Philippine Government’s ICT initiatives and the National Broadband Plan

Presented by:
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Philippine Cable Television Association (PCTA) Convention

Our distinguished Officers, Board of Directors and Members of the Philippine Cable TV Association, ladies and gentlemen, Good Morning!

On behalf of the Information and Communications Technology Office (ICTO) of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), I congratulate the Philippine Cable Television Association (PCTA) for the successful organization of this national convention.

Indeed, it is my privilege to join you today in order to share with you some good news about where ICTO is today and more importantly to renew our partnership on mutual concerns specific to the Philippine cable television industry.

Firstly, I wish to thank the PCTA for its valuable contribution toward the finalization of the Philippine Digital Strategy 2011-2016. Your support in the way of sending industry representatives and participating in the intensive discussions conducted at the technical working group level as well as during the PDS
consultations were invaluable in the development of the PDS.

DOST-ICTO has submitted a draft Administrative Order to be signed by the President approving and adopting the PDS as a Guide for National ICT Development. The order calls for the creation of a National ICT Council or NICTC to provide advisory and advocacy functions to ensure the effective implementation of the PDS. Upon signing of the AO and the creation of the NICTC, we are hopeful in your organization’s support and participation in the council, the same way you have been instrumental in the development of the PDS.

Today, DOST-ICTO has also embarked on several ICT programs and projects that are expected to support the current administration’s Social Contract.

One of the major thrusts of the DOST-ICTO is to improve the delivery of government services to the Filipino people with speed, efficiency, transparency and accountability. One key project undergoing development to achieve this is iGOV or Integrated Government. iGOV will integrate major front-line government services ensuring the public easy access under a single window. The iGOV Project aims to establish, upgrade and improve government ICT infrastructure, systems and ICT-related procedures to allow for integrated government operations. Under this project, DOST-ICTO has identified priority systems that shall be integrated. These are the Business Permit and License System, Real Property Tax System, eBayad (Payment) System and eSerbisyo System under the e-Government Portal. Systems under the Community eCenter (CeC) Project will also be integrated under this environment. The iGOV Project requires the provision of seamless connectivity throughout the country from the national level down to the household level and with this we will need the PCTA’s assistance in providing last mile connectivity to the citizenry.

You may also recall that as part of the government’s ICT policy initiative to improve government’s adoption and use of the Internet, Executive Order No. 893 “Promoting the Deployment and Use of Internet Protocol Version 6 (IPV6)” was issued to encourage all government online services to be IPV6 compliant by 2012. Immediate migration to IPV6 is promoted to address the threat that exhaustion of IPV4 addresses could deter growth and development of the country’s ICT infrastructure and ICT-enabled services. The EO also called on all Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to be capable of providing IPV6 addresses and services by this year. I hope you guys have been doing your homework and are IPV6 ready if not yet… soon. Likewise I’d like to invite PCTA network experts to recommend security policies and principles toward a smooth, efficient and quick migration to IPV6.

As part of our priority programs, DOST-ICTO will formulate a National Broadband Plan for the Philippines (NBBP) for the next five years that shall provide a clear direction for the Philippine government to ensure that all Filipinos will reap the benefits of broadband, address challenges and accelerate broadband deployment. The National Broadband Plan is envisioned to provide detailed physical targets and strategies to effect nationwide broadband deployment and widespread use. The Broadband Plan would analyze existing and planned government and private sector deployment, and address supply and demand gaps by recommending policy and non-policy related actions. It would include policy decisions
on the need to establish a National Internet Exchange or a peering arrangement mechanism to connect Internet exchanges in the country to pave the way for a National Facility that would allow government and public data to freely flow within the country. This would allow added security to the data and transactions being undertaken by the government and the public. The project proposal to formulate the National Broadband Plan is now under evaluation with the DOST for Grant-in-Aid funding consideration.

Over the past decade, the developing world has seen dramatic growth in the information and communications technology (ICT) sector, particularly on mobile telephone subscription and usage. The country has around 90% penetration in terms of mobile usage. However, most developing countries such as the Philippines are much behind in terms of adoption and use of broadband.

This inequality threatens to widen the existing digital divide and it can be said that is can be a roadblock to economic development and social inclusion since a large number of individuals are still without high speed Internet access.

The National Broadband Plan would ensure that an implementable set of strategies and actions, to achieve a set of indicators on Universal Internet access to give everyone the chance to reap the advantages of high speed Internet.

The Philippine Digital Strategy (PDS) 2011-2016 provided set targets for the provision of basic broadband access and internet opportunities for all by 2016, these are as follows:

- 80% of barangays to have Internet access through the CeCs of at least 2 Mbps,
- 100% of high schools & 80% of elementary schools to have internet access
- 80% of other public institutions have internet access
- 100% of goverment offices have internet access
- All central business districts to have available download speeds of 20 Mbps
- 80% of households to have access to at least 2 Mbps of broadband connectivity
- Average prices for basic broadband Internet to be reduced by at least 5% annually
- and Investment in infrastructure expansion to increase by at least 10% annually.

The National Broadband Plan will be formulated and expected to be adopted within the year through a multi-stakeholder process. This would address issues such as among others to “Ensure affordable broadband access to every community” and “Improve broadband connectivity”.

And as always, we encourage that PCTA will be present as a member of the multi-stakeholder group and play a key role in improving broadband access for our citizens.

In closing, I urge you to scan the horizon for opportunities and partnerships with us. We believe that through our sharing of experiences and best practices during events like what we have today, we can bring about the much needed improvement in the status of ICT in the country. ICT is an enabler of more efficient government operation and service delivery, productivity and national competitiveness. As well
a major game changer for Filipinos who find themselves on the wrong side of the digital divide. Together with the PCTA and other partners in the industry let us create a difference in the life of every Filipino through ICT.