80th session of Economic and Social Commission of ESCAP

Side Event: “Expanding Digital: Innovations for SDG fulfillment”

Date and Time: 135-1415 hrs, 22 April 2024, UNCC

Statement of Mr Supakorn Siddichai, Group Executive President
Digital Economy Promotion Agency (DEPA), Thailand.

Distinguished audience and fellow panelists,

I am pleased to introduce Thailand Digital Economy Promotion Agency (DEPA) to this esteemed assembly. DEPA is a crucial organization in Thailand's digital transformation journey, focusing on promoting and developing the country's digital economy to achieve sustainable development goals and foster inclusive growth.

DEPA has been actively partnering with the United Nations Thailand to launch the 'Decade of Action, Decade of Innovation' campaign, which aims to harness technological and innovative solutions to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Thailand. This collaboration demonstrates DEPA's commitment to integrating digital innovation and sustainable development, aligning with the theme of the 80th session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

In the context of ESCAP's 80th session, DEPA's expertise in e-learning, e-agriculture, and digital transformation for SMEs can contribute significantly to the region's efforts towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. DEPA's work in these areas supports the awareness of the Global Goals and inspires people from all walks of life to participate in this vital undertaking.

As we gather for the 80th session of the ESCAP, I encourage you to consider DEPA's experience and contributions in promoting digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific. By working together, we can leverage digital innovation to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and build a more inclusive and resilient region.

Thailand's smart city development strategy is an integral part of the country's broader economic and social development plan, as outlined in the Thirteenth National Economic and Social Development Plan (2023-2027). The plan emphasizes the development of strong, high-potential, and competitive SMEs, as well as the creation of smart cities that are safe and livable.

To achieve these goals, the plan includes several strategies and sub-strategies related to smart city development. These include providing incentives for starting new businesses to manufacture smart electronic products and parts, developing internationally accepted standards and rules for accessing data from smart gadgets, and supporting the exchange and linkage of data among government agencies and with local and regional private sectors to build big data for research and development of relevant products and services.
Additionally, the plan encourages attracting and encouraging foreign investment by collaborating with Thai businesses or joint ventures, giving privileges for investors that encourage or press for specialist partners to transfer knowledge and expertise to Thai enterprises with a focus on upstream industries with advanced manufacturing technology, which are the basis for the smart electronics industry.

The plan also advocates for the local digital industry with competitiveness, with strategies such as attracting investment from international big tech enterprises for the benefit of all Thai businesses throughout the supply chain, attracting big tech investment in Thailand’s digital infrastructure, and establishing investment formats and privileges that generate added domestic economic value.

Furthermore, the plan promotes the development of digital infrastructure to help Thailand leverage its geographical advantages to enhance the competitiveness of Thailand’s digital services by 2027, expanding international internet bandwidth, linking international networks to cut costs and times for building data centers, and developing domestic public cloud services.

In terms of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Thailand’s smart city development strategy is closely related to SDG 11, which aims to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. The plan also contributes to SDG 9, which focuses on industry, innovation, and infrastructure, and SDG 17, which emphasizes partnerships for the goals.

In summary, Thailand’s smart city development strategy is a comprehensive and multifaceted approach that aims to create safe, livable, and competitive cities by leveraging innovation, technology, and foreign investment. The strategy is aligned with the United Nations' SDGs and is an essential component of Thailand’s broader economic and social development plan.

Thank you for your attention.