



Event : 80th Session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Date and Time : April 22, 2024, 2:30 – 5:30 p.m.
Venue : ESCAP Hall, United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) Bangkok, Thailand
Speaker : Secretary Ivan John E. Uy

Country Statement (maximum of 5 minutes)

- Your excellencies, esteemed delegates, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I stand before you today humbled by the magnitude of the task that lies before us—a task that transcends borders, defies convention, and demands our collective resolve. In the heart of the Asia-Pacific region, the Republic of the Philippines stands as the Pearl of the Orient, a nation undeterred by the challenges that confront us, resilient in our commitment to forging a path towards sustainable development.
- Our journey is fraught with obstacles, none more formidable than the digital divide that fractures our communities, segregates opportunity, and stifles progress. Across our nation, disparities in internet access, affordability, and speed persist, casting a shadow over the promise of a digitally empowered future. In the remote corners of our nation, marginalized groups continue to be challenged in the shadows of connectivity, delayed with the fundamental right to participate in the digital age.



- Yet, amidst these challenges, we find promise—a glimmer of hope that illuminates the path forward. The Philippines reaffirms its strong commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, under the visionary leadership of President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr.
- We recognize that digital innovation is not merely a tool for progress but a catalyst for transformation, a force that can propel us towards a future defined by inclusivity, prosperity, and resilience.
- In our pursuit of this future, we have launched bold initiatives that harness the power of technology to bridge the digital divide and empower our citizens. The eGovPH App stands as a testament to our commitment to transparency, efficiency, and citizen-centric governance, providing over 2 million active users with access to essential government services at their fingertips.
- Furthermore, our National Broadband Program, spearheaded by the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), is revolutionizing connectivity across our nation, bringing high-speed internet access to over 30 million households and 80% of barangays nationwide. This initiative is not merely about connectivity—it is about empowerment, education, and economic opportunity, laying the foundation for a more equitable and prosperous society.



- But our journey does not end here. It is continuing and it will be continued with the mettle we had when we started.
- We recognize that in the digital age, security is paramount. That is why we have adopted a comprehensive National Cybersecurity Plan 2023-2028, designed to safeguard our digital infrastructure, protect our citizens' privacy, and ensure a trusted and resilient cyberspace for all Filipinos.
- In addition to these efforts, we are committed to leveraging digital innovation in every facet of our society. We will invest in digital skills development, ensuring that every Filipino has the tools and knowledge they need to thrive in the digital economy. We will harness the power of data analytics to inform evidence-based policymaking and drive greater efficiency and effectiveness in government services.
- Moreover, we will foster an environment that encourages innovation and entrepreneurship, providing support and resources to startups and small businesses as they harness the power of technology to drive economic growth and create jobs. We will leverage emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and the Internet of Things to address some of our most pressing challenges, from healthcare and education to climate change and disaster resilience.



- As we stand on the cusp of a new era of possibility, let us seize this moment with courage and conviction. Let us embrace the power of collaboration and cooperation, recognizing that together, we can overcome the barriers that stand in the way of progress. Let us leverage digital innovation as a force for good, a beacon of hope in a world beset by challenges.
- Let me close by reaffirming the Philippines' steadfast adherence to supporting the Commission's endeavors in leveraging digital innovation to accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Together, let us embark on this journey towards a brighter, more inclusive future—for the Philippines, for the Asia-Pacific region, and for the world.
- Thank you.