

**ASEAN Australia Development Cooperation Program 6<sup>th</sup> Project Workshop**  
27 May 2006, 9:30AM  
Crowne Plaza Manila

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*Opening Remarks*  
**SECRETARY RAMON P. SALES**  
*Chairman, CICT*

*AMENITIES*

*THANK YOU FOR THAT GRACIOUS INTRODUCTION.*

*(ACKNOWLEDGE OTHER FOREIGN DIGNITARIES, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS  
PRESENT ----- INCLUDING PRIVATE SECTOR CEOS.)*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, GOOD MORNING.

I AM PLEASED TO BE WITH YOU HERE ON THE 6<sup>TH</sup> PROJECT WORKSHOP OF THE ASEAN AUSTRALIA DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION PROGRAM. WE SHOULD TAKE THIS OCCASION TO WORK TOGETHER TOWARD THE CREATION OF A LEGAL REGULATORY AND INSTITUTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE FOR E-COMMERCE THAT WILL AID ITS DEVELOPMENT BY ENSURING THAT ONLINE TRANSACTIONS ARE RECOGNIZED IN ALL ASEAN JURISDICTIONS.

THE GROWTH OF INTERNET USE IN THE ASIA HAS JUMPED 218.7% IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS. IT IS HIGHER THAN THE WORLDWIDE PERCENTAGE WHICH IS 183.4%. TODAY, OVER ONE BILLION PEOPLE WORLDWIDE HAVE ACCESS TO THE INTERNET.

THE INTERNET'S GLOBAL REACH HAS ENCOURAGED GEOGRAPHIC OPENNESS MAKING PERSON-TO-PERSON INTERACTIONS MORE LIKELY. ITS ACCESSIBILITY HAS ALSO SPURRED ONLINE COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES INVOLVING SMALLER PLAYERS.

HOWEVER, THESE CHARACTERISTICS HAVE TURNED RESOLVING INTERNET-BASED CONTROVERSIES IN COMMERCE AND POLITICAL INTERACTION A CHALLENGE.

ONLINE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ODR) ADVOCATES SYNERGIZING PARTICULAR ONLINE INTERACTIONS AND CONTEXTS WHILE RECOGNIZING SIGNIFICANT CONCERNS OVER THE PRACTICALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF STATE SPONSORED LEGAL REMEDIES. QUESTIONS ON JURISDICTION ARE CIRCUMVENTED BY ODR AND IT PROVIDES CONSUMERS AN ALTERNATIVE TO CROSS-BORDER LITIGATION IF THEIR ONLINE TRANSACTIONS GO WRONG.

IT MUST BE RECOGNIZED THAT ODR IS A KEY COMPONENT IN THE LEGAL INFRASTRUCTURE FOR E-COMMERCE. HOWEVER, IT HAS BEEN NEGLECTED IN DISCUSSIONS AND INITIATIVES TO HARMONIZE E-COMMERCE LAWS ACROSS NATIONS.

THE PHILIPPINES HAS BEEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE PROMOTION OF ODR IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. THE PHILIPPINE ONLINE DISPUTE RESOLUTION SERVICE IS A PIONEERING INITIATIVE THAT WAS NOMINATED LAST YEAR FOR THE ANNUAL SCHOLL FOUNDATION SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AWARD. IT IS AN EXAMPLE FOR OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO EMULATE.

I ENCOURAGE THOSE PARTICIPATING IN THE WORKSHOP TO FREELY SHARE THEIR IDEAS FOR THESE WILL ENABLE THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMON METHODS FOR ELECTRONIC CONTRACTING STEPS. YOUR VIEWS WILL HELP IDENTIFY A COMMON FRAMEWORK FOR RESOLVING ELECTRONIC COMMERCE DISPUTES. YOUR INPUT WILL ALSO GIVE DIRECTION TO LEGAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN COUNTRIES THAT ALREADY HAVE THEM IN PLACE AND THOSE THAT HAVE YET TO PUT THEM IN PLACE.

I CONGRATULATE GALEXIA AND ITS PARTNERS FOR UNDERTAKING THIS INITIATIVE. THIS IS THE FIRST ASEAN INITIATIVE ON ONLINE DISPUTE RESOLUTION TO MY KNOWLEDGE. I AM ESPECIALLY PROUD THAT THE PHILIPPINES WAS CHOSEN AS A VENUE FOR THIS EVENT.

THANK YOU.