



Smart agriculture, smart transport systems, smart grid program, leading to “smarter ASEAN.” Such smart initiatives, according to Secretary Mario G. Montejo of the Department of Science Technology (DOST), are not only happening in the Philippines, but also “around ASEAN in other centers of innovation.”

Sec. Montejo revealed his dream of a “smart ASEAN” as he spoke before telecommunications and information technology ministers and senior officials of ASEAN countries during the 12th ASEAN Telecommunications and Information Technology Ministers (TELMIN) Meeting held in Mactan, Cebu on November 15 and 16.

Montejo also takes over from Myanmar as TELMIN leader while DOST Undersecretary Louis Casambre of the DOST’s Information and Communications Technology Office (DOST-ICTO) chairs the assembly of ASEAN senior officials supporting the ASEAN TELMIN.

In his opening speech, Sec. Montejo hinged the concept of a “smart society” with the emerging role of ICTs in a world being increasingly defined by how people use them.

“We may be seeing an emerging shift in ICTs manifested in directions beyond mere access to the technology to its strategic use as it becomes embedded in all aspects of life,” Montejo said. “This is a shift from the so-called information society paradigm to a new one—the paradigm of a smart society.”

The DOST chief further expounded on the economics of digital devices, relating that while their cost continues to plunge, their level of sophistication increases, resulting in the pervasiveness of these modern and smart gadgets in everyday lives. This scenario brings about an abundance of real time information and data which can be analyzed and processed for faster decision-making

and more efficient systems management in various industries— from agriculture, health services, and energy, to meteorology and weather, traffic management, and other governance systems. This smarter way of task performance has resulted in increased productivity, efficiency, and responsiveness in a quick and timely manner.

“Let us continue to share our experiences, learnings, and strategies that will respond to common challenges and go beyond a connected ASEAN to embody a smart ASEAN that has truly leveraged ICTs to enable the aspirations of the ASEAN people for a better future,” said Sec. Montejo.

Other highlights of the two-day conference include the signing of a Memo of Understanding between ASEAN and the International Telecommunications Union on Joint Cooperation on ICT development in ASEAN, the 1st ASEAN ICT Awards, and the signing of the Mactan–Cebu Declaration between ASEAN member states to advance ICT cooperation and integration in ASEAN, and strengthen DOST’s commitment to socio-economic development through ICT.

The ASEAN Telecommunications and ICT Ministers from the ASEAN member states and dialogue partners from China, India, Japan, Korea, the European Union, and the International Telecommunications Union discuss their respective countries in Information and Communications Technology in order to have a clearer view of the region’s progress in accordance with the ASEAN ICT Masterplan, which is looking at having an integrated ASEAN by 2015. At the same time, the delegates will also identify plans for 2013.

The Information and Communications Technology Office of the Department of Science and Technology is the Philippine government’s lead agency on ICT related matters. Its primary thrusts are in the ICT Industry Development, eGovernment, ICT policy development, Internet for all and cybersecurity. (Roy Espiritu, S&T Media Service)