

ICT Conference – An enabler for innovative growth
Attila Nyitrai
Deputy Head of EU Delegation to Thailand
Welcoming remarks
Grand Centrara
2 July 2013

Greet guest of honour and speakers

Col. Dr. Settapong Malisuwan, Vice Chairman of NBTC,
Chairman of Telecommunications Commission NBTC

Speakers

Dr. Deunden Nikomborirak, Research Director, Economic Governance, TDRI

Dr. Bandid Nijathaworn, President & CEO Thai Institute of Directors (IOD)

Alex Lim, Managing Consultant, BT Advise for communications BT Global Services

Tsuyoshi Kawashima, NTT Communications Thailand

Bob Fox, Vice Chair EABC ICT Working Group; Chair JFCCT ICT Group

Organisers

EABC – European ASEAN Business Centre

JFTCC- Joint Foreign Chamber of Commerce to Thailand

ATCI- Association of Thai ICT industry

SIPA - Software Industry Promotion Agency

The ICT sectors are indeed the engine for innovative growth. Through skills enhancement, productivity gains and more knowledge-intensive work, opportunities for personal, societal, national, and economic development and enhancement can be realized.

Telecoms is a regulated industry. It is highly inter-dependent. Thus we have rules about infrastructure sharing and access to facilities, along with ways of competing fairly. Globally the industry requires the institution of the independent regulator, which also has a role to enforce such rules.

Software development and much of IT is not regulated in the same way or at all. To the contrary, often the innovations which occur do so simply through creating the right environment.

We acknowledge the long-standing principle, recognized in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) that the telecoms sector has a dual role in the economy – that of an industry in its own right and as a contributor to all other parts of the economy. The national mission has been thus recognized in many countries to make the sector work in a productive, efficient, innovative and contributive way. To do this, we must all face the path of evolution and even sometimes disruptive change. Structures and practices which were appropriate some time ago may not be relevant and useful now.

Indices and reports such as the Networked Readiness Index (published in the Global IT Report by WEF and INSEAD) can be useful tools in understanding what is working and what needs attention. The ‘Impact’ sub index is telling of the use which is made of ICTs in the economy.

This is a connected world. Technology knows few geographical boundaries. There are forces, primarily on the demand side, driving the adoption of new technologies.

All of this means that we all work towards creating the right structures and environments which support delivery of competitive services and make any location attractive for this. Thus in trade and investment terms, being attractive on the one hand and having the best structures to use technology and services are both important.

There are currently four EU FTAs at different stages of development in the ASEAN region. The agreement with Singapore has been finalised and is subject to ratification, negotiations are well advanced with Malaysia, and talks were launched with Vietnam in October last year. With Thailand the first round of negotiation took place in Brussels 27-31 May this year and the next round will take place in Thailand in September. The FTA can be seen as an excellent opportunity to make the necessary evolutionary changes which will allow the sectors to really shine.

The conference line up today brings together many of the key issues facing the ICT sectors. I wish all participants – those delivering, those listening and responding and questioning, a most fruitful day.