Users who missed 4G migration the 'real opportunity' for telcos

By Ashley Erika O. Jose
Reporter

THE telecommunications industry must seize the opportunity presented by the Konektadong Pinoy legislation to address users who missed the initial wave of migration to 4G mobile technology, US cloud and mobile technology company CloudMosa said.

"Telcos are racing to the future with 5G, but growth won't come from the top alone. The real opportunity lies in those who were left behind in the migration to 4G and beyond. This is a call to action for industry leaders: those who move first to bridge the affordability gap will shape the next decade of the industry," CloudMosa Chief Executive Officer Shioupyn Shen said in a report on Tuesday.

According to a study conducted by CloudMosa, Konektadong Pinoy will help expedite the phase-out of 2G and 3G, thereby providing a boost to affordable connectivity.

"While the rest of the world is rushing towards 5G, these users (those left behind in the 4G upgrade) present the region's most overlooked commercial opportunity and telcos are uniquely positioned to move them up the value chain to ultimately close this gap. Doing so will unlock revenue, drive education, employment, economic mobility, and social inclusion," according to the report.

The Konektadong Pinoy bill is now awaiting the signature of President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., after the two chambers separately ratified the priority measure through voice vote in their respective plenary sessions.

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Last week, the Palace said Mr. Marcos will be reviewing the bill in the wake of rising concerns by telecommunications companies. The Department of Information and Communications Technology has expressed optimism that the bill will be signed into law.

A joint statement on Tuesday by several business and industry groups, foreign chambers, public service organizations, tech organizations, and civil society and consumer groups urged Mr. Marcos to sign the bill into law.

The group, which composed of American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, Inc.; Canadian Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, Inc.; Analytics & AI Association of the Philippines; Alliance of Tech Innovators for the Nation; Chief Information Officers Forum, Inc.; Better Internet PH and other industry leaders, described the measure as "landmark legislation that will democratize internet access, which could potentially be this Administration's greatest legacy."

The bill aims to increase internet access by relaxing regulations and allowing the entry of more data transmission entrants.

Konektadong Pinoy also raises the prospect of more optimal use of the radio frequency spectrum and the reallocation of underutilized and unutilized spectrum.

Information and Communications Technology Secretary Henry Rhoel R. Aguda has called for expediting the deployment of 5G technology.

The Philippine Chamber of Telecommunications Operators (PCTO) has warned that certain provisions of the measure could weaken regulatory oversight and threaten national security and fair competition.

PCTO President Froilan M. Castelo, in a statement on June 12, warned that the bill raises the risk of unregulated infrastructure and possible foreign control.

The version of the bill agreed by the bicameral conference committee outlines an open-access policy to create a more competitive environment for all qualified participants across the entire data transmission network, while encouraging investment in digital infrastructure to support reliable and affordable data services.

The final version exempts international gateway facilities, cable landing stations, and satellite service providers from legislative franchise requirements. This means any company may build and operate such facilities without going through the safeguards historically used to ensure national security.

ASEAN PRIVATE SECTOR LEADERS MEET. Joey Concepcion (left), Chair of ASEAN-BAC Philippines and founder of Go Negosyo, and Tan Sri Nazir Razak, ASEAN-BAC 2025 Chair and head of ASEAN-BAC Malaysia, at the 103rd ASEAN BAC Council Meeting, Interface with ASEAN Leaders & Related Meetings last May 2025 in Malaysia

ASEAN-BAC PHILIPPINES TO HOST FIRST-EVER ASEAN BUSINESS RETREAT AHEAD OF 2026 CHAIRMANSHIP

In a milestone initiative signaling a renewed commitment to regional economic cooperation, the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC) Philippines will host the inaugural ASEAN-BAC Retreat on July 7–8, 2025, in Makati City. This first-of-its-kind gathering marks a significant step in redefining the Council's role in ASEAN's integration agenda.

The retreat will also feature a high-level reception that will serve as the soft launch of the Philippines' ASEAN-BAC Chairmanship in 2026. It will bring together business leaders from across Southeast Asia, senior government officials, members of the diplomatic corps, and development partners—highlighting the Philippines' whole-of-nation approach to driving ASEAN prosperity.

Joey Concepcion, Chair of ASEAN-BAC Philippines and founder of Go Negosyo, announced the event, saying, "We envision an ASEAN where no one is left behind; where digital innovation, sustainability, and entrepreneurship fuel inclusive growth that uplifts people, empowers communities, and benefits all nations."

Tan Sri Nazir Razak, ASEAN-BAC 2025 Chair and head of ASEAN-BAC Malaysia, together with co-Chair Joey Concepcion, incoming ASEAN-BAC Chair for 2026, are spearheading the retreat with theme, "ASEAN-BAC Reimagined." The Council members, each appointed by their respective Heads of State or Government, will review their mandate.

"This is not just a meeting—it is a reset," said Nazir. "In a world shaped by disruption and divergence, ASEAN-BAC must evolve to remain a credible and effective platform for the private sector. This first-ever retreat reflects our collective responsibility to strengthen our relevance and impact for the region."

To ensure impactful outcomes, the retreat will be facilitated by McKinsey & Company to help guide the Council in sharpening its priorities and enhancing its role in driving ASEAN's economic integration and public-private cooperation.

The retreat will also help bridge Malaysia's ASEAN 2025 theme of 'Inclusivity and Sustainability' and the Philippines' 2026 agenda, "Driving ASEAN Prosperity: Further, Faster, Together "

"This is the right moment to recalibrate," Concepcion added. "With the Philippines set to chair ASEAN next year, we must be ready to lead with unity, purpose and impact. Together, ASEAN can—and must—move further, faster."

Sardine canners promise to keep prices steady

THE Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said it received a commitment from sardine canners, who promised to hold prices steady, contrary to reports that they are seeking to charge more.

"We appreciate the industry's commitment to the consumer, especially with the economic pressures families are facing today," Trade Secretary Ma. Cristina A. Roque said in a statement on Tuesday.

"Their decision not to increase prices supports President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.'s directive to keep basic goods affordable and ease the daily burden on consumers," she added.

The manufacturers' commitment follows her June 23 meeting with members of the Canned Sardines Association of the Philippines.

She said the commitment was given after news reports that the industry was planning to request an increase in the suggested retail price of a 155-gram can of sardines to P24 from P21, due to rising production costs.

Among the attendees were Chattrade, Mega Prime Foods, Inc., PERMEX, Universal Canning, Inc., and Century Pacific Food, Inc.

"They committed to maintaining the current suggested retail price for canned sardines, a staple in Filipino households," the DTI said.

The DTI's Fair Trade Group said that it has "not received a formal petition for a price adjustment but initiated the meeting to proactively address the issue."

Under the Price Act, the DTI monitors prices of basic necessities and prime commodities, including canned fish. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

PHL becoming 'attractive destination' for HNWIs due to growth, tax reform

THE PHILIPPINES' strong long-term growth outlook and tax reforms for foreign investment are expected to attract interest from high-net-worth individuals (HNWIs), private client immigration consultancy Henley & Partners said.

"The Philippines is emerging as an attractive destination for people that want to do business just because of the above average GDP growth. (Many other) economies cannot grow as fast as the Philippines. And given that the Philippines is still a developing country, it presents huge opportunities for people to come and start businesses and capture success that would be impossible in developed countries," Henley & Partners Managing Director for Southeast Asia Scott Moore said at a briefing on Tuesday.

The firm's Private Wealth Migration Report 2025 projects the Philippines to experience a net outflow of HNWIs this year, which Mr. Moore described as less severe than the situation in regional neighbors.

"I would say it's much more worrying that Vietnam is losing 300. Indonesia is losing 250. These are at the top of the list. The Philippines, compared to its regional neighbors, is losing much less," he said.

He added that overall growth in Philippine HNWIs in the past decade of 32% also supports the outlook for economic growth and further inflows of HNWIs.

According to the report, the Philippines has 12,800 millionaires, 70 centi-millionaires, and 12 billionaires.

"So in terms of relevance for HNWIs in any country, it just signals economic progress and general health of the economy. If a country can create new millionaires, it means that the economy is growing and there are good opportunities," Mr. Moore said.

He said Singapore and Thailand remain the policy leaders for nurturing HNWIs.

"If we're looking at specifically Southeast Asia, Singapore and Thailand (benefit from) government policy. Singapore has stability and attractive tax regimes for HNWIs. Thailand has ease of entry in terms of their visa options and very attractive tax incentives for foreigners, as well as of course the lifestyle," Mr. Moore said.

He added a golden visa for investors could make the Philippines more attractive to HNWIs.

He added that a weak peso could increase the Philippines' HNWI intake.

"The weaker currency would mean foreigners coming in. It would make (the Philippines) more attractive."

The firm's wealth migration report listed the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as having the highest expected net inflows of millionaires at 9,800 this year.

"Dubai has amazing infrastructure and lifestyle for wealthy individuals. It's basically built to cater to them. The UAE also has very stable politics while they have zero income tax they have very low corporate tax. It's extremely easy to set up a corporation there and (obtain a) golden visa... It's probably one of the most straightforward," Mr. Moore said.

In the region Singapore had the highest expected net inflow of millionaires, estimated at 1,600.

"The number of millionaires coming into Singapore has started to go down a bit. And this is because those wealthy individuals are now moving to the UAE," Mr. Moore said.

Meanwhile, the UK posted the highest expected net outflow of millionaires at 16,500, which Mr. Moore said was the largest single-year outflow in over a decade.

Brexit continues to prove to be a bad bet to attract and retain HNWI, but the real genesis of this huge outflow comes from major tax changes that were confirmed in 2024. — **Aaron Michael C. Sy**

Grid plan expected by September

THE Department of Energy (DoE) said on Tuesday that the Smart and Green Grid Plan (SGGP), which will establish policy and mechanisms for timely transmission of project implementation and efficient system operation, is due for completion in September.

"The SGGP started in September 2023 and is scheduled for completion this year," Energy Undersecretary Rowena Cristina L. Guevara said at the Conference on German Technologies for Renewable Energy Integration in the Philippines.

"The SGGP aims to enable the seamless integration of large-scale renewable energy (RE), including up to 50 gigawatts of offshore wind and 4.8 gigawatts of nuclear by 2050," she added.

The SGGP is being developed by the DoE in collaboration with the US Agency for International Development Energy Security Project, the University of the Philippines, and TRANSCO.

It also seeks to enhance grid reliability and resilience and to connect more remote RE sources to key demand centers by developing new transmission corridors and subsea cables.

"Meanwhile, SGGP Phase 2 focuses on developing a transmission timeline to support large-scale RE integration, prioritizing offshore wind and other high-capacity sources," she said.

"It aims to modernize the grid to meet the 2050 peak demand, enable over 50% RE share by 2040, and enhance energy security and affordability," she added.

She said the government views transmission as a major challenge in the energy sector. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**