

**35TH MEETING OF APEC
TELECOMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION WORKING GROUP
PLENARY I SESSION
9:00 A.M., WEDNESDAY, 25 APRIL 2007
CROWNE PLAZA MANILA, PHILIPPINES**

***MINISTERIAL ADDRESS BY
THE HONORABLE RAMON P. SALES
CHAIRMAN, CICT***

EXCELLENCIES,
DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES FROM THE APEC I.C.T. MINISTRIES AND
PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS LED BY TEL CHAIR DR. INUK CHUNG,
ASEAN SECRETARIAT,
APEC GUESTS,
MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS,
QUEZON CITY MAYOR SONNY BELMONTE,
FELLOW GOVERNMENT WORKERS,
FRIENDS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,
GOOD MORNING!

ON BEHALF OF THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT, WE WELCOME YOU ALL
TO THE PHILIPPINES. WE HOPE THAT YOUR MEETING WILL BE A
PRODUCTIVE ONE AND THAT PRE-MEETING EXPERIENCES HAVE BEEN
POSITIVE TO DATE.

THIS IS THE SECOND TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION
WORKING GROUP THAT THE PHILIPPINES HAS HOSTED. THIS THIRTY-
FIFTH MEETING OF APECTEL IS LIKEWISE JOINTLY UNDERTAKEN BY THE
COMMISSION ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY
(CICT) AND THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (NTC).
THE LAST TIME THE PHILIPPINES HAS HOSTED A MEETING OF THIS KIND
WAS MORE THAN A DECADE AGO. SINCE THAT TIME, WE HAVE SEEN A
GREAT DEAL OF DEVELOPMENT IN ICT WHICH HAVE LED US TO REALIZE
SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS IN OUR EFFORTS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE
TRANSFORMATIONAL POTENTIAL OF ICT IN ADDRESSING OUR
COUNTRY'S NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS. GOVERNMENT
ATTEMPTED TO INCLUDE ICTS INTO MAINSTREAM POVERTY REDUCTION

STRATEGIES WHENEVER POSSIBLE DUE TO THE RECOGNITION THAT ICT ACTS AS A CATALYST FOR EMPOWERMENT AND CHANGE IN MOST CASES.

WE HAVE RECENTLY LAUNCHED THE PHILIPPINE ICT ROADMAP, A COPY OF WHICH IS PROVIDED TODAY TO EACH MEMBER-ECONOMY. THIS ROADMAP HAS BEEN CONCEIVED TO PROVIDE STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND POLICIES TO GUIDE GOVERNMENT, THE PRIVATE SECTOR, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS, IN THEIR RESPECTIVE FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES. IN OUR COMMITMENT TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS, AS WELL AS, THE PURSUIT OF THE WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY, WE, AT THE CICT, WILL CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT ICT PLANS AND PROGRAMS THAT WILL FOCUS ON ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF BUILDING A CITIZEN-CENTERED, INCLUSIVE AND DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED INFORMATION SOCIETY. THIS AGENDA HAS ALSO BEEN ALIGNED WITH THE MEDIUM TERM PHILIPPINE DEVELOPMENT PLAN. THIS ALIGNMENT HAS LED TO THE ATTAINMENT OF SOME ECONOMIC GOALS IDENTIFIED BY THE FORMATION OF SUPER-REGIONS IN THE COUNTRY, ONE OF WHICH IS THE PHILIPPINE CYBER-CORRIDOR.

THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZES THAT ACHIEVING OUR NATIONAL GOALS REQUIRES REGIONAL AND GLOBAL COOPERATION. WE THUS COMMIT TO GIVE PRIORITY TO APEC, PARTICULARLY IN THE FIELD OF ICT AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COOPERATION. IN MAKING APEC MORE EFFICIENT, I AM PLEASED TO LEARN THAT THE APECTEL HAS PROPOSED A WORK PROGRAM FOR 2007 THAT WOULD SET THE DIRECTIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE PRIORITIES OF OUR ECONOMIC LEADERS.

WITHIN THE APEC COMMUNITY, WE STRIVE COLLECTIVELY TOWARDS THE SAME GOAL OF PROVIDING UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO ICT, ALBEIT PERHAPS WITH DIFFERENT STRATEGIES BEFITTING OUR SOCIO-POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL CONDITIONS. GLOBALIZATION HAS RAISED OUR AWARENESS OF THE DIGITAL DIVIDE, AND THE PROBLEMS THIS HAS CAUSED. AS A REGIONAL COMMUNITY OF NATIONS, I BELIEVE WE ARE ALL COMMITTED AND DEDICATED TOWARDS THE STRENGTHENING OF THE ICT SECTOR THROUGH:

- 1) A STRONG LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK,
- 2) NEW AND CONTINUING INVESTMENTS OF CAPITAL IN RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVES FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR,
- 3) A COMPETITIVE AND SKILLED KNOWLEDGE WORKFORCE, AND

4) THE EXPLORATION OF INNOVATIVE ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.

WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN SOME OF THESE POLICIES TRANSFORMED INTO CONCRETE PROJECTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS WITHIN THE APECTEL COMMUNITY WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO THE ROBUST GROWTH OF THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION INDUSTRY IN THE REGION.

APECTEL HAS IMPLEMENTED A RANGE OF PRACTICAL PROJECTS IN SUPPORT OF APEC'S OBJECTIVES IN THE AREAS OF TRADE AND INVESTMENT FACILITATION AND ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION, AS WELL AS, TO ADVANCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ASIA PACIFIC INFORMATION SOCIETY (APIS). APEC REPORTS THAT GOVERNMENTS IN THE REGION HAVE NOW IMPROVED THE OVERALL TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENVIRONMENT IN THE REGION, BY REDUCING TELECOMMUNICATIONS TRADE BARRIERS WHICH HAS MADE ACCESSIBILITY AND AFFORDABILITY OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES A REALITY.

I ALSO NOTE THAT A NUMBER OF WORKSHOPS HELD THE PAST TWO DAYS HAVE FOCUSED ON MOST OF THE ISSUES AND PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY OUR LEADERS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION MINISTERS AS CRITICAL TOWARDS ACHIEVING SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES IN THE INDUSTRY. THESE PRIORITY AREAS INCLUDE REGULATORY REFORM, MUTUAL RECOGNITION AGREEMENTS, AND NETWORK SECURITY.

THE BOUNTIFUL HARVEST OF PROJECTS HAS ALLOWED APECTEL ACHIEVE SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES IN ALL AREAS COVERED BY THE WORKING GROUP, PARTICULARLY ON LIBERALIZATION-RELATED ISSUES, SECURITY AND PROSPERITY, ACTIVITIES PURSUING ICT DEVELOPMENT AND CROSS-CUTTING INITIATIVES ON HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS FACILITATION. ON A RELATED MATTER, WE WOULD LIKE TO SEEK YOUR SUPPORT AS THE PHILIPPINES PROPOSES A PROJECT ON DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY OF KNOWLEDGE COMMONS. THE CONCEPT OF THIS PROJECT IS TO EMPOWER OUR COMMUNITIES BY PROVIDING THEM WITH THE TOOLS TO DEVELOP APPLICATIONS, OR CONTENT, THAT IS RELEVANT BECAUSE IT IS COMMUNITY-LED AND DEVELOPED. WE HAVE FORMULATED THIS PROPOSAL IN LINE WITH THE OBJECTIVES STATED BY OUR ECONOMIC LEADERS IN BUILDING STRONGER SOCIETIES AND DYNAMIC AND HARMONIOUS COMMUNITIES.

WE REMAIN HOPEFUL THAT THE STRENGTH AND ENERGIES OF ICT WILL BE HARNESSSED TO REALIZE OUR GOALS OF A PEOPLE-CENTERED AND DEVELOPMENT ORIENTED SOCIETY --- ONE THAT PROMOTES

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVES THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL OUR CITIZENS. THESE WE WILL FULFILL BY ESTABLISHING AN ENVIRONMENT THAT WILL BUILD, ENHANCE AND SUSTAIN A DIGITAL COMMUNITY THAT WILL CREATE JOBS, STRENGTHEN GOVERNANCE, AND IMPROVE EDUCATION AND THE QUALITY OF OUR HUMAN CAPITAL.

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK TEL CHAIR DR. CHUNG AND HIS ASSISTANT, APEC SECRETARIAT REPRESENTED BY MS. MONICA OCHOA FOR THE ASSISTANCE AND GUIDANCE THEY HAVE PROVIDED TO THE LOCAL SECRETARIAT. I KNOW THAT OUR LOCAL SECRETARIAT AND OTHER INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS WORKING ON OUR HOSTING OF APEC TEL 35 ARE DOING THEIR BEST TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF THE MEETING AND MAKE YOUR STAY AS CONVENIENT AS POSSIBLE.

BEFORE I CLOSE, I WOULD LIKE TO AGAIN, WELCOME ALL OF YOU TO THE PHILIPPINES AND WISH YOU WELL ON YOUR IMPORTANT MEETINGS IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

I WILL BE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE OUTPUT OF THIS MEETING, AND LOOK FORWARD TO A SUCCESSFUL TELMIN NEXT YEAR, WHICH I KNOW WILL BE DISCUSSED IN THE PLENARY MEETING.

WHILE THERE IS INDEED TREMENDOUS WORK TO BE DONE, WE HOPE THAT YOU WILL HAVE THE CHANCE TO ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE OF WHAT IS UNIQUELY PHILIPPINES --- WARM TROPICAL CLIMATE, SUMPTUOUS FOOD, FESTIVE CELEBRATIONS, FANTASTIC LOCATIONS, A RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE AND GRACIOUS, HOSPITABLE PEOPLE.

I KNOW THAT ALL OF YOU WILL CONTINUE TO BE WORKING HARD IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. BUT I DO HOPE THAT YOU WOULD ALSO FIND TIME TO BRING HOME, NOT ONLY GOOD MEMORIES, BUT ALSO LOTS OF PHILIPPINE MADE PRODUCTS.

ONCE AGAIN, A PLEASANT MORNING TO ALL OF YOU.