



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

**ASEAN SPECIAL TELSOM WELCOME DINNER**  
30 May 2006, Crowne Plaza, Quezon City

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS**  
**BY THE HONORABLE SECRETARY RAMON P. SALES**  
**CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON INFORMATION AND**  
**COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY**

EXCELLENCIES, ASEAN TELSOM LEADERS, DELEGATES FROM VARIOUS ASEAN I.C.T. MINISTRIES, MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS, FELLOW GOVERNMENT WORKERS, FRIENDS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, GOOD EVENING.

ON BEHALF OF THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT, I WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME THE ASEAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND I.T. SENIOR OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS OF THEIR DELEGATIONS TO THE PHILIPPINES. I WISH ALL OF YOU A PRODUCTIVE MEETING AND I HOPE THAT YOUR EXPERIENCE TO DATE HAS BEEN POSITIVE. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO APOLOGIZE FOR WHATEVER SHORTCOMINGS THAT WE HAVE AS HOST OF THE ASEAN SPECIAL TELSOM AND WORKING GROUP MEETINGS AND I ASSURE YOU THAT WE ARE DOING OUR OUTMOST TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF THE MEETING AND MAKE YOUR STAY AS CONVENIENT AS POSSIBLE.

BEFORE I CONTINUE, I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO EXTEND THE SYMPATHIES OF THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT AND THE FILIPINO PEOPLE TO THE VICTIMS OF THE EARTHQUAKE IN CENTRAL JAVA. THE PHILIPPINES STANDS READY TO EXTEND A HELPING HAND TO OUR NEIGHBOR AND ASEAN PARTNER IN THEIR MOST TRYING TIMES.

EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

TONIGHT WE WELCOME TELSOM LEADERS AND PARTICIPANTS TO THE FIRST SPECIAL TELSOM THAT THE PHILIPPINES AND THE COMMISSION ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (C.I.C.T.) HAS HOSTED. THIS EVENT ALSO MARKS MY FIRST INTERNATIONAL MEETING AS A GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL AND CHAIRMAN OF THE PHILIPPINE COMMISSION ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY.

AS SOME OF YOU MAY KNOW, I HAVE BEEN IN OFFICE FOR ONLY A MONTH. AND GIVEN THAT I HAVE HAD NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE IN GOVERNMENT, I MUST CONFESS THAT THE LAST THREE WEEKS HAD BEEN VERY INTERESTING INDEED.

I AM BOTH HUMBLLED AND CHALLENGED BY THE TASK THAT I FACE AS HEAD OF MY COUNTRY'S I.C.T. AGENCY. I.C.T. DEVELOPMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES, LIKE IN OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, REQUIRES NOT ONLY VISION AND A PASSION TO IMPLEMENT BUT ALSO CREATIVITY AND FOREBEARANCE. MUCH IS EXPECTED OF US IN GOVERNMENT BUT LITTLE RESOURCE IS MADE AVAILABLE.

WHILE HUMBLER I AM NOT DAUNTED. LIKE MOST OF MY COMPATRIOTS, I LOVE A GOOD CHALLENGE. AND WHATEVER WE LACK IN RESOURCES, WE MAKE UP FOR IN PASSION. I AM ALSO FORTUNATE THAT MY PREDECESSOR AND GOOD FRIEND- SECRETARY VIRGILIO PENA -- HAS SET THE NECESSARY FRAMEWORK AND HAS LAID A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR I.C.T. DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRY.

EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT REMAINS STRONGLY COMMITTED IN ITS ROLE AS AN ENABLER OF I.C.T. DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRY. C.I.C.T.'S PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY IS TO PROVIDE A FACILITATING ENVIRONMENT THAT WOULD ALLOW THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO DRIVE I.C.T. GROWTH AND PROGRESS IN THE COUNTRY.

THE WISDOM OF A MARKET-LED, PRIVATE SECTOR-DRIVEN APPROACH TO I.C.T. DEVELOPMENT IS EVIDENT IN OUR VIBRANT TELECOMMUNICATIONS MARKET.

I AM OLD ENOUGH TO REMEMBER THE TIME WHEN IT TOOK MONTHS, IF NOT YEARS, FOR SMALL COMPANIES AND HOMES TO GET A TELEPHONE LINE. IN THE DARK DAYS OF THE MONOPOLY, EVEN BIG CORPORATIONS AND MULTINATIONALS HAD TO SUFFER LONG WAITING TIMES FOR TELEPHONE SERVICE (ANECDOTE HERE FROM IBM, CITI OR BPI DAYS)

TODAY, THE PHILIPPINES' TELECOMMS MARKET IS AMONG THE MOST COMPETITIVE IN THE REGION. WHILE WE ONLY HAVE 10% WIRE LINE PENETRATION, WE ARE NEARING 40% MOBILE PENETRATION. A WIDE RANGE OF MOBILE SERVICES AT VARIOUS PRICES ARE NOW AVAILABLE TO CONSUMERS. WIRELESS BROADBAND IS ALSO IN THE HORIZON. RECENTLY, OUR MOBILE SERVICES PROVIDERS HAVE JUST INTRODUCED 3G SERVICES AND A NUMBER OF COMPANIES ARE ENGAGED IN WIMAX FIELD TRIAL.

WHILE WE GIVE IMPORTANCE TO OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR, THEY ARE BY NO MEANS OUR SOLE PARTNER. THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT IS ALSO FIRMLY COMMITTED TO A MULTISTAKEHOLDER APPROACH TO I.C.T. DEVELOPMENT. C.I.C.T. WILL CONTINUE TO PARTNER NOT ONLY WITH THE BUSINESS SECTOR BUT ALSO WITH NON-GOVERNMENT AND OTHER CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS TO BRING THE POWER AND BENEFITS OF I.C.T. TO ALL OUR COMMUNITIES AND ALL OF OUR CITIZENS.

WE REMAIN STEADFAST IN OUR GOAL TO BRING INFORMATION GOODS AND SERVICES THAT ARE ALREADY AVAILABLE IN URBAN TO OUR RURAL AREAS. C.I.C.T. WILL CONTINUE TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF THE DIGITAL DIVIDE BY FOCUSING ON DEPLOYING COMMUNITY E-CENTERS, IN UNSERVED AND UNDERSERVED AREAS; CONNECTING ALL OUR SCHOOL TO THE INTERNET, THEREBY ENHANCING THE USE OF I.C.T. IN EDUCATION, AND MAKING I.C.T. ACCESSIBLE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITY.

IN E-GOVERNANCE, WE WILL CONTINUE TO TRANSFORM GOVERNMENT THROUGH I.C.T. – NOT ONLY TO BRING EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS IN THE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC SERVICE BUT ALSO TO MAKE GOVERNMENT MORE TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE TO ITS CITIZENS.

WE WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO NURTURE OUR I.T. AND I.C.T.-ENABLED COMPANIES IN ORDER TO DEVELOP A WORLD CLASS I.C.T. SERVICES SECTOR.

BUT WE NEED A STRONG ORGANIZATION TO MAKE ALL OF THESE A REALITY. THUS, IN THE IMMEDIATE TERM, OUR CHALLENGE IS TO BUILD A ‘LEAN AND MEAN’, EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION FROM THE VARIOUS UNITS THAT NOW COMPRISE THE C. I. C. T.

EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZES THAT ACHIEVING OUR NATIONAL GOALS REQUIRES REGIONAL AND GLOBAL COOPERATION. OUR INITIATIVES ON CYBERCRIME, LIKE PUSHING FOR THE ENACTMENT OF LAWS RELATING TO CRACKING, DATA PRIVACY, E-MAIL SPAM AND CYBER PORNOGRAPHY, FOR EXAMPLE, WOULD BE GREATLY ENHANCED BY REGIONAL AND EVEN GLOBAL AGREEMENTS THAT PROSCRIBE UNLAWFUL AND/OR CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR IN CYBERSPACE.

THE PHILIPPINES WOULD CONTINUE TO GIVE PRIMACY TO ASEAN, PARTICULARLY IN THE FIELD OF I.C.T. COOPERATION.

I AM PLEASED TO LEARN THAT WITH THE ADOPTION OF THE ASEAN I.C.T. FOCUS 2005-2010, WE ARE NOW MORE PREPARED TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY.

ALREADY WE HAVE A BOUNTIFUL HARVEST OF PROJECTS THAT WOULD HELP US ACHIEVE OUR COMMON GOALS. TO CITE ONLY A FEW:

- WE HAVE COMPLETED THE PROJECT ON CONVERGENCE AND THE A.A.D.C.P. E-COMMERCE HARMONIZATION PROJECT.
- WE CONTINUE TO MOVE FORWARD ON ASEAN CYBER SECURITY COOPERATION.
- OUR REGULATORS, THROUGH THE A.T.R.C., CONTINUE TO WORK ON MUTUAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT.
- IN THE AREA OF CAPACITY-BUILDING, WE ARE WORKING ON A RURAL KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, ASEANNET FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITY AND AN ASEAN ICT SKILLS CERTIFICATION PROGRAM.

I UNDERSTAND THAT A NUMBER OF WHAT MIGHT BE CALLED 'ORGANIZATIONAL' ISSUES NEED TO BE ADDRESSED IN ORDER TO MAKE THE TELSOM/TELMIN PROCESS MORE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT. I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE ASEAN SPIRIT OF COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIP WILL HELP THE SENIOR OFFICIALS AND DELEGATES IN ACCOMPLISHING THIS AND OTHER TASKS AT HAND.

EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

BEFORE I CLOSE, I WOULD LIKE TO AGAIN, WELCOME ALL OUR GUESTS TO THE PHILLIPINES AND WISH YOU WELL ON YOUR IMPORTANT MEETING IN THE NEXT DAY AND A HALF.

I WILL BE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE OUTPUT OF THIS SPECIAL TELSOM, WHICH WE AT THE TELMIN WOULD RELY ON TO ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL MEETING IN SEPTEMBER IN BRUNEI DARUSSALAM.

I KNOW THAT ALL OF YOU WILL BE WORKING HARD IN THE NEXT DAY AND A HALF. BUT I DO HOPE THAT YOU WOULD ALSO FIND TIME TO ALSO ENJOY THE WARM HOSPITALITY OF OUR PEOPLE AND BRING HOME GOOD MEMORIES (AND LOTS OF PHILIPPINE MADE PRODUCTS).

THANK YOU AND GOOD EVENING.