



**FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION  
AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY, SCIENCE,  
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION**

**ASIA-PACIFIC DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION LANDSCAPE**

**Assistant Secretary Philip A. Varilla**

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To the representatives of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Member States, Associate Member States, Observers, and the various international organizations present here today, Good morning.

The Philippines recognizes the pivotal role of sustainable digital transformation in social progress and is one with the UN-ESCAP Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation (CICT - STI) in its efforts to bring together opportunities and solutions as laid out in the Asia-Pacific Digital Transformation Report 2022.

The Philippines places significance on transforming our government into an agile bureaucracy that is responsive to the needs of Filipinos, allowing secure and seamless access to public services and narrowing the digital divide by capitalizing on the gains of digital transformation.

To keep abreast with the increased reliance of the 110 million population of Filipinos on ICT, the Philippines through the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) presses on to develop and implement ICT initiatives and regulatory responses that stimulate a vibrant ICT ecosystem. In line with this, the DICT made it a mission to establish a 24/7 e-government service to simplify government transactions and eliminate corruption through programs such as the digital foundational ID system branded as Philippine Identification System (PhilSys) and the Electronic Business Permits and Licensing (eBPLS), among many others.

Specific to the telecommunication sector, to enhance market competitiveness and provide a more accessible and affordable internet, the Philippines issued the Guidelines for the Common Tower Policy in June 2020, this seeks to widen the base of tower providers to fast-track the deployment of Shared Passive Telecommunications Tower Infrastructure (PTTIs) across all regions of the country, especially in the Geographically Isolated, Conflicted, and Disadvantaged Areas.

Acknowledging the significance of promoting digital literacy to further accelerate digital transformation, the Philippines, who is a Governing Council member and as an Academy Partner of the United Nations Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (UN APCICT) fully supports its ICT

Capacity Building initiatives. We have included these initiatives in our Executive Management Track Digital Transformation related modules of the Department's ICT Academy, and these are being implemented nationwide through our Regional Offices.

With the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Philippine economy, the government responded with the enactment of policies that would aid in the recovery of businesses and stimulate investments for various sectors, including the ICT, Science and Innovation related sectors, which are important in digital transformation. This includes the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises (CREATE) Act which is estimated to provide private enterprises with more than 1 trillion pesos worth of tax relief over the next 10 years. The Foreign Investment Act (FIA) was also amended to relax foreign equity restrictions to attract international investors through reduced minimum paid-in capital.

The Philippines, being a member state of the UNESCAP, will continue to step up to the challenge of keeping abreast with this fast-changing industry through programs that would bolster societal and economic development. The Philippines will push forward timely and relevant ICT reforms to champion the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Initiative 2022–2026.

Thank you very much for your attention.

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