



Office of the President of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

**FEDERATION OF INTERNATIONAL CABLE TV ASSOCIATION OF THE
PHILIPPINES (FICAP) 9TH CABLE CONGRESS AND EXHIBIT**

14 March 2008, 9:00 AM
Centennial Hall A, Manila Hotel

OPENING REMARKS
SECRETARY RAY ANTHONY ROXAS-CHUA III
Chairman, Commission on Information and Communications Technology

Officers and members of the Federation of International Cable TV Association of the Philippines, or FICAP, led by your National Chair Estrellita Juliano-Tamano, distinguished speakers and resource persons, guests, ladies and gentlemen, a pleasant good morning to you all.

The Commission on Information and Communications Technology, or CICT, wishes to convey its appreciation for having been invited to this 9th Cable Congress and Exhibit. This marks my first participation in this event as the Chairman of the CICT, but I am aware that for the last nine years, this event has provided a venue for prominent cable TV industry stakeholders to share their best practices and showcase the latest innovations.

This year's theme "***Developing Local Economies thru Cable TV Networks and its Value Added Services***" speaks of the industry's commitment to provide opportunities for convergence and economic progress through relevant cable TV technologies.

As we all know, cable has long had the ability to deliver high quality video services and content to our citizens. However, as voice, video and data services continue to converge toward the holy grail of triple play, many ICT stakeholders see the potential of cable to become a primary delivery mechanism for voice and data services. Already many cable operators are offering broadband access and Voice-over-IP services, and we believe this trend will continue and even accelerate. As a result, cable operators are becoming key contributors to the growth of broadband subscribers in the country by providing citizens with a viable alternative to the traditional telcos. With the cost of broadband access still beyond the reach of many segments of the population, we believe the competitive dynamic that the cable industry brings is essential to transforming the Philippines into an information society.

As the lead ICT agency of the government, the CICT recognizes the need to enhance the coverage of broadband access in the country, which is among the lowest in the Asia Pacific region and in the world. Our Philippine Community e-Center Program aims to provide broadband connectivity to all municipalities by 2010 through the provision of

PCs, broadband connections, relevant content and training programs. We hope these Community e-Centers, or CeCs, can become champions of socio-economic development in the countryside, with CeC managers figuring prominently as ICT leaders in their respective communities. In relation to this, the CICT believes cable infrastructure can play a part in the expansion of the country's broadband coverage and the provision of broadband connectivity to our CeCs.

One major misconception of broadband is that it benefits only businesses and the wealthy. On the contrary, the CICT believes that broadband can greatly improve the lives of the disadvantaged segments of the population. Microentrepreneurs can reach broader markets around the country and even around the world without having to invest much capital. Talented Filipinos can gain instant global recognition over the Internet, such as in the case of Charice Pempengco. The Internet provides free access to relevant information, such as news, health and employment. The emergence of VoIP allows OFWs to communicate with their loved ones for free or at very little cost. Alternative internet-based remittance methods have dramatically driven down the cost of sending money home. Finally, citizens can access government services online without having to go to the relevant government agencies. As you can see, the benefits that broadband brings to the poor are practically endless.

I know that many of you are in the cable business in order to make a profit, but whether you realize it or not, you have also become key players in the ICT development of our country. I therefore encourage you to sharpen your business models, invest more in your infrastructure and enhance the coverage of your broadband services. It is through your business acumen and willingness to take risks that broadband access will become more widespread and affordable, so we can finally leverage ICT in improving the lives of our fellow Filipinos.

Before I close, I would like to commend the FICAP for organizing this notable event. I strongly encourage all the guests present here to openly share ideas and develop new partnerships with one another. I hope everyone enjoys the exhibits and leaves this event with a better appreciation for the role of cable in our country's efforts to fully integrate with the global information society.

Thank you very much and congratulations to FICAP!