



OPENING REMARKS

By

H.E. Mr. Pornchai Rujiprapa

Minister of ICT Thailand

For

Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on e-Government, Smart Cities, and Digital Societies for Sustainable Development 2015

19-20 AUGUST 2015, BANGKOK, THAILAND

Mr. Brahima Sanou, Director of Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU

Mr. Jae-Hong Lim, Head of the United Nations Project Office on Governance

Mr. Hee Joon Song, Chairman of Prime Minister's Government 3.0 Committee, Republic of Korea

Distinguished delegates and participants,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

It is my great pleasure to be here with you today for the opening of the Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on e-Government, Smart Cities, and Digital Societies for Sustainable Development 2015 which is jointly organized by ITU and the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology of Thailand.

This forum is organized in a very opportune time in that as you may know the Royal Thai Government is currently promoting digital economy and digital society. The Government has also embarked on new legislations aimed at enabling public and private sectors as well as civil societies to benefit from technologies and innovations especially the information and communication technologies or ICTs thereby driving growth of social and economic development of the nation. My ministry in particular is also in transition to a new Ministry of Digital Economy.

As the forum brought together policy makers, scholars, and experts from various fields in ICTs and from different countries, Thailand can learn a lot from your experience and knowledge that you are kindly sharing at this forum. I also believe that our discussion in the next two days will not only benefit Thailand but also many other countries whose delegates are participating in the forum.

Hence, I am thankful to ITU for making this forum happened and I am also grateful to all of you who will contribute to the success of the event.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In view of an objective of this forum to provide a platform for knowledge and experience sharing, let me also share with you what my country is doing with an aim to make Thailand a digital economy.

Thailand's digital economy and society framework is based on five supporting pillars.

- 1) The first pillar, **Hard Infrastructure**, focuses on reliable networks with enough capacity, coverage and suitable pricing. In this regard, the government will embark on a national broadband initiative proposed to pool together existing network resources that belong to state enterprises, government agencies, as well as private companies for more efficient resource planning and usage. Data centers and enhancing international gateway capacity are also a focus of the first pillar.
- 2) Second, **Service Infrastructure**. This pillar promotes service platforms that will allow data from multiple sources to be linked and mashed-up to create innovative services. Government data will be open and integrated through government service platform with the goal to provide paperless, one-stop, citizen-centric services.
- 3) The third pillar, **Soft Infrastructure**, refers to the underlying processes to guarantee secure and trusted digital transactions. New laws and regulations are being created, while the existing ones are being updated — especially to improve user privacy protection and data security.
- 4) Forth, **Digital Economy Promotion** aims to boost the Thai economy through a vibrant digital business ecosystem. The focus is on, inter alia, promoting SMEs through technology-enabled value adding, e-commerce and digital marketing.

5) The last pillar, **Digital Society Promotion** focuses on equitable access to information and technologies especially for persons with disabilities and marginalized groups of people. Hence digital inclusion is a key principle under this pillar.

Distinguished participants,

Now let me turn to another important event. Thailand has been a member of the Union since 1883 and has witnessed great achievements ITU has contributed to our societies. We are also very proud to host the ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. As ITU has turned 150 years old this year, we would like to be part of this milestone and a very memorable moment to all of us.

I on behalf of the Ministry of ICT and the Government of Thailand am very pleased to invite all of you to join the celebration of the ITU's 150th Anniversary. The Ministry is hosting a gala dinner tomorrow which we call "ITU150 NIGHT". The ceremony will take place right here in this room and your presence will be an honour for us.

In addition, we also have exhibitions right outside this meeting room and I take this opportunity to thank all the sponsors and exhibitors who kindly come and join us in celebrating the ITU's 150th anniversary.

Let me conclude by joining honourable speakers before me in welcoming you all today and I wish you enjoy the events, the discussions, the networking, and especially the Bangkok city.

I now declare ***the Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on e-Government, Smart Cities, and Digital Societies for Sustainable Development 2015*** opened

Thank you.