

## **CICT Enjoins Everyone to Celebrate National ICT Month**

“A DIGITALLY EMPOWERED PHILIPPINES” – this battle cry formally ushers-in the celebration of National Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Month this June. The celebration of National ICT Month is mandated under Presidential Proclamation No. 1521 (Series of 2008), declaring every month of June as National ICT Month.

The month-long celebration features events and activities organized by government and the private sector. For its part, the CICT, together with various industry associations, will be holding the National ICT Summit, which will feature the official launch of the Philippine Digital Strategy (PDS) 2011-2016 and the launch of a limited edition Commemorative Stamp marking National ICT Month 2011. Another major event is the celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of the National Computer Center (NCC), a component agency of the CICT.

Several milestones have been achieved for the ICT sector, many of these bringing prestige to the country. According to “the Global Location Trends 2010 Report” of IBM Global Business Services, the Philippines is now the world leader in terms of jobs for shared services and business process and outsourcing (BPO) services. The IT-BPO industry, through the Business Processing Association of the Philippines, has provided more than 525,000 jobs as of December 2010, about 79,000 new jobs created representing an increase of about a twenty-four percent (24%) from the previous year. The increase in employment for this industry can also be attributed to the success of the Next Wave Cities initiative, a program which develops cities as alternative destinations for BPO investments. Cities such as Davao, Iloilo, Bacolod and Sta. Rosa, Laguna are now in the roster of preferred IT-BPO locations, due to the success of this program.

A significant activity this June is the launch of the Philippine Digital Strategy on the theme “Transformation 2.0: A Digitally Empowered Nation.” The Philippine Digital Strategy 2011-2016 aims to contribute to the Aquino Administration’s “Social Contract with the Filipino People”, mainly by leveraging the use of ICT for national development. The PDS identifies four strategic thrusts, namely: 1) transparent government and efficient services delivery, 2) internet opportunities for all, 3) investing in people: digital literacy for all, and 4) ICT industry and business innovation for national development. This strategy presents a renewed vision for ICT and its importance in transforming Philippine society into a competitive force in the global digital economy by the year 2016. The PDS is also aligned with the principles and thrusts of the ASEAN Information and Communications Technology Masterplan (AIM) 2015, which was adopted in January 2011. AIM 2015 was developed to serve as a guiding document to advance ASEAN regional ICT cooperation.

As the nation celebrates National ICT Month, CICT Chairman Ivan John E. Uy has these inspiring words, “We have achieved much for this sector and for this National ICT Month, let us take this opportunity to assess our collective strengths, combine our knowledge and resources, and synergize our activities to move forward. As our experiences show us, we at the CICT remain steadfast in our commitment to work even harder in leveraging on ICT to steer our country to greater heights.”

The national momentum towards global ICT leadership must be sustained. The CICT as government’s arm tasked to plan and implement ICT-related programs for the country, has the responsibility of bringing this country to international competitiveness in the ICT market. Celebrating National ICT month can certainly help keep the country abreast of the latest in both local and global ICT developments, and raise the public’s awareness on the strategic importance of ICT towards a digitally empowered Philippines.