



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

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ACTION PLAN 2022-2026 OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC INFORMATION
SUPERHIGHWAY

Assistant Secretary Philip A. Varilla

Your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, despite abrupt changes encountered during the pandemic which challenged resiliency, it became an opportunity to boost creativity in innovation and technology. It gave a bird's eye view of the digital issues being faced in order to achieve the connectivity goals as aspired in the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Connect 2030 agenda to connect all to a better world. As the demand for connectivity continually rises, we are constantly faced with challenges to respond to the growing need for pervasive and resilient broadband infrastructure.

Excellencies, as we traverse the fourth industrial revolution, we should continually address the connectivity gap, giving emphasis, especially on the Geographically Isolated, and Disadvantaged Areas, through plans and

policies that are aligned to international commitments and responsive to the needs of our citizenry and stakeholders.

The Philippines applauds the efforts of the AP-IS Steering Committee and the Drafting Committee. We commend their dedication in developing responses to connectivity issues in advancing safe and affordable digital access through the formulation of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS) 2022-2026.

With this, we promote the active engagement and contribution of various stakeholders, including international organizations, businesses, non-governmental organizations, academe and think tanks, in the implementation of the action plan.

The Philippines commits to continuously support the implementation of the AP-IS Action Plan by strengthening domestic approaches to advance digital transformation through local initiatives such as the National Broadband Plan and Free Wifi for all Project. The National Broadband Plan addresses the clamor for universal, faster and affordable Internet access all over the country. The Free Wifi for all Project, branded as Broadband ng Masa in our language or Broadband for All in English, provides free public Wi-Fi to all citizens in all public places in the country on top of a government network

and the private-sector led multi-owned and multi-operator environment of the telecommunications sector, with government acting as a facilitator, regulator and investor.

As the demand for connectivity continually rises, we are constantly faced with challenges to respond to the growing need for pervasive and resilient broadband infrastructure that would carry digital services applications and content and increase digital opportunities. The WSIS Action Lines provided us a guide which we can all use towards the achievement of our national development goals which are aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals. The WSIS Prizes provided us a glimpse of best practices and various use cases to connect, harness, innovate and protect our networks, applications and digital data. The Philippines, for example nominated and won on Information and Communications Infrastructure for the project Free Internet Access Program for isolated island provinces of Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-tawi in the Philippines with about 2 million residents having challenges due to geographic constraints. Digital technologies and applications are now available and are continuing to be improved to enable us towards digital transformation. Inclusive growth and development is certainly something that we all aspire for.

With improved internet connectivity we may realize improved governance, secured online access to public services, digitized government archives, and harmonized access to data across government offices. Moreover, through this Action Plan, we envision that information and communications technology will be accessible and inclusive for all.

Again, we would like to thank and congratulate the Committee for organizing a meaningful avenue to gather Member States, Associate Members, and observers to collaborate in transforming nations.

Thank you very much!