

6 *Advances in Public Sector Info-communications*

1. Joint Development of Public Sector Telecommunications Systems

Based on the Law Regarding the Promotion of Research and Development on Joint Operation Initiatives Dealing with Network Technology, in fiscal 2000, the MPT, with the cooperation of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Fisheries Agency of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, plans to add (1) a telecommunications system to upgrade fisheries information usage and (2) a telecommunications system to enhance the changeover from paper to electronic application procedures at local governments. The MPT submitted to the 147th Diet draft legislation revising this law, and in April 2000, the law was promulgated.

2. Developing a Geographic Information System

The MPT is promoting several activities to lay the groundwork for an advanced geographic information system (GIS), including R&D of an information system for distributed GIS construction and information technology for three-dimensional GIS construction.

3. Advances in Regional Info-communications

The MPT supports the development of advanced regional info-communications networks and info-communications R&D that uses the full potential of Japan's regions. During fiscal 1999

numerous regional info-communications-related projects were undertaken: 16 model construction projects to build models for the enhancement and promotion of wide-area regional telecommunications networks, 26 regional Internet infrastructure construction support projects, and eight research projects on urban community network model composed of advanced technologies. In fiscal 2000, project to enhance wide-area regional info-communications network infrastructure will be undertaken under the auspices of the Project for Ensuring Equal Access to Info-communications Infrastructure.

4. Encouraging Development in Okinawa

Desiring to make Okinawa an info-communications hub for the Asia-Pacific region, the MPT has proposed an "Okinawa Multimedia Special District Concept" and is undertaking numerous activities toward that end: (1) development of the info-communications infrastructure; (2) encouraging personnel development and R&D; (3) development of advanced applications; (4) integration of the info-communications industry; and (5) strengthening the region's information-producing functions. Additionally, the ministry is developing additional info-communications activities focused on the city of Nago in Okinawa, in light of the government's policy of aggressively developing the northern region of Okinawa prefecture, including the hosting of a Kyushu-Okinawa Summit in July 2000.