

## National Legislative Assembly of Thailand Approves Establishment of Ministry of Digital Economy and Society

The National Legislation Assembly of Thailand (“NLA”) approved a bill (the “Draft Act”) establishing a new Ministry of Digital Economy and Society (“DES”) on 3rd June 2016. The Draft Act will become effective after its publication in the Government Gazette expected by the end of September this year.

Under the Draft Act, the Ministry of DES will replace the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (“ICT”). The Minister of ICT, Mr. Uttama Savanayana, said that the new ministry will have a new administrative scope and conceptual framework for implementing, developing and promoting Thailand's digital economy and society.

The DES Ministry will take over all responsibilities from the Ministry of ICT and will be in charge of the National Statistics Office, the Software Industry Promotion Agency, the Electronic Transactions Development Agency, the Thai Meteorological Department and Thailand Post, as well as oversight of state-owned telcos TOT and CAT Telecom. The National Disaster Warning Center is the only agency that will not be transferred to the Ministry of DES but to the Ministry of Interior.

The officers and assets of the ICT Ministry will be transferred to the DES Ministry as well.

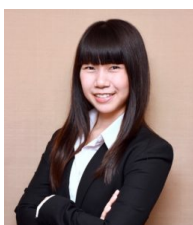
Under the Draft Act, there will be two new ministerial agencies under the Ministry of DES, i.e. the National Digital Economy Committee and the Digital Economy Promotion Agency. Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha will chair the National Digital Economy Committee.

Mr. Uttama said that the ICT Ministry is on the verge of transforming its administrative implementation structures and the DES Ministry is expected to be officially established in September this year. He will have to resign from his position as the ICT Ministry once the DES Ministry officially begins its work. The government will appoint the first Minister of DES. The Permanent Secretary of the ICT Ministry will work as Secretary General of this new ministry.

The Draft Act is the first of eight bills approved by the NLA for implementation of Thailand's digital economy roadmap.

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