

**PRESIDENT FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.'s
SPEECH AT THE GRAND LAUNCHING OF THE
VITRO SANTA ROSA (VSR) DATA CENTER**

Santa Rosa City, Laguna

April 23, 2025

[00:00:00]

Thank you, DICT Secretary, Secretary Henry Aguda.

Please take your seats.

DTI Secretary, Secretary Cris Roque; of course, our very good friend and most important partner in not only bringing AI-ready facilities such as this but in all kinds of other sectors of our economy, our good friend and partner PLDT Incorporated Chairman, Mr. Manny Pangilinan; [applause] the ePLDT and VITRO Incorporated President, Mr. Victor S. Genuino; [applause] Santa Rosa City Mayor Arlene Arcillas; [applause] the officers of PLDT, SMART, ePLDT, and VITRO; esteemed partners; fellow workers in government; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen. Good morning.

I would just like to add to what Mike was saying when he said you congratulated ePLDT and VITRO for what they have done. I now would like to add to that and congratulate the Philippines because we now have this incredible facility, which makes us AI ready and definitely in the running to compete with our neighbors and our partners all around the world. [applause] And that is a very important achievement.

That important milestone is what we mark here today in Santa Rosa—this launch of the VITRO Santa Rosa or VSR Data Center.

It stands as proof that the Philippines is future-ready for the digital realm. There is some work left to do but we are ready to do that work so we can be an equal player in the world of data and data processing.

[00:02:08]

This launch also reflects our commitment to regional development. We bring the digital progress beyond outside of Metro Manila, into the heart of our provinces.

Fully energized. Artificial Intelligence-ready. Built to support hyperscale, cloud, and enterprise workloads, in other words, the Googles, the Amazons, the Facebooks of this world.

Those who are not techie might ask—ano ba iyong data center na iyan? A data center is akin to a warehouse. Parang warehouse iyan ngunit imbes na iyong mga gamit ang naka-storage doon – instead of boxes of products, we store digital information – such as emails, videos, business records, government files, even the apps on your phone. It keeps everything running safely and securely, twenty-four hours seven days a week.

Every time you attend a virtual meeting, every time you book a plane ticket, every time you pay online, go shopping, even stream your favorite movies and drama series—that data passes through a facility like this.

In today's world, data is as critical as water and electricity. We need to strengthen further our digital infrastructure, especially for critical, private, and confidential data. We need to safeguard our digital security. We need to secure our digital future.

So, how important, in fact, is it to secure digital information system?

Itong mga panahon na ito, paano natin nalalaman kapag in a relationship na ang dalawang tao? Nowadays they call it an Instagram hard launch—posting of romantic pictures sa IG na may caption “Found my Forever” or such like. Mayroon ding soft launch. I look at the social media posts of Sandro siya ang nagturo sa akin nito. [laughter]

Paano mo naman malalaman kung hiwalay na? Nag-unfollow at nag-block na kaagad. Burahan ng picture. Pero minsan, napapasilip pa rin sa Archive, na nagbabaka-sakaling may naiwan pang picture. Parang may memories.

Buti na lang may data center na tayo—kasi kahit siya ay hindi na bumalik, iyong alaala, naka-backup pa rin. Iyan ang sinasabi natin tech has your back. [laughter]

As a powerful tool though in the digital age, this mega-infrastructure provides essential protection for sensitive data across the public and private sectors.

[00:04:50]

The launch of this landmark ICT infrastructure is also a testament to the people-centered future we are building—a Philippines where technology and human connection go hand in hand and exist seamlessly.

Over the past couple of years, the Philippines has made meaningful strides in the digital space. In the Global Innovation Index, out of 133 economies, we rose from 56th place in 2023 to 53rd place in 2024—it is an improvement that reflects our collective effort to accelerate Philippine progress through innovation.

But this achievement does not make us complacent. Because we need to do more. We must continue to strive for more. And this is why this Administration is persistently taking deliberate steps to propel us to even greater heights.

In April 2024, we launched the National Fiber Backbone Project Phase 1. The NFB will deploy fiber optic cable and wireless technology required to enhance internet accessibility and speed nationwide. We aim to complete the entire project by 2028.

Through the Free Public Internet Access Program, we have established more free Wi-Fi sites nationwide, with more than 11 million user sessions recorded as of March 2025, including in GIDA areas or geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas.

Additionally, to ensure energy reliability as well as create an investor-friendly environment, the Department of Energy, through its Energy Virtual One Stop Shop System, is streamlining the applications and permitting process[es] for energy projects.

This will ensure that we have enough power to support our hyperscale data centers, including companies that want to build their own renewable energy facilities that can generate power for self-use.

With these efforts of creating a more digitally-connected and energy-aware environment, the inauguration of VSR signals the country's readiness to attract the world's largest technology companies and showcase our regional competitiveness in the digital space.

More than that, this technological development is an investment on the future of every Filipino. The Filipino student who studies and conducts research online. The small business owner who relies on social media and e-commerce. The Filipino worker who lives far from his or her family, counting on technology to bridge that distance. This technological infrastructure strengthens connection, not just digitally. It ensures that innovation fosters connection, brings opportunities, and uplifts lives.

Alongside infrastructure, we are equipping our people with the requisite expertise—anchoring on our broader goal under the Digital Workforce Competitiveness Act. This will build a workforce that is future-ready, inclusive, and able to thrive in the digital economy.

Our job in the government is to create the conditions for growth. But real progress comes from partnership—from trust, commitment, and shared vision.

Of course, we would not be here today without the steadfast partnership of our friends from the VITRO and ePLDT Group. Thank you for your vision, for your trust, and most especially, [for] your confidence in the Filipino people.

And to our visionary investors, I invite you to come explore the potential of Filipino ingenuity. Bring your technology here! Let us shape that digital economy together—with the Filipino being your greatest asset!

So, as we celebrate this achievement, let us remember:

The Bagong Pilipinas we aim to achieve is not just about rebuilding—it is about reimagining and transforming. A nation that embraces digital transformation is a nation that secures inclusive progress.

Once again, congratulations to ePLDT for the successful launch of VITRO Santa Rosa.

Maraming, maraming salamat at mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas!

Magandang umaga sa inyong lahat. [applause]

[00:09:19]
