

2023 MIC Minister's New Year's Greeting



Takeaki Matsumoto

Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications

Happy New Year's to you all. My name is Takeaki MATSUMOTO, and I was appointed Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications in November of last year.

Since assuming this post, I am reminded of the broad jurisdiction of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, administering many important fields that form the core of our nation and support our citizen's daily lives, including local economies, elections, fire fighting, information and communications, broadcasting, the postal system, public-sector evaluation, and statistics.

As the Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications, I am prepared to put all of my effort into fulfilling my duty, working to implement our policies for all citizens of Japan.

Supporting digital reform

The top priority policy of Prime Minister Kishida's cabinet is his "Vision for a Digital Garden City Nation," and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications will put all of our effort into realizing it, as the administration for local administration and finance, and for information and communication.

To realize this "Vision for a Digital Garden City Nation" will require consolidation of regional digital infrastructure and DX of local governments. To this end, we are completing integration of 5G networks in urban and regional areas, completing and maintaining regional fiber-optic networks, distributing data centers in regional areas and completing fiber-optic submarine cable networks.

We are also promoting a comprehensive technology strategy for "Beyond 5G," the next-generation information and communications infrastructure, utilizing funding from the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology (NICT), which has been made permanent through legislative amendments. This involves accelerating R&D and implementation in society, promoting a comprehensive technology strategy including obtaining intellectual property and international standardization, and promoting R&D on important advanced technologies such as quantum communication, AI and space development.

Addressing internal and external environmental change

We are addressing internal and external changes in our business environment with rapid technical innovation.

We are working to promote economic security and stability amid rapidly changing international conditions in the field of information and communications, and also to strengthen our international competitiveness and have deeper international cooperation. In particular, we are promoting "Data Free-Flow with Trust" (DFFT) through the G7 and the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), which will be held in Japan this year, by building high-quality, robust network infrastructure to support it, and by holding discussions toward international cooperation promoting and maintaining a free and open internet.

We are also promoting cooperation with the ITU more than ever before, as Japan's Dr. Seizo ONOE assumes the position of Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau of the ITU in January this year. We are also promoting international expansion of the excellent MIC technologies and services in areas including 5G, optical submarine cable, broadcast content, postal services, fire fighting, administrative consulting, and statistics.

The rapid changes in technical innovation and international circumstances are also bringing great changes in business and user environments, resulting in more new issues. In anticipation of this, we are asking the Information and Communications Council to deliberate on directions that information and communications policy must take in Japan looking ten years in the future.

Considering the series of communications faults that occurred last year, due to disasters and other causes, we are working to be able to introduce roaming between operators as quickly as possible during disasters, so that operators can utilize each other's networks. As part of our comprehensive measures in this area, we are also promoting means of communication other than roaming, such as using public Wi-Fi or devices with multiple SIMs.

We are also increasing support for cyber security measures, such as personnel training and data analysis, considering the increased risk of damage from cyber attacks last year. We are also promoting comprehensive measures to deal with abuse and defamation on the internet and to streamline provision of aid to victims through consistent application of the "Amended Act on the Limitation of Liability for Damages of Specified Telecommunications Service Providers," to promote efforts by platform operators to remove such content, and by strengthening systems for education and consultation.

Considering the changes taking place in the broadcasting environment, such as viewers moving away from television and increasingly watching video through the internet, we are also reexamining NHK and commercial television's broadcast systems as broadcasters in the digital age. It is important for NHK to continue to fulfill its mission as a public broadcaster, according to the demands of the age, and with that in mind, we are studying how the internet should be utilized in our work.

Regarding use of mobile telephone frequencies, we are also studying how the system for reallocating frequencies can operate smoothly, and how to secure new bandwidth for mobile communications.

To continue providing useful public statistics in response to changes in the economy and society, we have also bolstered our system for securing the required personnel. We continue comprehensive quality management and promotion of statistics reforms with measures such as personnel training and digitalization.

Conclusion

Please allow me to conclude my New Year's greeting by wishing you all health and much happiness in the coming year!