

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE  
PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK**

**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.  
AT THE NATIONAL ICT MONTH KICKOFF CEREMONY  
AND NATIONAL LAUNCH OF THE EGOV SUPER APP**

[Delivered at the President's Hall, Malacañan Palace | 2 June 2023]

Thank you, Sec. Ivan Uy... *[Please have your seats.]* for your introduction.

Our Finance Secretary Ben Diokno; Jimmy Bautista of DOTr; and all the other officials who have come to join us here today; my fellow workers in government; well, our, tayo mga fellow workers in government, mukhang mapapagaan ang trabaho natin kapag talagang nabuo na natin ito. And that is --- the call of the day is that we will have to adopt all of these new technologies to be able to compete properly in the global stage.

And of course, our all important partners in the private sector, without whom these new steps that we have taken could not have been possible; all the distinguished guests here; ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

In my first address to the nation last year, I emphasized that we are in the midst of an age of exponential adoption of technology.

Our Government must keep up with that frantic pace and it is frantic, and facilitate the rapid development of our interconnectivity infrastructure to allow our economy to ride the wave and open up an ocean of opportunities for prosperity.

Government as well must be able to identify and utilize high-impact innovations to improve its own governance and transform itself into an agile bureaucracy that is responsive to our people's needs.

As we commemorate National ICT Month, it's proper that we recapitulate what Government has collectively accomplished over the years to develop and strengthen our country's overall ICT infrastructure.

As early as two decades ago, the policy on e-commerce had been laid down, [and] electronic documents and transactions have been mainstreamed and given legal recognition.

Unfortunately, the technology was not able to keep up. This is one of those very rare cases na nauna ang legislation doon sa teknolohiya.

And so, this is what we are trying to do now. We are trying to make maximum use of the technologies that are available to us.

We are talking about the ease of doing business, the ease of interacting with the government. At the very beginning when we first came into office, I explained over and over again and made it very clear to all that would listen that this is not something that is an option that we might want to examine. This is something we need to do. We have no option of not doing this. It is something that is required.

If we look now on the experience, when we look at our competitors and that is essentially what this is about. It is a competition of the global market on many, many dimensions. And if we are to look at our neighboring countries, for example, to Europe, to the United States, then we can see that you cannot compete on an even basis unless you are highly digitalized, both in the private sector and as well in the public sector.

And that includes all the attendant issues of cybersecurity, the attendant issues of having a cloud that belongs to the country, the issues that we are beginning to resolve on the single ID for all citizens of the Philippines.

And all of these must come together in a way that is useful and easy and convenient for the ordinary Filipino citizen.

Now, I have no --- I always worry about how Filipinos will take. Kaya ba nilang gamitin ito? Is it simple enough? And we had that meeting yesterday. And I said I always worry about the capacity of the Filipino to take on these new technologies.

And thus far, I have always been wrong. There has never been a problem for Filipinos to take up these new technologies. They pick it up, well more quickly than...

Well, we are a young country and young people simply have an affinity for the new tech because it is something that they can live with, that they have lived with. They cannot imagine a world without Wi-Fi.

'Yung mga anak ko noong maliit pa pag babiyahe kami. Ang unang tanong: "We're going to visit this island in Visayas." "May Wi-Fi ba? May Wi-Fi ba?"

And you cannot blame them. That's the world we live in today. And that's why this is essential to all the plans. This is going to be another building block in the foundation of our transforming the economy.

And this e-governance, the whole idea of e-governance is something that we need to do because we have fallen behind. And when we started --- before we started this and I've quoted this statistic many times that we did a survey of how people use the internet in the Philippines and the result was quite enlightening, in that they say 95 percent of their daily activities -- the shopping, the paying the bank and even the payments to government, all 95 percent are done online.

Ano 'yung 5 percent? Government. "We cannot do it online with government. We have to go to the office. We have to collect the birth certificate, the documentation, the clearance and then we go to the government office and they say: "You're missing one document." Balik na naman. And they do all of these things.

So, that cannot, that will not, that just won't work. And as we can see, many of the problems that we are encountering are simply because of the problems that are being faced by both the public sector, by ordinary citizens in their dealings with government is the ease of doing the work.

Now, we hope with the beginnings of the e-governance system that a senior living in an isolated place, isolated island somewhere who by which time we will have had connectivity can just go on to their phone. If they don't know how to do it, they'll call their child or 'yung apo nila. "O sige kayong gumawa." And do all their business on the internet and be able to have payments.

The Central Bank actually was leading the pack here in that --- the Central Bank has also been very, very aggressive in trying to make as many of these payments, both to government and from government in the digital space and that I think has been --- it has been very, very successful and you can see.

We were in GSIS the other day and only four percent now. If I remember correctly, 4.7 percent of their transactions are done over the counter. Everything else is over the internet.

And so this is what we are pushing for. This is what e-governance is about, to bring it all together to make it simple and available, accessible.

Some of these data that we have has been siloed in different departments, in different agencies and there is no way for us to go from one place, one website, and say: "I am interested in a job in engineering. Is there anything out there?" Now, we have that.

"I am trying to buy land in this area. What does the titling look like? Has it been surveyed?" We couldn't that, now we can do that.

So, these are the capabilities that these e-governance program brings. And that is why it is extremely important that now that we have launched the e-governance app, which by the way, I'm going to... *[You have to show me how to download it immediately para tetestingin (testing) natin.]*

Once again, that brings us again to the issue of our IDs. And so the IDs are really going to be the central focal point for the dissemination of information, the dissemination of services et cetera.

So, that's what we are working on and I think we're making a good deal of progress. We are finding those operations, those groups who are able to print them out now.

Right now, it's a little unsatisfactory because what we call an ID is essentially a picture of an ID. There is no data that backs it up.

I think the simplest example which I think most of you will have been familiar with, either first hand or second hand, is the social security number in the United States.

You give your social security number, they have all your data. You don't have to explain. You don't have to bring the documentation. All they had to is to verify that you are indeed who you say you are and once your identity has been confirmed then you can do the business that you need to do with government.

So, this is what we are aiming for. But this is extremely important step in heading down that road of digitalizing our bureaucracy, our government functions and this will extend not only to the national government, this will extend to even the local government.

The local government actually has --- local governments have, many of them have already taken the initiative and have started to digitalize themselves.

Now, what we have to do is to consolidate all of those systems in place. Allow them to communicate with each other in a way that is useful for the consumer, for the citizen in terms of

again the business that has to be conducted with government. So, I'm very, very happy that we are going in this direction.

There is another part of this that is extremely important that we sometimes do not talk about and that is the lessening of corruption.

Because when you do not have to talk to a person at all for the entire process, wala kang kausap na tao, there's no discretion that's being exercised at any point. It's either yes, no, yes, no, yes, no, binary, 1 0 1 0. It's binary.

So, that way it simplifies the process, especially for the citizen and there is no discretion being exercised by anyone. "Eh kung 'di mo ako lagyan, hindi ko ipapa-ano ito, iipitin ko ito." "Yung mga ganun.

Kausapin mo 'yung si ganito, ganyan, siya mag-aayos, 'yung fixer niya. Wala na 'yan. Mawawala na 'yan.

And that's --- we owe that to the people. We owe them to be able to do that. We should not allow them to continue to suffer to this antiquated, corrupt, and inefficient system.

Mabuti naman. If it works, it doesn't work, it just gets worse and worse and worse. So, we are looking forward to this e-governance platforms that we are starting to put up.

The issuance now of the national ID which will be a proper ID in the sense that it is --- it contains a data that is critical or that is important or that's necessary for the conduct of business with government.

And so this is a very good step and we will continue to push this and we will need the partnership, not only of our government agencies, but also of the private sector because the private sector also has concerns in this regard, especially when it comes to cybersecurity.

So, these are the elements that we have to be looking at and that we are looking at.

So, I congratulate DICT for now having the first e-governance app and we will continue to make it more extensive, make it more sophisticated and eventually put us at an even keel, at the very least, at an even keel or hopefully at an advantage as we compete in the global market for the supply of goods, for the supply of services, for the supply of labor, for opening up new markets, all of these elements which we have to make more robust if we are going to do well in the next decade or two.

Thank you very much and good morning. *[applause]*

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