



Rakuten Symphony and NOW Telecom sign MoU for 5G Open RAN Pilot in Philippines

BARCELONA, February 26, 2024 - NOW Telecom Company, Inc. ("NOW Telecom") and Rakuten Symphony today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish a collaborative framework for the deployment of a 5G Open RAN Pilot Deployment in the Philippines. The MoU was signed on Day 1 of the Mobile World Congress (MWC) at the Fira Gran Via in Barcelona, Spain held from February 26 until Feb 29. The MWC is the largest and most influential connectivity event in the world hosted by the GSM Association and draws more than 100,000 visitors from over 190 countries.

Under the terms of the agreement, Rakuten Symphony and NOW will collaborate with the aim of developing disaggregated networks and open interfaces in the South-East Asian country. The MOU was signed by Hironori Shimada, Director of Rakuten Symphony, and Romeo C. Escobar, Jr., Head of Networks for NOW Telecom. This significant event was also witnessed by Mickey Mikitani, Chairman and CEO of Rakuten Group, Inc. and Mel Velasco Velarde, NOW Telecom Chairman and Chief Advocate of the Trusted Network Alliance in Indo Pacific Region.

Sharad Sriwastawa, President, Rakuten Symphony, said, "We look forward to bringing Rakuten Symphony's expertise in Open RAN solutions and digital services to support NOW Telecom's 5G Open RAN ambitions. Rakuten Symphony is proud to support the development of Open RAN in the Philippines and the proliferation of open interfaces across global telecom networks."

Mel Velasco Velarde, Chairman, NOW Telecom, said, "Our partnership with Rakuten, the force behind Japan's 4th mobile operator and a key player in launching Germany's newest mobile network, signifies a pivotal moment for NOW Telecom. This collaboration is instrumental in our mission to unveil a secured 5G network in the Philippines. Together, we are dedicated to transforming telecom industry and establishing a standard for open, interoperable, and secure networks across the Indo-Pacific region."



Mickey Mikitani, Rakuten Group Chairman and CEO with Mel Velasco Velarde, NOW Telecom Chairman and Chief Advocate of the Trusted Network Alliance in Indo-Pacific Region.

Both Parties will contribute expertise, resources, and technology to jointly develop 5G and related ICT solutions for NOW Telecom's network.

Rakuten Group already has a strong presence in the Philippines through its leading instant messaging app, Rakuten Viber, with user penetration levels of 71% in the country of more than 110 million people.



Mahesh Kasar, Senior Vice President, Rakuten Symphony, Rabih Dabboussi, Chief Business Officer, Rakuten Symphony; Mickey Mikitani, Group Chairman and CEO, Rakuten Group, Mel Velasco Velarde, NOW Telecom Chairman and Chief Advocate of the Trusted Network Alliance in Indo-Pacific Region, and Romeo C. Escobar, Jr., Head of Networks of NOW Telecom.

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