

Concern was raised that new technology will not help people put food on table. For the poor, ICTs could be useful as far as they help to earn money for basic resources. Participants stressed the need to train people properly and said technology has to be user-friendly. The Philippines already has a relatively solid ICT basis and with some assistance could be become an ICT hub.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked all the participants for their valuable contributions. He drew attention to what seem to be emerging "common themes" around good governance and related issues. Other CCFPD discussions have concluded with calls for attention to governance issues, including issues of building a professional public service, the long term challenges of establishing democratic practices and democratic political cultures in post-communist or post-authoritarian states and the often long processes of establishing viable political parties with platforms and electoral accountability. Some of what was said today about the Philippines has also been mentioned in connection with other countries and other policy development questions. Canadians may have valuable experience and "lessons learned" in looking at the evolution of parties, democratic practices and a professional public service. He challenged the academic community to bring these threads together and address the "big picture."

Minister Pagtakhan echoed the Chair's sentiment. He said that we should continue thinking about how to help sustain the new directions taken by President Macapagal Arroyo towards strengthening democracy in the Philippines. He emphasised the importance of drawing on the expertise of the non-governmental sector in policy development and the need to work together.