

New Year's Message



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Best wishes for the New Year!
New Year's Day in 2024 brought the earthquake on the Noto peninsula, causing enormous damage. Even now, we continue to pray for recovery efforts and a return to regular life. Then, on January 2, there was an airline accident at Haneda Airport, which was a powerful reminder that unexpected conditions can arise in systems composed of advanced technologies, and safety must be the highest priority.

Internationally, the Olympics were held in Paris, Russia's invasion of Ukraine expanded, strife in the middle-east intensified, and the year was consumed with activity to resolve conflicts and restore peace to society. We need to continue on this path toward peace, based on our human wisdom and intelligence.

Reviewing our meetings with the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) in 2024, ITU-T SG9 held the last meeting of this session Sept. 2 to 10 in Otemachi, Tokyo. There were approximately 90 participants deliberating on various issues. On the final day, a joint workshop was held between SG9 and SG16, anticipating their amalgamation at WTSA-24 in October.

The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-24) was held from October 15 to 24 in New Delhi, India, where the study group amalgamation (SG9 and SG16) proposed by Japan was agreed upon, establishing SG21. The chairperson and seven vice-chairpersons from Japan were also appointed. We pray for their activities in these positions. The ITU-AJ supported administration of these meetings.

Other ITC events included the first "Digital Academy", held December 2 to 6 in Takeshiba, Tokyo, with the World Bank taking the lead. There were approximately 80 participants, with lectures, discussions and technical visits for sessions based on themes faced by the Asia-Pacific region. ITU-AJ also provided support for this assembly.

Within the ITU-AJ, we held our annual "World Telecommunication and Information Society" ceremony on May 17 at the Keio Plaza Hotel. At the ceremony, the Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications Award was presented to Yukihiro Nishida (NHK), who worked for many years as vice-chairman of ITU-R SG6 (2007-2015) and chairman (2015-2023), contributing to International Standardization of broadcasting technology and anticipating the future of broadcasting. A special award was also given

to Dr. Maki Sugimoto (Holoeyes Inc., Teikyo University), for his work applying ICT in the medical-surgical field, actively advancing application of the latest XR, VR, AR and MR technologies for use in surgery. A further eight people and one organization received accomplishment awards, and 15 people received encouragement awards. Hearty congratulations to all of them!

The APT training office held a network planning course aimed at eliminating the digital divide from October 24 to November 1 in Shinjuku, Tokyo, with 13 participants from nine countries.

Regarding ITU meetings in 2025, ITU-R WP5D will be held in Kobe in June and July. Then, in November, the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-25) will be held in Baku, Azerbaijan. The ITU-AJ will continue to collaborate actively with relevant parties on ITU and APT assemblies and events, based on our past experience.

In March, the Mobile World Congress (MWC-25) will be held in Barcelona Spain, and the ITU-AJ will support Japanese enterprises with pavilion exhibits.

Within the ITU-AJ, we will continue operation of our Platform for Driving Digital Development Overseas, which began in 2020. By also publishing the online monthly, "ITU Journal," and the English quarterly, "New Breeze," by inviting experts to speak at research conferences, and holding informational meetings gathering a cross-section of people involved in ITU-related businesses, the ITU-AJ will continue collaboration to provide a platform for interaction among the ITU, the APT, the Japanese government, and each of the supporting members.

I wish you all a sincere Happy New Year and good health in the coming year.

■ WTSA-24 New Delhi

