HOUSE RESOLUTION

STRONGLY URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (DICT), IN COORDINATION WITH THE MINDANAO DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (MINDA) AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS (LGUs) CONCERNED TO ESTABLISH INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT), FACILITIES IN MANGSEE ISLAND, PALAWAN AND TAGANAK ISLAND, TAWI-TAWI TO FAST-TRACK INTEGRATION AND ENSURE PARTICIPATION OF THESE BORDER AREAS IN THE VARIOUS BIMP-EAGA SUB-REGIONAL COOPERATION PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and Internet Broadband Development are integral in the Economic Recovery and Digital Transformation Programs in the entire country, more particularly in the areas under the Philippine Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) cooperation in Mindanao and Palawan;

WHEREAS, ICT Infrastructure plays a fundamental role in the Recovery Plans in the New Normal by providing connectivity anywhere and anytime with uniform quality regardless of region, location or socio-economic status. An efficient ICT infrastructure can address the issue of the Digital Divide, which separates those able to access computers and the Internet and those who must do without;

WHEREAS, Digital Divide in the country is more evident in Mindanao and Palawan, the country’s two focal areas in the BIMP-EAGA, wherein according to the results of a March 2019 Survey by the Social Weather Station (SWS), only 39% of individuals in Mindanao are accessing the Internet. Also, digital divide is more evident in the countryside wherein only 38% of individuals are using the Internet in rural communities as compared to the 56% access rate in urban areas in the country;

WHEREAS, there is a need to fast track the implementation of ICT-related projects in the border areas in the BIMP-EAGA, particularly in the Taganak Island located in the province of Tawi-Tawi and Mangsee Island, in Palawan. These projects would benefit the population in various online learning and educational activities, accessing knowledge and information, livelihood and entrepreneurship. Further, these would link them to the global village and their counterparts in the BIMP-EAGA subregion and take advantage of the greater opportunities for trade and business. The fruition of the ICT project shall also strengthen the ties and identity between the Filipinos in these border areas with the rest of the Philippine population;

WHEREAS, the Special Committee on East ASEAN Growth Area of the House of Representatives seeks the enhanced cooperation of the various government agencies such as the Department of Information and Communication Technology (DICT), the Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA), the concerned Local Government Units (LGUs), and private telecommunication companies operating in the countryside such as Smart Communications, Globe Telecom, Inc. and DITO Telecommunity, to include and prioritize in their ICT development projects the establishment of ICT Connectivity in these border areas of the Philippine BIMP-EAGA, in Mindanao and Palawan, particularly Taganak Island and Mangsee Island. The DICT and private telecommunication companies shall provide these border areas the needed ICT access and Internet connectivity to recover in the New Normal and link them to their counterparts in the BIMP-EAGA subregion.
NOW, THEREFORE, FOR AND IN CONSIDERATION OF THE FOREGOING PREMISES, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, THAT THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON EAST ASEAN GROWTH AREA OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, PHILIPPINES STRONGLY URGE THE DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (DICT), IN COORDINATION WITH THE MINDANAO DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (MINDA), AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS (LGUs) CONCERNED TO ESTABLISH INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT) FACILITIES IN MANGSEE ISLAND, PALAWAN AND TAGANAK ISLAND, TAWI-TAWI TO FAST TRACK INTEGRATION AND ENSURE PARTICIPATION OF THESE BORDER AREAS IN THE VARIOUS BIMP-EAGA SUB-REGIONAL COOPERATION PROGRAMS

Adopted,

SABINIANO S. CANAMA

GIL “Kabarangay Jr.” A. ACOSTA