

ESCAP/IDD inputs for the Opening Address
Of
H.E. Air Marshall Thares Punsri
Chairman, National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission of
Thailand
Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Third Session
20 November 2012
13:00 hours
United Nations Conference Centre, Meeting Room 3

Your Excellency, Dr. Noeleen Heyzer, Under-Secretary General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission of Asia and the Pacific,

Your Excellency, Undersecretary Casambre, Information and Communications Technology Office, Department of Science and Technology of the Philippines,

Your Excellency, Group Captain Anudith Nakornthap, Minister of Information and Communications Technology of Thailand,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be here with you this afternoon for the opening of the third Session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology. I would like to begin by warmly thanking the Under-Secretary General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP, Dr. Noeleen Heyzer, for her invitation to attend this important gathering.

Excellencies,

We are all aware that information and communications technology is one of the driving forces of economic and social development, and so we gather here today to renew our commitment to bringing the benefits of ICT to all. ICT is enhancing the delivery of education, healthcare, government and financial services across the Asian and Pacific region, improving the lives of millions of people. Broadband Internet is providing unprecedented access to content-rich material that is changing the way people interact and communicate with each other. New innovations in ICT, including social media and crowd-sourcing, provide new opportunities to connect economies and people across the Asian and Pacific region.

For the Government of Thailand, ICT and broadband Internet is seen as a key part of the economic growth of the country, and the region. This year, we have provided tablet computers to thousands of elementary school students in Thailand and we continue our efforts to expand broadband connectivity throughout the country.

We recognize, however, that the benefits of ICT are not guaranteed, and that government policy has an important role to play in creating an enabling environment that will bring the benefits of ICT to all. A strong legal and regulatory environment is essential to ensuring that open and fair competition in the telecommunication industry provides the maximum benefit to consumers, through lower prices and higher quality of service.

Policy challenges on issues of security, trust, privacy and intellectual property also require proper regulation and strong leadership, from both the private sector and the government. Broadband Internet is changing how we interact with information tied to intellectual property rights, underlining the need for ICT regulators to take on expanded roles and responsibilities. Cybercrimes, identity theft and e-waste are some of the unfortunate consequences of the digital revolution, and we must work together to address these issues of our modern society. E-waste in particular poses a growing threat to our sustainable future as societies consume more and more electronic devices.

Cooperation between government and the private sector is also a key component of developing and operating ICT infrastructure networks. Public-private partnerships can benefit from the efficiency and advanced technology of the private sector, and the funding capacity and civic orientation of the public sector. Public-private partnerships established on the principles of open access and universal access, will spur competition amongst telecommunication providers and provide lower costs for the end user.

Excellencies,

It is imperative that we work together to create a digital environment that is conducive to growth in the ICT sector, as well as the broader economy. However, we must not pursue growth at all costs. Growth must be accompanied by a regulatory environment that protects consumers and balances technological progress with cultural traditions. These regulations should be based on the principles of accountability, transparency, stability and predictability.

In closing, I would like to thank Dr. Noeleen Heyzer and ESCAP for organizing this third session of the Committee on ICT. The delegates in attendance and the issues to be discussed give me confidence that Asia-Pacific will continue to lead the world in ICT uptake and innovation. The items that you will discuss over the next three days, from infrastructure development to technological innovations, and ICT capacity building to measurement of ICT indicators, offers a balanced agenda that is focused on the most important ICT issues of today.

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