OPENING STATEMENT

Thank you, Chair, and good day to my fellow ministers and colleagues.

This year, the Philippines has begun its **ASEAN Chairmanship**, and the question we feel most sharply is the one behind today's theme: **how do we shape governments that can sustain growth and influence—when expectations are rising, budgets are tight, and trust is fragile**?

Because influence is earned trust—the ability to convene, reduce uncertainty, and deliver results people can see. And growth is not just numbers; it is the daily confidence that rules are clear, processes are fair, and outcomes are predictable.

In the Philippines, across our 7,000+ islands, trust is tested in everyday transactions. When a "simple" task takes too many visits and too much guessing, people lose confidence. That is ARTA's mandate: cut red tape, improve service delivery, and deliver results.

QUICK WINS

First: Our eBOSS digitalized the local business permitting process. Across **1,634 LGUs** as of **26 December 2025**, **127** are fully compliant and **718** are partly compliant—over half already within reach of full conversion.

Where eBOSS works end-to-end, processes that used to take days can take minutes—3 minutes in Baliwag, Bulacan , 9 minutes in Valenzuela. These improvements track with stronger outcomes, including revenue increases such as **Taguig +46.09%**, **Mandaluyong +17.80%**, and **Parañaque +13.58%**. In a 10-LGU 2025 sample, revenues rose **5.82%** (**₱40.33B → ₱42.68B**) while total registrations increased (**203,008 → 204,431**).

PBRIS & ARTEMIS:

Second: predictability of rules and service standards. Through **PBRIS**, we are building one trusted place to find and verify regulations: **238 agencies onboarded**, with **44 agencies** posting **220 proposed regulations** for 2025. Through **ARTEMIS**, we are making service standards visible and verifiable: **80 agencies onboarded** and **12,869 services encoded** as of **December 2025**.

TELCO & MINING

Third: cutting bottlenecks in priority sectors to share our nation's competitiveness. In telecom streamlining, tower energization improved from **255–300 days to 59 days**, and LGU-approved tower permits rose **48.14%** (**6,117 in May 2022 → 9,062 in May 2024**).

In mining exploration, reforms are projected to cut steps **254 → 49** and processing time **1,096 days → 55 days**—about a **95% reduction**—supporting a stronger investment signal, reflected in the Philippines' jump to **16th of 82** jurisdictions in 2024 from **72nd of 86** in 2023 in the Fraser Institute survey.

EODB REFORM GUIDEBOOK

Quick wins matter—but lasting influence needs scale. That's why we're implementing the Philippine Ease of Doing Business Reform Guidebook: one shared playbook to simplify processes, standardize requirements and timelines, and measure performance so reforms outlast personalities and political cycles. Fully implemented, these reforms are projected to move the Philippines into the top 10% of the World Bank B-READY rankings.

TALA AI + KIOSK

And I want to end with a forward-looking thought.

Every generation tries to close the distance between citizen and state. We once did it with more forms and more layers, thinking control meant order. Today we're learning the opposite: **simplicity is justice, clarity is dignity, and speed—paired with integrity—is respect.**

So the next leap is not only digitization. It is making government **easy to navigate**, especially for people who don't have time to decode bureaucracy.

Just last year, we launched **ARTA's Tala AI**—a 24/7 AI agent that people can already talk to for filing complaints. But our vision goes further: an **AI-powered ARTA Dashboard and kiosks** as a trusted front door—giving the right requirements, steps, timelines, and channels—so citizens and businesses face less confusion, fewer repeat visits, and more certainty.

If we can do that, we don't just modernize transactions—we rebuild confidence, daily and at scale. And that confidence sustains growth and strengthens our credibility in the region and the world.

Thank you, Chair. I look forward to learning from your experiences on sustaining reform, financing modernization, and building institutions that endure.

END