, MIC and related ministries formulated the “Asia Broadband Program” in March 2003 on the basis of the “e-Japan Priority Policy Program-2002” and “Basic Policies for Economic and Fiscal Policy Management and Structural Reform 2002.” This Program aims to make Asia an information hub by 2010. In addition “the e-Japan Strategy II”, “e-Japan Priority Policy Program 2004”, and “IT Policy Package 2005” promote efforts to achieve this goal.

(2) Bilateral and Multilateral Efforts

Between Japan and the United States, for example, the Japanese and the US governments exchanged recommendations in variety of fields including telecommunications in December 2005 concerning regulatory reform and competition policy initiatives. In June 2005, the fourth Japan-US ICT Dialogue was held aiming at exchanging a wide range of opinions on appropriate regulatory decisions and cooperation concerning ICT in Japan and the US in the course of broadband deployment and rapid technology development.

Furthermore, “An Action Plan for EU-Japan Cooperation,” which sets forth concrete fields and content for ten years of cooperation starting in 2001, was adopted in the EU-Japan Summit Meeting held in Brussels (Belgium) in December 2001. This Action Plan specifies fields of cooperation and details of cooperation between the EU and Japan. In June 2004, the “Joint Statement on Cooperation on Information and Communication Technology” was issued in the joint press statement of the 13th Japan-EU summit meeting. On the other hand, multilateral efforts have also been made in the various stages including the New Round of negotiations within the framework of the WTO, Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), G8 Summit, and ASEAN +3 (Japan, China, Korea) Telecommunication and IT Ministers Meeting.

(3) Cooperation and coordination between Japan, China and Korea

In September 2002, the First China-Japan-Korea ICT Ministers’ Meeting was held in Marrakesh, Morocco, with the aim of promoting cooperation among Japan, China, and the Republic of Korea in the information and

communications field and with the attendance of representatives from private companies and research institutes in the three countries. The Third China-Japan-Korea ICT Ministers’ Meeting was held in Sapporo, Japan in July 2004. From the viewpoint of further promoting cooperation among Japan, China, and the Republic of Korea in the information and communications field, the “arrangement on cooperation in information and communication sector” that had been agreed to in 2003 was revised, and “cooperation on RFID tags/sensor networks” and other matters were included as new cooperative items.

(4) World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)

The World Summit on the Information Society is a UN Conference under the leadership of the ITU (International Telecommunication Union) with the aim to formulate a common vision of the global information society and to examine specific measures to realize this vision.

The second phase of the WSIS took place in Tunis, Tunisia in November 2005 to discuss specific implementation measures for the Plan of Action adopted in Geneva, key elements of Internet governance, and elimination of the digital divide. As a result, the Tunis Summit adopted the Tunis Commitment and the Agenda for the Information Society.

Meanwhile, the Japanese government has been actively contributing by, for example, holding a WSIS thematic meeting on a ubiquitous network society in Japan in May 2005, and drawing up the proposal on foreseeable problems toward the realization of a ubiquitous network society and specific measures to overcome such challenges.

2 Promotion of international cooperation

Information and communications are attracting high expectation as a form of infrastructure that, among other things, leads to economic development, the expansion of employment, and improvement of the national life. In developing countries though, there are still, for example, about 30 countries in which the telephone diffusion rate does not even reach one unit per 100 persons, and the international digital divide is widening. Therefore, there is a growing need to construct information and communication networks around the world, including in developing countries. The MIC supports human resource development in the ICT field, assists with the formulation of ICT policies and systems through policy dialogue with information and communication ministries in devel-

oping countries, assists with development of information and communications infrastructure through implementation of joint international experiments and so on, and supports international and regional organizations that promote global cooperation for eliminating the international digital divide. At the same time, it contributes to the sustainable development of the information and communications field in developing countries in cooperation with such organizations as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and the Japanese Bank of International Cooperation (JBIC), mainly through official development assistance (ODA).

3 Promotion of international standardization activities

The ITU (International Telecommunication Union) plays a key role in international standardization in the field of information and communications. The standardization activities within the ITU are undertaken by the ITU-T (ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector) and the ITU-R (ITU Radiocommunication Sector). The ITU-T conducts standardization work for various technical issues in the telecommunications field. In the current session (2005-2008) emphasis is being made on the pro-

motion of standardization of the optical transmission network and next generation network (NGN) which is the next-generation all-packet network that can replace the existing telephone network. In addition, discussions have been undertaken about the standardization plan for new issues such as home networks and radio frequency identification (RFID).

Japan has made a positive contribution to the Study Groups (SGs), which undertake specific standardization activities, by appointing two Chairmen and eight Vice-Chairmen of the SGs from Japan.

The tasks of the ITU-R include revision of radio regulations, research and formulation of recommendations for issues such as technologies and operations of radiocommunication, and allocation and registration of frequencies. The standardization work has currently been taking place for the fourth-generation mobile communications system, broadband wireless access system, Emergency Warning System, and disaster radio system.

Japan is making a positive contribution to the work of the ITU-R during the current session (2003-2007); for example, Japan assumes a number of key positions, including appointing four Vice-Chairmen to the SGs and the participation of a number of experts in SG meetings.

Section 10

● Development of Postal Service Administration

1 Efforts of Japan Post

(1) Overview and privatization of Japan Post

Regarding the postal business, the Basic Law on the Administrative Reform of the Central Government (enacted in 1998), which was established to lay down the basic principles for reforming government ministries, stipulated that a new state-run public corporation should be established that would operate in accordance with policies, such as to enable autonomous and flexible management under the self-supporting accounting system, an introduction of corporate accounting principles, and a shift from ex-ante control through Diet approval of its budget to ex post facto evaluation of the formulation of mid-term management goals. Japan Post was then inaugurated in April 2003 after the enactment of the Japan Post Law (2002).

Based on "the Basic Policy on the Privatization of the Postal Services" (issued in September 2004), the government submitted the bills on postal services priva-

tization to the Diet, which were then enacted on October 14, 2005. Japan Postal Services Holding Company was established on January 23, 2006 as a preparation and planning company to formulate the implementation plan concerning the inheritance of services of Japan Post and prepare the establishment of four companies that would inherit the services: Postal Service Company, Post Office Company, Postal Savings Bank, and Postal Insurance Company. Japan Post will be privatized in October 2007, and the final state of privatization will be realized within a 10-year transitional period.

(2) Discussions about measures to promote competition in postal services

With the establishment of Japan Post, the "Law concerning Correspondence Delivery Provided by Private-Sector Operators" was enforced in April 2003, allowing private businesses to conduct correspondence delivery services, which had been conducted solely by the state. Delivery services by private businesses are classified