

**WELCOME ADDRESS**

by

Ms. Areewan Haorangi  
Secretary General, Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT)

His Excellency Dr. Pichet Durongkaveroj, Minister of Digital Economy and Society, Kingdom of Thailand,

Mr. Malcolm Johnson, Deputy Secretary General, ITU,

Mr. John Giusti, Chief Regulatory Officer, GSMA,

Mr. Alasdair Grant, Head of Asia Pacific, GSMA,

Mr. Sameer Sharma, Senior Advisor, ITU,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning!

On behalf of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT), I am pleased to welcome you all to the Asia-Pacific Digital Societies Policy Forum 2017. It is a great pleasure for APT to be a partner of this important Forum for this year.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The digital technologies have been reshaping our economies, our societies and our cultures. Self-driving vehicles are already on our roads, artificial intelligence is getting attention of the globe. 42 of the world's leading banks committed to develop common standards for Blockchain use in global financial markets. These digital innovations are soon to be a big bang to reshape our lives in the areas of health, education, transport, and agriculture and others.

In order to maximize these benefits, we should be aware of disruption which is the opposite side of the coin. Digitalization has transformed how we interact with other sectors and changed the nature and structure of profile of jobs, hence raising important issues around privacy, security, individualism, and skills, among others. Therefore, cooperation among interested parties are essential to build up forward looking blueprints and to seize the opportunities offered by the digital advancement.

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 2014, APT organized the Asia-Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting on “Building Smart Digital Economy through ICT” in Brunei Darussalam. Ministers responsible for ICT from the Asia-Pacific region had assembled to discuss their joint efforts to further strengthen regional collaboration in the development of telecommunication/ICT. The meeting adopted the Brunei Darussalam Statement which covered six key priority areas in order to build a smart digital economy in the Asia-Pacific region.

These six key priority areas are:

- Conducive Policies for Sustainable Growth of ICT and Smart Digital Economy;
- Safe and Secure Society through ICT;
- Trust and Confidence in ICT;
- Sustainable ICT Ecosystem for Innovation;
- Capacity Building and Institutional Development; and
- Fostering Regional Cooperation for ICT Development.

These key priority areas have guided the works of APT to assist its members to realize digital economy and society. The Brunei Darussalam Statement was further reaffirmed by APT Strategic Plan for 2015–2017 and all APT Work Programmes have dedicated to the development of digital economy and society.

Taking into account these six key priorities areas from the Brunei Darussalam Statement as well as ICT trends and developments in recent years, APT is now preparing our Strategic Plan for 2018–2020 which will be proposed for approval by the 14th Session of General Assembly of APT at the end of this year.

In order to make APT in line with the digital economy and society context, Member Administrations of APT proposed five strategic pillars, namely: Connectivity, Innovation, Trust, Capacity Building, and Partnership. With these strategic pillars, APT will assist our members to address the challenges towards digital economy and society.

Distinguished Participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since its first inception in 2015, the Digital Society Policy Forum has gathered various stakeholders including government officials and industry representatives to discuss on national plans to build digital societies, role of spectrum policy and licensing for mobile broadband, cybersecurity, digital financial services and ICT innovations.

The topics to be discussed at this Forum this year, such as policy and regulatory measures ensuring hyper-connected society, digital innovation promotion and other emerging issues are quite relevant to address the challenges we are now facing. As such, I hope there will be fruitful discussion in every session of this Forum both today and tomorrow.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To conclude, I would like to thank all participants to this Forum. I also thank ITU and GSMA for organizing this Forum and inviting APT to be a partner organization.

I wish you a successful Forum. And, for those who come from abroad, I wish you an enjoyable stay in Bangkok.

Thank you.