**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD), twenty-sixth session**
Geneva, 27-31 March 2023

**Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the
World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international
level**

Statement by

Mr. Edwin S. Ligot
Assistant Secretary, Department of Information and Communications Technology
The Philippines

Event	**: 26th Session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development**
Venue	**:** Online
Date & Time	**:** 29 March 2023, 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM
Speaker	**:** Assistant Secretary Edwin S. Ligot

SPEECH

- Good day, everyone, and thank you, Chair, for giving me the floor.

- As we all know, technology is strongly tied to information society, and it is easy to lose focus on technology as a singular factor. When we talk about addressing the digital divide, it is not enough to ask how many satellites we are going to build or how many computers we are going to deliver; rather, we must continue to ask how we can make government services more available in this digital era of connectivity and computers. We have recently made significant strides towards the passing of the E-Governance Act; once passed into law, it will help expedite the digitization and digitalization of government services, making the government more accessible to its people.

- I firmly believe that challenges are actually, only missed opportunities. The Philippines is faced with the problem of connecting over 7,600 islands, but we can use this to explore the use of TV White Space and satellite technology to bring our country together.

Currently, we have activated around 4,214 Free Wi-Fi sites in Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas.

- In the same context, access to education is a prevailing concern for us, especially in remote areas. Given the Philippine landscape, some students have to go so far as to travel for hours on foot just to reach the nearest school. We need to see this as a possibility to use information technology to bring the schools to them. Again, our work does not stop at merely providing connectivity and equipment; we must remember that our people are the most important component in the development of an information society. We must ensure that our students and teachers are both capacitated to use technology in delivering education.

- Challenges in employment can also be exposed as ICT advances. More and more jobs become vulnerable to automation and artificial intelligence. Instead of seeing this as a threat, we can again use this as an opening to develop new competencies and generate new jobs in the digital economy. The Innovation and Startup Act that we passed last 2019 has allowed the Philippines' Startup Ecosystem Value to reach USD 2 Billion. In this regard, we can see that numerous opportunities abound in an information society— opportunities that both the public and private sectors can open to our citizenry.

- It is without a doubt that we are all bound to face obstacles, many of which we do not even recognize yet, but as long as we remain faithful to the core of public service – which

is serving our people, I am confident that we can all be stewards in advancing ICT and

achieving a people-centered, inclusive, and development-oriented information society.

- Thank you.