

**PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.'s
SPEECH AT THE NATIONAL INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY SUMMIT 2022
The Manila Hotel, City of Manila
October 26, 2022**

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You mustn't applaud me that much. Now, I have to perform to earn your applause. [laughter] But thank you.

Thank you, Information and Communications Technology Secretary Ivan John Uy; the Chief Information Officers Foundation Chairman George Kintanar; the CIO Foundation President Cynthia Topacio; and the Bureau of Internal Revenue Commissioner Lilia Guillermo; the industry partners, exhibitors and participants to the 2022 National ICT Summit who are virtually present here with us this morning; my fellow workers in government; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

I'm sorry that we were a bit delayed and I hope we did not delay your breakfast too much. But I could not help but go through all the booths and all of the displays that we have available to --- that were presented --- all the presenters here in this ICT conference.

And it's really gratifying to see that every time we come to this type, a gathering of technical, the technology experts, it is really interesting to see that even if the last time you did it was six months ago, you come to this new one and the way that the technology progresses is just absolutely remarkable.

And we see now where you do not need a coder, you do not need an engineer. People can do their packages that are available, that you can build your own software, you can build your own app. And the point that I'm really making is that clearly, the opportunities are there. The opportunities are out there. It is up to us.

I think it is fairly clear that it is the private sector that leads the technology, that innovates most quickly when it comes especially --- for most things in commerce, but for the most part, especially in the tech industries.

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And it is up to us who are in government to learn these new technologies, to learn these new techniques and to take full advantage so that those of us in government are able to provide the best possible services that we can to our people. And that is why the partnership --- I think Ivan mentioned that 80 percent of our audience here today are the CIOs from the government and the rest are from private sector.

And that is for me critical if we are to succeed in digitalizing our bureaucracy, our government and to make the way that we do business, the way that we work, the way that even we communicate with one another, to make it as efficient, as streamlined and as affordable as possible so that we can provide that extremely important service. And so that partnership in terms of investment, in terms of infrastructure, we keep talking about public private partnerships.

Well, it turns out that even in the sector of Information and Communications Technology, those partnerships are not a business partnership. But I suppose, it is a sharing of technology, it's a sharing of knowledge, it is a sharing of the state-of-the-art from the private sector, with the public sector and that working together that will bring us to success.

So, I am very happy to be here with you at this National Information and Communications Technology Summit. Unfortunately, when we look at the records, our country has ranked 89th out of 193 countries in the United Nations E-Government Survey. That is not an encouraging number.

This survey assesses the digital government landscape across member states. And this assessment of our performance is, at the very least, worrying. We experienced actually a regression. In other words, other countries have progressed. We have not progressed quite as much and therefore have fallen down the list of e-governance in our different member countries of the UN.

And that this happened even though many innovations and technologies in ICT are open and widely available. But clearly, we will do better: Our ICT professionals are among the best in the field and Filipinos are among the most tech-savvy people in the world. There is, essentially, nothing holding us back.

This summit is therefore correct, is apt, is timely for what we will discuss here will be instrumental not only in improving our global standing, but most importantly, securing the Philippines' place in the future.

I thank the DICT and all our summit attendees for answering the call to find a holistic approach in harnessing the various technologies for the Philippines' digital transformation. It is my hope that the summit will result in actionable proposals towards a truly citizen-centric, inclusive and sustainable e-governance ecosystem.

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Moving forward, we will become more adaptive to fast-changing developments. And in this endeavor, I speak once again, of a cohesive public-private collaboration and I find that this is necessary. So let's work together to optimize the opportunities provided by ICT for nation-building.

During the pandemic, it was clear that the private sector led the way in employing technologies and innovations that deliver faster and better results to its stockholders (sic) (stakeholders). There is nothing holding government back from adopting these improvements to perform better in its tasks.

In the same manner, there is also a need for the public sector to work and partner with the private sector to encourage growth, promote investments, make sure that private enterprise acts in the best interest and welfare of the general public.

To achieve this end, we are committed to realize the vision of a Digital Philippines. We will achieve this by enhancing the country's digital infrastructure, improving the regulatory framework for innovation, ensuring cybersecurity and developing the country's digital workforce, amongst other things.

The government will also facilitate the swift passage of the E-Governance and E-Government bills. And I am happy to report that at the last meeting of the LEDAC, which is the liaison body between the Executive and the Legislature, this came up and it looks like that... Well, the E-Governance and the E-Government bill will be consolidated. But they are working on it and I have asked them to bring it out as quickly as they possibly can so that we have the framework with which we will digitalize our government, which we will digitalize our bureaucracy.

And it is not something that we choose to do. It is something that we have to do. We are already playing catch-up in terms of digitalization to the rest of the world. So, it is not as if we have a choice here, we don't have a choice; that maybe we'll do it, maybe we'll not. No, it is simply not the way that the modern world works. We have to digitalize if we are going to keep up.

All our plans for the transformation of the economy and our continuing redefinition of the Philippines' place in the community of nations, all of that depend upon your work and that we are able to do all the important work that we are trying to achieve. And that can only be done if we have a digitalized government, a digitalized bureaucracy, a strong partner with our private sector in terms of the technology industries.

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So this is something that --- whatever obstacles we may find before us we will overcome because we need to do it. So, the bills that we have asked the

legislature to pass will enable to ensure fast, transparent and efficient government service for the Filipinos.

I therefore call on all our servant-leaders in Congress to help accelerate the approval of these bills once again. As I said earlier there is nothing that I can see that should hold us back from getting the future that we want. We have the tools. We have the knowledge. And most importantly, we have the people. All that is left to do is to have the will and the resolve to achieve it.

So, I reiterate my call to our partners: Let us forge ahead, build a better, brighter, more progressive future for the ICT sector for the bureaucracy, for the entire Philippines.

Thank you at mabuhay kayong lahat. Magandang umaga po sa inyo.
[applause]

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