2024 MIC Minister's New Year's Greeting

Takeaki Matsumoto
Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications

Happy New Year's to all of you. My name is Takeaki MATSUMOTO, and I was reappointed Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications in December, 2023.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) forms the core of our government, supporting daily life for our citizens in many areas, 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 will put all of my effort into fulfilling my duty, working to implement our policies for all citizens of Japan.

Enhancing information and communication infrastructure, promoting regional digital transformation

We are enhancing information and communication infrastructure to support regional digital transformation, as part of implementing the "Vision for a Digital Garden City Nation."

We are completing integration of 5G networks in urban and regional areas, completing and maintaining fiber-optic networks in remote areas, distributing data centers regionally, and completing fiber-optic submarine cable networks.

To enable dramatic increases in use of radio in society and the economy, we are also studying allocation of new frequencies, and how to introduce non-terrestrial networks seamlessly.

To create solutions to regional issues using these types of digital infrastructure, we are also implementing advanced digital technologies such as automated driving.

To realize a society in which everyone can enjoy the benefits of digital transformation, we are advancing support for use of digital technologies by populations such as the elderly, improving literacy across all generations, and promoting barrier-free access to information for those-with-disabilities.

We are also promoting measures dealing with abuse and defamation on the internet, to streamline provision of aid to victims through consistent application of the "Act on the Limitation of Liability for Damages of Specified Telecommunications Service Providers," promoting efforts by platform operators to accelerate and improve transparency of efforts, and strengthening systems for education and consultation.

We are also promoting policy conforming to changes in the environment surrounding information and communication, including discussion in the Information and Communications Council of how communication policy should change with the times. We are conducting comprehensive review of necessary revisions to related legal systems, such as the "Telecommunications Business Act," and the "Act on Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation, etc."

Regarding broadcast systems in the digital era, to provide broadcasts with reliable information in the expanding information space, we will need to promote policies that support business sustainability and fulfill the overall role of broadcasting with expanding usage of the internet, and also promote further study of these issues.

Regarding use of the internet by NHK, we are taking necessary measures including preparing systems and conducting studies toward suitable broadcast content production environments.

Promoting advanced initiatives to enhance competitiveness and cooperation internationally

Amid rapidly changing international conditions, we plan to ensure economic security in the information and communications and postal domains, strengthening international competitiveness and promoting deeper international cooperation.

Last year, the Internet Governance Forum was held in October, and the G7 leaders held a Digital and Tech ministers' meeting in December, compiling the "Hiroshima AI Process Comprehensive Policy Framework," which was the first international policy framework on generative AI. Expansion of results of the Hiroshima AI Process in international society will promote international cooperation in implementation of reliable AI and the implementation and maintenance of a free and open internet.

We are also working strategically on forming international rules with organizations such as the Universal Postal Union (UPU), the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), and the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT), which have many directors appointed from Japan.

We are promoting overseas expansion of our technologies, systems and services in MIC-related fields: in digital infrastructure such as 5G and Open RAN and also broadcast content, postal services, fire fighting, and administrative consulting. These technologies excel in safety, reliability and security.

Regarding "Beyond 5G," which is the next-generation information and communications infrastructure, we are utilizing National Institute of Information and Communications Technology (NICT) funding to support R&D and international standardization of all-photonics networks, including implementation in society and expansion outside of Japan.

We are also working on data-related issues and promoting R&D on important advanced technologies such as AI, space development, and quantum communication.

We are promoting cyber-security measures such as HR training and data analysis to account for recent increasing risk of damage due to cyber attacks.

In particular, based on revisions to the NICT Act established in an extraordinary session of the Diet last year, we continue to promote and expand NICT's survey of vulnerable IoT devices, and contribute to further measures to strengthen IoT device security in collaboration with a wide range of communications operators, manufacturers and other related-parties.

MIC is also working to accelerate policies related to economic measures.

In public relations, we are also working to promote a deeper understanding of MIC policies.

Conclusion

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