

Minister KANEKO's 2022 New Year's Greeting



KANEKO Yasushi

Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications

Happy New Year to all!

In October last year, I assumed the position of Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) handles wide ranging policy related to the daily lives of people in Japan, such as local economies, fire departments, information and communications, the postal system, and statistics. We are putting every effort into accelerating digital reform of all of society, building revitalized communities, and building national resiliency with disaster prevention and mitigation, while also working steadily to realize the “Digital Garden City National Concept,” a priority initiative of Prime Minister Kishida.

At the end of last year, a supplementary budget was established, for economic measures based on four main themes. These include initiating a “new capitalism” and ensuring safety and security for all citizens. We will work hard, with a sense of urgency, to advance these initiatives.

Toward digital reform of all of society, we are putting every effort into realizing the “Digital Garden City National Concept,” lead by the “MIC Digital Garden City National Concept Promotion Office.”

Implementing a digital garden city nation will require the digital infrastructure to be consolidated in all regions, and digitalization of administration.

Initiatives we will work on include full integration of 5G networks (fifth-generation mobile communication systems) in regional and urban areas; promotion of “Local 5G,” which will contribute to solving regional issues; consolidation of infrastructure such as optical fiber, which will help revitalize regional areas and reduce the disparity with urban areas; relocation of data centers, which are extremely centralized around Tokyo, in regional areas; and completion of the “Digital Garden City Super Highway,” a network that will surround Japan with domestic submarine optical cables.

We will also continue to study information and communication policy, including directions for markets and technical development.

Regarding mobile telephone services, we will continue to build an environment with competition among operators, with initiatives to smooth the transition to lower-cost plans, among others.

To consolidate 5G and other digital infrastructure quickly, we will be studying ways for allocating new frequencies for mobile

phone use, including examples from various other countries.

To ensure the efficacy of regulations regarding foreign investment in the information and communications field, MIC will quickly consolidate the necessary regulations, including the final proposals from the upcoming experts meeting, so that foreign-investment compliance conditions can be understood and verified, and so that operators and others can comply with the regulations reliably. At the same time, we will also study the future of broadcasting and broadcasting systems in the digital era, including the rapid changes in broadcasting environments, such as the spread of video viewing over the internet.

To secure a safe and reliable cyberspace, we are increasing efforts to build environments for analyzing cyber-security information and for training personnel, while also promoting security measures taken by telecommunications operators. We are also advancing comprehensive policies to deal with slander and defamation on the internet, promoting platform-operator efforts to delete it, preparing to enact revised regulations on provider responsibilities, and enhancing educational efforts and consultation systems.

We will invest even more into research and development of advanced technologies such as Beyond 5G, which will bring low-power digital infrastructure in the future and also quantum encrypted communication and AI, continuing to bring together public and private knowledge. We will also use the Beyond 5G New Business Strategy Center, comprising industry, government and academia, to obtain intellectual property rights and to promote international standardization.

With changes in the global environment, it is necessary to guarantee Japan's economic security, to strengthen our international competitiveness, and to forge deeper international cooperation.

To achieve these, we will engage in policy dialog to cultivate shared understanding on issues such as the use of AI and circulation of data, and will promote international development of MIC's superior technologies and services such as 5G, submarine optical cables, broadcast content, the postal system, fire-fighting, administrative consultation, and statistics.

Please accept my New Year's greeting, wishing everyone health and great happiness in the coming year!

New Year's Day, 2022