

**Transcript of Speech delivered by Dr Janil Puthucheary,
Senior Minister of State,
Ministry of Communications and Information,
at Asia-Pacific Regional Internet Governance (APriGF) Forum (12 Sep 2022)**

Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

1. It is my pleasure to address you all today.
2. The internet has profoundly transformed societies and economies across the Asia Pacific.
3. Today, over 2.5 billion individuals in the Asia Pacific use the internet in one form or another.
4. The internet's open architecture has dissolved national boundaries and created vast economic opportunities. It has also drastically lowered the costs of collaboration and outreach.
5. However, the internet also poses unique challenges for governance.
6. First, the challenge of driving greater inclusion. Amidst the digital revolution, there is a risk that individuals who lack the resources or necessary skills will not be able to reap the benefits of the internet, or that companies who are not at the digital frontier, will be left behind.
7. The second key issue is that of security and trust. The internet in its nature is open and its anonymity creates opportunities for malicious actors to take advantage of the vulnerable.
8. This can take the form of misinformation, cyberattacks, or fraudulent schemes, of which crypto scams are merely the latest iteration.
9. To ensure an open, inclusive, and secure internet, international collaboration is key.
10. The digital commons cut across state boundaries. If we are to govern it effectively, countries must work together – whether bilaterally, regionally, or at multilateral fora – to set the rules of the road for an increasingly fluid and contested space.
11. This will allow us to harmonise standards, respond to shared threats, and cooperate on cutting-edge technologies.
12. For small countries like us in Singapore, we are often price-takers internationally. This approach is key to our digital sovereignty.
13. Collaboration also allows us to learn from each other's experiences, whether in fostering inclusion or enhancing cybersecurity.
14. It is because of the importance of collaboration that platforms like this forum matter so much.
15. I am sure that the conversations over the next three days will build the partnerships we need to navigate the challenges of governing the internet.
16. Thank you.

