

Welcoming in the New Year



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Wishing Everyone a Very Happy New Year!
As we look back on 2021, we can see that the number of COVID-19 cases in Japan began to drop from early autumn, bringing some relief to society. From here on, we must keep a close watch on social trends, but we can assume that the “with-corona” lifestyle brought on by the widespread use of teleworking, online meetings, and webinars will continue thanks to the distinctive features of these formats. I expect 2022 to be an outstanding year filled with new trends and lively activities using information and communications technology (ICT).

Looking back at last year’s International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) meetings and events that the ITU Association of Japan (ITU-AJ) was involved in, many were postponed or held online.

At ITU-AJ, we held the 50th Anniversary Ceremony of The ITU Association of Japan in an online format on September 1, 2021. This ceremony included the presentation of various awards. Mr. Yoshio Utsumi was presented with the MIC Minister’s Award and ITU-AJ 50th Anniversary Honor Award, and Dr. Yasuhiko Ito, Dr. Akira Hashimoto, and Mr. Makoto Miura were presented with the MIC Minister’s Award and ITU-AJ 50th Anniversary Special Award. In addition, 11 individuals were presented with the ITU- AJ 50th Anniversary Commemorative Award and 3 individuals were presented with the ITU-AJ Special Achievement Award. I extend my congratulations to all award winners! Then, in the second half of the ceremony, we held an online panel discussion with Mr. Houlin Zhao, Secretary-General of ITU, Mr. Masanori Kondo, Secretary General of Asia-Pacific Telecommunity, and Mr. Yasuo Tawara, Director-General of Global Strategy Bureau, MIC.

Continuing on, “Celebration of World Telecommunication and Information Society Day” postponed from May was held on November 30, 2021 at the Keio Plaza Hotel and distributed online. At this event, Mr. Yoichi Maeda (Telecommunication Technology Committee), who has long been involved in international standardization activities at ITU and APT, was presented with the MIC Minister’s Award, and the Fight against COVID-19 using Fugaku: Droplet Simulation Project Team (representative researcher: Makoto Tsubokura, RIKEN) at RIKEN was presented with a Special Award. In addition, 9

individuals were presented with the Achievement Award and 16 individuals and 4 groups were presented with the Encouragement Award. Congratulations to one and all!

This year, we can expect commercial services of the fifth-generation mobile communications system (5G) to expand and evolve. Hopes are high that ICT technologies including 5G will help solve social problems and drive a quantum leap toward Society 5.0. At the same time, there is a need for awareness-raising activities about carbon neutrality as a global movement.

In relation to ITU, the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA) is scheduled to be held in March 2022 and the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) in June 2022. Then, in September and October, the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference will be held in Romania making 2022 a milestone year indeed. This is a truly important meeting since Japan will be backing Seizo Onoe, Chief Standardization Strategy Officer (CSSO) at NTT, as a candidate for director of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T). Based on our experiences to date, ITU-AJ will continue to provide flexible support for ITU and APT meetings and events while collaborating with all concerned.

I would like to extend my appreciation for the support given by many to ITU-AJ over many years. Going forward, we will enhance our efforts in building a strong bridge between the ITU on one side and the Japanese government and our supporting members on the other.

In closing, I would like to pass on my sincere wishes to everyone for a healthy and prosperous New Year.

■ Guests and Award Winners

