

New Year's Greeting



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Happy New Year!
At the beginning of a new year, our cabinet office is working hard to lift Japan into a new stage of social and economic prosperity. To reinvigorate the development of our nation, we must improve our international competitiveness in the global environment and cultivate opportunities in new frontiers as they arise.

The application of ICT to new innovation can make a large contribution to achieving this goal, and in June last year, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) published its ICT strategy and policy for growth, which sets out our vision for growth based on the use of ICT.

The aim of this strategy is to develop Japan's economy and contribute to the international community by promoting the use of ICT, which creates new value-added industries through the use of geospatial information, big data and the like, and resolves social issues such as the growing demand for medicine, caregiving and healthcare, and the need for regional stimulation measures, disaster prevention and sustainable resources.

Looking overseas, top Japanese officials have been strenuously promoting ICT — especially the Japanese terrestrial digital television system (ISDB-T) — in developing countries. As a result, the Japanese system was adopted as a national standard by Botswana in February, followed by Guatemala in May, and Honduras in September. In November the Philippines reaffirmed their commitment to the Japanese system, which is now used by a total of sixteen countries worldwide.

Likewise, we hope to make steady progress in increasing the adoption of Japan's terrestrial digital television standard, and we will contribute to the world by expanding the cooperative relationships we have built in terrestrial digital television into the entire ICT field in order to resolve diverse social issues in a wide range of areas.

In September, with the aim of strengthening our international ties and dealings with other ASEAN countries in the field of information security (one of the cornerstones of socioeconomic activity), the ASEAN-Japan Ministerial Policy Meeting on Cybersecurity Cooperation was held in Tokyo. This event allowed us to further strengthen our international liaisons in order to construct a safe and secure environment in which to conduct business and use ICT.

Meanwhile, Japan is also contributing to the international development of ICT through its activities in international and regional organizations, where the ITU plays a very important role.

As part of its efforts to connect people in the world through the

use of ICT, the ITU has held "Connect" summits in various parts of the world. We discussed the ICT vision for the Asia-Pacific region in the year 2020 at the Connect Asia-Pacific Summit held in Thailand back in November.

The ITU Telecom World 2013 event was also held concurrently with the Connect summit, and included presentations and forums relating to the latest technologies, services and policy trends in the ICT field. With a focus on international cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, Japan set up and exhibited a Japan Pavilion with the cooperation of many Japanese businesses and organizations.

This year will be of greater importance to the ITU, as the highest decision-making body, the ITU's quadrennial plenipotentiary conference (PP-14) is to be held in South Korea in October. This conference will decide the direction of the ITU for the next four years, so it is important that we pay close attention to this event.

Japan is one of the ITU's biggest contributor nations, and the MIC will continue to be proactive in its support for the ITU and its participation in ITU conferences.

With the aim of allowing people throughout the Asia-Pacific region to gain equal benefits from ICT, a regional organization called the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) is working in the field of telecommunications to cultivate expertise, participate in standardization and so on. Japan is a contributor to the APT, and continues to support it by providing human expertise and financial assistance.

The importance of MIC's role as an overseer of ICT is continuing to grow. By reliably implementing a range of different measures, we will continue to work as a single body in order to empower and enrich the lives of Japanese citizens. Your continued support and cooperation for another year is deeply appreciated.

I'd like to conclude by wishing you all a happy and healthy New Year. I hope 2014 brings you everything you wish for.