



Secretary General

WELCOME ADDRESS

Your Excellency Secretary Rodolfo Salalima, Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), the Philippines,

Distinguished Guests, Speakers and Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat.
Good morning to all of you.

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the 14th APT Telecommunication/ICT Development Forum (ADF-14) in the vibrant city of Manila, the Philippines.

First of all, on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) and all participants here, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Your Excellency Secretary Rodolfo Salalima for being with us today to inaugurate this important forum of the APT despite your engagements and busy schedule. It is a great honour for us all.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) of the Philippines, and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for hosting this Forum in conjunction with the Digital Strategies for Development Forum 2017 (DSDF 2017).

I would also like to thank the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Government of Japan, for continuous funding APT projects under Extra Budgetary Contribution from Japan (EBC-J) since 2003 and for providing fellowships to project proponents to present their achievements at this ADF.

My appreciations also go to the Ministry of Science and ICT (MSIT), Government of the Republic of Korea for funding the projects under Extra Budgetary Contribution from Republic of Korea (EBC-K) since 2015.

Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

ADF is a unique platform of the APT for policy makers, regulators and industry representatives to discuss ICT development related policies, regulations and technologies taking into due consideration of pilot projects and ICT applications which apply those suitable technologies.

As physical connectivity still remains as an overwhelming challenge in the Asia-Pacific region, to maximize the usage of the connection to Internet is another area to be underlined. This ADF will discuss on the issues relevant to the deployment of cost efficient broadband networks and to the extension of connectivity to unserved/ underserved population.

For this year, the programme of ADF will be 2 days as there will be another important event, Digital Strategies for Development Forum 2017 (DSDF 2017), which will be held on 7-8 September 2017, right after this ADF.

The programme of ADF-14 will dedicate three sessions to EBC-J and EBC-K projects. The experts and specialists who had worked in these projects will share their findings and thoughts obtained during the implementation process. Each year, APT has received a large number of applications for these projects. I am very pleased to see that many of these projects are very successful and have direct benefit to APT Members. I am sure this will help our Members in their efforts to develop national telecommunication/ICT sector.

At the final session of this ADF, we need to have your views on future activities of APT relating to telecommunication/ICT development. It is important that we come up with recommendation to enable APT to implement relevant activities, especially for developing countries. Please provide your contributions at the last session of the forum.

Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nowadays, ICT has been a driving force for economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region and it has been pervasive in many industry sectors. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) also acknowledges the importance of ICT, which can allow developing countries to leapfrog over traditional development pathways, and pursues its goal of reducing poverty and improving quality of life by utilizing ICT to the maximum extent. In this connection, APT has taken an initiative to collaborate with ADB to organize Digital Strategies for Development Forum 2017 (DSDF-2017) in conjunction with ADF-14 to make effective synergy for both organizations.

I truly hope that both ADF-14 and DSDF 2017 will be valuable to all the participants and give you new insights that you can take back to your countries. APT secretariat will do our best to assist your participation and ensure the smooth running of the forums.

In conclusion, I would like to once again express my heartfelt gratefulness to Your Excellency Secretary Rodolfo Salalima, for being with us today, and to our host, DICT and ADB, for the excellent preparations and the warm hospitality extended to all of us. I am also thankful to all staff involved in organizing the forum, both from DICT and ADB, for their hard work in the coordination and preparation.

I wish you all a successful forum.

Thank you very much.