

2018 New Year's Greetings from the Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications



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Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications

To begin with, I would like to wish everyone a very happy New Year.

Since assuming office of Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications five months ago, I have visited local communities and inquired about their conditions. While attaching great importance to the viewpoints of residents and consumers, I have devoted myself to the administrative field of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), which is closely and broadly involved with the lives of citizens.

Japan has entered a mature period with a population that is predicted to decrease even further in the years to come. Under these circumstances, establishing a sustainable society that enables everyone regardless of gender or age to provide mutual support is an extremely important issue.

A great deal of wisdom and experience accumulates in a mature nation. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications has likewise accumulated a wide variety of data, technologies, and knowledge over the process of administering policies in the diverse areas under its supervision. This year, as well, I plan to put these resources to work and devote all of my energy toward the creation of a “peaceful, kind, and sustainable society” in which everyone can work together and live a happy life.

I believe the key to regional revitalization is diversity, inclusion, and sustainability. I would like to emphasize this viewpoint in MIC policies.

Establishing the world's highest-standard ICT environment

Information and communications technology (ICT) is the “trump card” that creates new added value by interconnecting all kinds of resources including people, things, and data. ICT penetrates every corner of people's lives as an indispensable platform for all sorts of social and economic activities. To maximize the benefits of ICT, we will promote the “use of ICT throughout society” by ensuring cybersecurity, further enhancing the ICT platform, and promoting widespread use of ICT. Additionally, as a compass to guide us in this endeavor, we will formulate new information and communications policies for creating Japan's future with an eye to the 2030s and beyond when the drop in population and the aging society likely intensify.

With the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 in view, we are working to establish an ICT environment of the world's highest standard by introducing a fifth-generation mobile communications system, promoting an advanced platform for video delivery as in new 4K/8K satellite broadcasting (scheduled for launch in December of this year), furthering the research and development of a multi-lingual speech translation system, and achieving a society in

which all vehicles are connected to the network.

It is important that diverse services are provided with reasonable rates so that users can enjoy the convenience of communication services by smartphones. To this end, I will work toward creating an environment that ensures fair competition in a market that includes mobile virtual network operators (MVNOs).

I will also enhance our efforts at achieving a smooth migration of the fixed telephone network—Japan's core communications infrastructure—to an IP network while ensuring a fair and competitive environment and user convenience.

At the same time, I will push for more effective utilization of the radio spectrum, which we can expect to affect a wide range of fields as the core element of the ICT platform.

Enhancing cyber security and ensuring safe and secure ICT

As we enter into a full-scale Internet of Things (IoT) era, cyber attacks on IoT devices are suddenly increasing and the strengthening of cybersecurity is becoming an urgent matter. At MIC, we are enhancing the system for formulating cybersecurity policies, steadily advancing “IoT security comprehensive measures,” enhancing countermeasures to Internet incidents, and upgrading training for security professionals. In addition, we continue to deal with the dissemination of illegal and harmful information and to work on creating a safe-and-secure radio environment.

Promoting the use of IoT, big data, AI, and the sharing economy for greater productivity

New applications of ICT such as IoT, big data, artificial intelligence (AI), and the sharing economy can lead to new business models and greater productivity. It is the key to solving regional issues and achieving sustainable economic growth. We will support the comprehensive creation of new IoT services and their regional implementation to steadily realize the “Road Map to Promote Regional IoT Implementation.”

In the area of AI, our efforts are centered on social implementation and research and development. We will promote the implementation of fundamental AI technologies in a wide variety of fields and accelerate the research and development of next-generation AI technologies. We will also proactively contribute to discussions at G7, G20, OECD and other international meetings to achieve a sound development of AI networking.

In addition, we will actively promote the introduction of new technologies and mechanisms such as blockchain technology and information trusting functions to promote the expanded use of data.

In closing, I wish everyone great health and good fortune to come.

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