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Statement submitted by

Thailand

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Thailand Intervention on WSIS Progress

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Thailand is pleased to share our progress made to first time ever able to close the access divide by providing broadband internet access to all rural villages in the country.

Given the Thai government has emphasized the importance of digital economy and launched the Thailand 4.0 policy, the Village Broadband Internet or so called Net Pracharat project becomes a flagship project that comes to the government's attention. The goal of Thailand 4.0 policy is to drive the country by innovation, knowledge, technology, and creativity. Toward this aim, the government gives high priority on digital foundation layout related to enhancing the quality of the digital infrastructure, which is a crucial factor to develop innovation and improve the quality of lives of people in remote areas. This is to enable Thai people across the country to access digital technology equally.

The Thai government has therefore made a bold decision to expand high-speed network to all 24,700 rural villages in Thailand.

Within one year during 2017 thru universal access fund and public-private partnership investment, the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society together with the Telephone of Thailand Public Company Limited (TOT) completed the installation of fiber cable network to all 24,700 target rural villages throughout the country. In addition, free public Wi-Fi hotspots at the speed of 30 Mbps download speed and 10 Mbps Upload speed were also installed in public areas such as schools, hospitals and

village centers. Within 6 months, 4.5 million users registered to access Wi-Fi Net Pracharat. Newly registered increases around 200,000-300,000 users in every month.

To increase awareness and promote the use of the Net Pracharat, the ministry of digital economy and society has developed curricula on Internet fundamentals (Basic Use of Internet), and Internet applications for career building and income supplement. As of now, MDES has provided trainings about 1,000 officers from the Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education (NFE). This was to create a leading group of Net Pracharat trainers. Then, these leading trainers went back to their communities to provide trainings to around 100,000 local people in Net Pracharat village areas. In addition, in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior (MOI), the trainings already reached 1,000,000 local people in September 2018.

• The Net Pracharat project helps reduce inequalities of broadband Internet access. With high-speed Internet network installed, local people who live in remote areas are able to access useful content and services via Internet as those in cities.

With access to Internet, local people will have opportunities to access useful content and services. The impact so far is beyond expectation. Here are some real testimonials:

On Education – students say they can search for information that can help their studies, for example, animation that explains chemistry, rules of physics, mathematic calculation and others.

Also, they can learn additional topics of their interests through online courses from both domestic and abroad.

Teachers can find new information that help improve their teaching materials. They can make supplementary class materials available online for students to study before coming to class . In addition, students and teachers can learn and practice English with a number of free online Web sites.

For local people, they can access lifelong learning education that can help them improve their knowledge and skills on several topics, such as household accounting, organic farming, and automobile maintenance. This will give them opportunities for employment and more income generation.

On Public Health services – local people can access health information online. They will be able to access tele-medicine service. In addition, hospitals will be able to exchange patient's electronic health records, without needs for patients to carry their own records to the hospitals to get service.

On E-Government service – local people can access online government services. For example, they can use their identification number to check their health care coverage, pay water and electric bills online, and do tax e-filing.

On E-Commerce – With access to Internet, local people say they have more opportunities to sell their local products thru e-commerce, resulting in more income generation. With e-commerce, local people can overcome geographical reach constraints. They will be no longer limited to selling to immediate local market, but expand their markets to both domestic and global stages. Currently, Ministry of Digital

Economy and Society is working with Thailand Post to implement e-Commerce platform and delivery service for local communities. The project will develop a Point of Sale (POS) system that offers a full range of e-Commerce tools and activities, such as e-marketplace, e-payment, and logistic services.

Last but not least, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the ITU for their interest in the project and has awarded a winner of WSIS prizes 2019 Category II Information and communication infrastructure to the government of Thailand on this endeavour.

Thank you.