

2016 New Year Greeting from the Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications



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Happy New Year!

I would like to thank you for your kind cooperation and assistance as always on behalf of all the staff at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

This year we will redouble the efforts of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications to formulate and implement effective measures that allow all citizens to move one step ahead and contribute dynamically. We will do this by working in partnership with related ministries in recognition of the fact that we need to do whatever we can to continue pursuing the economic recovery and regional stimulation initiatives arising from the broad agreements reached by the TPP last year.

ICT is a crucial field that not only provides an indispensable platform for all forms of socioeconomic activity and everyday living, but is also the key to generating growth and employment by accelerating investment in Japan's future and promoting creativity and innovation in provincial areas.

With the arrival of the IoT/Big Data era when new value will be created by exploiting all kinds of data, the government will also have to support Japan's further growth. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications is making rapid progress in service development support, budgetary provision and the like based on an IoT testbed, and in the preparation of systems that can cope with the expanded deployment of practical security training based on last December's interim report of the Information and Communications Council in order to devise new ICT strategies for the IoT/Big Data era and promote the development and practical use of cutting-edge technology.

The 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games will give Japan an ideal opportunity to demonstrate its high standard of ICT to the rest of the world. In anticipation of Japan's sustained growth following the Olympics, we will work towards the creation of the world's highest standard of ICT environments through advanced research and development and promoting the spread of ultra-high definition immersive 4K and 8K video technology. To make our foreign visitors feel welcome, we will make further advances in the implementation of "whole-society" ICT. For example, by organically combining multi-language voice translation systems with digital signage that enables the simultaneous transmission of disaster information and the like, we can configure a cloud environment where it is possible to

supply information that is tailored to the attributes of individuals, including their mother tongue.

From the viewpoint of increasing the disposable income of households, revitalizing the economy and improving the life of citizens, we are firmly resolved to establish smartphones as an infrastructure supporting people's everyday lives. Specifically, in line with the policy we established in December last year, we aim to establish a competitive environment for fixed-line and mobile phones, such as reducing smartphone fees and optimizing retail via smart terminals to promote the diversification of MVNO services, and we will then promote the spread of ultra-fast broadband and the like.

To capture the expanding international market, we will continue working in partnership with the Fund Corporation for the Overseas Development of Japan's ICT and Postal Services Inc. (JICT) to promote high-quality infrastructure investment that draws on the strengths and features of Japan's ICT. In addition, by promoting international expansion of broadcast content that contributes to the stimulation of regional economies and enhancing and strengthening international television broadcasting at the World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium (WTIS-15) in Hiroshima back in November, we are taking the initiative to promote the use of development assistance and other forms of ICT in solving regional issues expressed by relevant government officials of developing countries regarding ICT development.

In conjunction with the G7 Ise-Shima Summit, which will be hosted by Japan in May this year, a G7 ICT Ministers' Meeting will also be held on April 29 and 30 in Takamatsu city, Kagawa prefecture. On themes such as IoT and security measures that are of interest to countries around the world, we will engage in deep discussions with ministers from other G7 nations, and we will demonstrate Japan's leadership in the ICT field by contributing to ministerial discussions.

Although the issues to be tackled by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications are diverse and multi-faceted, we will once again mobilize our policy resources this year in order to concentrate our utmost efforts into solving them.

I'm looking forward to taking on these challenges with you over the coming year, and I hope that by next January we will be able to say that 2016 was a "leap year" in more ways than one.