



**WELCOME ADDRESS  
BY  
MS. AREEWAN HAORANGSI  
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC TELECOMMUNITY**

Ms. Ajarin Pattanapanchai, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Digital Economy and Society,  
Royal Thai Government,  
Mr. Khin Maung Thet, President of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT),  
Mr. Houlin Zhao, Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union (ITU),  
Mr. Syed Ismail Shah, Vice-President of the General Assembly,  
Mr. Ilyas Ahmed, Chairman of the Management Committee of the APT,

Excellencies,  
Distinguished representatives,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning to you all.

It gives me a great pleasure and a privilege to welcome you all to the 14th Session of the General Assembly and the 41st Session of the Management Committee (MC-41) of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity.

On behalf of the APT and all delegations here, I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to our host, the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society, Royal Thai Government, for the excellent arrangements for the meetings and warm hospitality extended to all of us.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Ms. Ajarin Pattanapanchai, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society for taking time from her busy schedule to grace this event.

My profound thanks go to Mr. Houlin Zhao, Secretary-General of ITU for coming here specially for this General Assembly despite his very busy schedule.

I would also like to sincerely thank all distinguished representatives for being present in this GA-14 and MC-41.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest condolences to the Government and people of Iran over the loss of human life and damage caused by the earthquake that struck near the border of Iran and Iraq late Sunday. I wish the victim's families fortitude and courage, and those injured a speedy recovery.

Excellencies,  
Distinguished representatives,

The General Assembly or GA, which is the supreme organ of the APT, provides an opportunity for APT Members to establish general policy and principles for the fulfilment of the objectives for the following three years. These include Strategic Plan of the APT for 2018-2020, basis for the Annual Budget of APT and determining the limits of Annual Expenditures for the year 2018-2020. This GA will also elect Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General for the following three-year term. Therefore, the success of the APT for the following three years and beyond will rely on your guidance and direction at this GA.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Three years have passed so swiftly since the last General Assembly in Yangon, Republic of the Union of Myanmar in 2014 where I myself was elected as chief administrative officer of the APT Secretariat along with my colleague Mr. Masanori Kondo, Deputy Secretary General.

Since then, with the generous support and contributions from APT members and dedicated works of APT Secretariat, I am very pleased to inform the General Assembly that APT has completed a number of activities in order to implement the Strategic Plan of the APT for 2015-2017 as well as the Brunei Darussalam Statement, which was adopted by the Asia-Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting in 2014.

Allow me to highlight some of achievements of the APT during the past 3 years.

The Work Programmes of APT have been stable in terms of structure that is based on the priority areas and work items of the Strategic Plan, which has facilitated the predictability from our memberships.

With the successful implementation of these Work Programmes, APT has been able to meet the divergent needs of the members. APT has received Extra Budgetary Contributions from our members for use in the regular Work Programme every year.

In addition, APT has continuously supported our members through various ICT projects including International Collaborative Research Project, ICT Pilot Projects for Rural Areas, Publishing Programme for ICT Policy and Development and Projects to Facilitate ICT Application in the Asia-Pacific.

APT has also provided capacity building programme for our members mainly through various training courses. Every year, APT has organized more than 20 training courses whereas the trainees have drastically increased from 262 in 2015 to 360 in 2016 and to 576 in 2017. This surging figures resulted from expansion of training course opportunities not only to fellowship trainees but also to non-fellowship trainees who can bear their own cost.

The overwhelming success of the capacity building programme was also attributable to the “Local Training” initiative, which allowed that APT training courses to be held in APT Member countries. Previously, APT training courses had been organized only at the partner training institutions in P.R. China, India, Japan and Thailand. However, since 2017, APT training has been organized in APT member countries upon the members’ request. Up to 13 local training courses had been organized this year.

Since 2016, APT has organized the series of APT Training Programme for International Conferences or Mock Conference. "Mock Conference" training programme aims to provide an opportunity for young officials of APT members to learn about international conferences, their structure, ways of negotiations and discussions, etc.

In terms of consolidating regional views in the preparation for international forums, APT has been successfully organized preparatory meetings for key global conferences including the ITU World Radiocommunication Conference in 2015 (WRC-15), World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly 2016 (WTSA-16) and World Telecommunication Development Conference 2017 (WTDC-17). A number of APT Common Proposals were drafted by the respective Preparatory Groups and had been successfully accepted by the ITU Conferences or Assemblies.

Through these APT Work Programmes, I would like to inform the General Assembly that the Strategic Plan of the APT for 2015-2017 has been successfully implemented. Details of its implementation have been provided in the relevant documents of this GA.

To pave the way forward for APT in the next three years, the new Strategic Plan has been drafted to cope with the new ICT development based on the Brunei Darussalam Statement. The new Strategic Plan will serve as guidance and direction for the APT activities in the key priority areas as set out in the Ministers' Statement.

Distinguished representatives,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As all APT members are aware, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030 approved in 2015 by the United Nation are currently under implementation by all stakeholders acting in collaborative partnership. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have spread rapidly in much of the world and contributed to the development and implementation of the SDGs. However, such rapid development has increased the complexity for in establishing sufficient legislative frameworks to maximize the benefit of ICTs to the citizens.

Meanwhile, plethora ICT devices including Internet of Things (IoTs) have generated enormous volume of data every day. Although this has attributed to the profound development of digital economy, it has been regarded as one of the major challenges to the policy makers and regulators to address the personal data or privacy concerns.

In addition, broadband has offered ubiquitous connectivity and Quality of Experience. However, ICT infrastructure still remains as one of the biggest challenges, in particular for most of the countries in Asia and Pacific. Even as ensuring the Internet universally accessible and affordable has been a global priority, it is not universal at all. 4 billion people in the world do not have any Internet access, nearly 2 billion do not use a mobile phone, and almost half a billion live in areas without a mobile signal.

In this context, the draft Strategic Plan of the APT for 2018-2020, which has been drafted by APT members, is well crafted to address the pressing needs and requirements of APT members. This draft APT Strategic Plan intends to build strong APT in the area of connectivity, innovation, trust, capacity building and partnership. I do expect your strong support for the draft Strategic Plan during the deliberation.

Another important issue to be decided at this GA is the unit cost of contribution. I have been listening to the voices of our members for almost 3 years throughout my term as Secretary General of APT, and I found that most of our members have been affected by the economic crisis and the severe downsizing. Hence, the APT Secretariat has decided zero nominal increase in the unit cost of contribution for the following three years. Nonetheless, APT Secretariat wishes to maintain the same or provide even better quality of services to our members without further financial burdens to our members.

Excellencies,  
Distinguished representatives,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This session of the General Assembly is my first GA together with my colleague, Mr. Masanori Kondo, the Deputy Secretary General, as elected officials of APT. During our tenure of service, we devotedly attempt to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the work of APT and we wish our services have been satisfactory to APT members.

With these few words, let me once again thank our Members, Associate Members and Affiliate Members and other partner organizations for their continuous and affectionate support and contributions extended to APT.

I would also like to thank once again our host, the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society, Thailand for the excellent facilities and wonderful arrangement for GA-14, MC-41 as well as the Preparatory Meeting for GA-14 yesterday.

In conclusion, I wish you all a successful deliberation at this GA and MC and a pleasant stay in Bangkok.

Thank you.