

Welcoming the New Year



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Happy New Year! I hope 2014 has got off to a good start for all of you.

Happily, it looks like Japan is showing signs of a gradual recovery. In September last year, the announcement that Tokyo would be hosting the 2020 Summer Olympics and Paralympics gave a boost to the economy, so the country's outlook is looking bright for some distance into the future.

In Japan last year, various initiatives were taken based on a new growth strategy in order to reinvigorate the country. These initiatives recognized the central role that ICT plays in Japan's development strategy, and included not only stimulating the domestic economy, but also promoting international development efforts such as stimulating the spread of the latest ICT throughout the world. I think it can be said that these efforts have borne fruit.

Taking a broad view of the ICT sector in recent years, various measures have been developed around keywords such as Big Data, geospatial information, 4K/8K television, cutting-edge communications infrastructure, and standardization.

In addition, while the country is still recovering from the Great East Japan Earthquake, it experienced widespread flooding, landslides and other problems caused by typhoons and other adverse conditions last year. Attention has thus been drawn to the importance of providing an ICT infrastructure that can cope robustly with natural disasters.

Furthermore, it seems to me that the importance of international standardization efforts is being recognized once again in Japan's promotion of overseas expansion in fields such as ICT, terrestrial digital television and broadcast content.

Under these circumstances, and with the guidance of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and supporting members, the ITU Association of Japan has joined in with the activities of the ITU (International Telecommunication Union) and with the organization and running of conferences and other events held by ICT-related international organizations. We have also put effort into activities such as holding study meetings and providing diverse information relating to the latest ICT.

For example, at the ITU-R WP5D meeting held in Sapporo in July last year, the study of additional frequency bands for IMT (International Mobile Telecommunications) was performed collectively by 185 participants from 36 countries, and was a great success. At the 2013 ITU Telecom World conference held in Thailand in November, the Japanese pavilion became the focus of interest from people of all nationalities. The ITU Association of Japan also cooperated with these events.

We also held about 30 events by the ITU and various study

meetings related to the latest ICT technology, and welcomed over two thousand individual specialists from this field.

The ITU Association of Japan has also been actively building a website as a means of supplying people with up-to-date information, and publishing the ITU Journal and New Breeze magazines. In particular, the English-language journal New Breeze is enjoyed in over 190 countries worldwide by people involved in the telecommunications industry.

Thus our involvement in a diverse range of conferences, meetings and other events is not just good news for the ITU Association of Japan, but also something that should be actively encouraged in the future.

Early this year, we will be preparing to welcome ICT trainees from many countries as part of the JICA training course. From the end of June, we will be hosting the ITU's Japan conference on multimedia (to be held in Sapporo like last year), and the ITU-T SG16 study group. The ITU Association of Japan is looking forward to participating in these events.

To welcome the New Year, we will promote the improvement of Japan's presence by establishing links between the world's peoples and nations as the ITU and APT, while refreshing our links with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and supporting members.

Thank you for your continued support and encouragement over the coming year.