

Malaysia Inc. – a system for close co-operation

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I WISH to congratulate Intan (Institut Tadbiran Awam Negara) for its efforts in holding this *Intan Forum*. The forum, as I have been made to understand, is to provide opportunity for intellectuals in both the Government and private sector to meet and discuss new ways to upgrade administrative efficiency and to enhance national development.

The forum is held in the context of the Government's efforts to upgrade efficiency. As you all know, in the 1982 general election the Barisan Nasional

promised that should it win the election it would form a clean, effective and trustworthy Government.

We know that the BN has been successful and it no longer acts as a party but as a Government. But the promise made must be fulfilled. The promise was made because there were some who felt that our administration has not reached a stage where it is efficient, clean and trustworthy. Thus after becoming the Government it is our responsibility to ensure that the cleanliness, efficiency and trustworthiness of the administration are upgraded further.

It is easy to make a promise but it is difficult for us to fulfil it, especially when the promise involves other people who did not stand in the election but are required to fulfil the promise made by politicians in the elections. That is why an effort must be made not only to have a programme to upgrade efficiency, cleanliness and trustworthiness of the administration but also to have a truly effective programme.

We have already initiated a number of positive and practical moves towards this objective.

However we should concede that till now we still cannot say that our administration has achieved its objectives. We can still hear people complaining about the services provided by the Government.

In view of this, there is a need for specific programmes. Forums, symposiums, seminars, dialogues are ways for exchange of ideas. The names are not so important. What is important is the exchange of ideas that can take place at these sessions. Even more important is the experience of having the results or conclusions arrived at at these forums.

Conflicting

We have made many suggestions in forums, dialogues, seminars and other such sessions. Nothing has been done about these findings. They have not been effectively implemented. Sometimes even though agreement has been reached on a certain course of action, implementation is held up due to some problems and obstacles.

Sometimes this is due to those entrusted with the implementation having conflicting opinions or, the decisions arrived at did not take into consideration the various obstacles that would be encountered.

This is a matter we must look into. Otherwise, if we merely concentrate on making decisions without considering the problems of implementation, the decisions will remain as decisions only. And the forums we have conducted will not have served any purpose.

Thus when making suggestions we should consider them carefully to ensure that they can be implemented. Sometimes a suggestion is too general, so general that it is no guide at all to the implementors. Sometimes we say that something should be further improved without mentioning how it should be improved. What should be done besides calling for further improvement?

This has given rise to a lot of problems and finally all our discussions will come to nothing. Furthermore, in subsequent discussions, the same problems are brought up again and once more we make the same decision or we query the non-implementation of the last decision. In this situation all the decisions made do not benefit anyone.

It is because of this I hope in this forum discussions are in depth and will go into detail so that any suggestions made are those that can be implemented, equipped to the last detail.

Otherwise the forum

we are going to have will serve no purpose. This forum is slightly different from the forums usually held by Government departments in that the private sector or those outside the Government are also invited. Policy wise, this is acceptable to the present Government.

We need to get the views of people outside the Government because actions by the Government will somehow or other involve or affect the private sector.

Government officials may not fully understand the problems faced by the private sector. It is up to those representing the private sector to raise the problems they face, not only to criticise but also to provide solutions to right what is not right.

Complaints

As a person who has been in and outside the Government, I am aware of the dissatisfaction that is felt by the private sector about the Government.

Many in the private sector probably feel that the country's administration is not so smooth, not so efficient and that usually all sorts of irregularities take place.

This may be true but without suggestions or discussions on how to overcome these problems, all the complaints will not bring benefit to

our country. The present Government is genuinely interested in improving our country's administration and, for this purpose, to correct this situation. The aim is to ensure that the people, including those in the private sector, derive benefits from the administration.

The past attitude was as if there was a confrontation between the Government and the private sector; as if Government officials purposely wish to frustrate the private sector and the private sector in turn purposely wish to be involved in efforts to interfere or to burden officials without considering the problems and responsibility these officials bear.

This is an old view, for we now feel that it should be the function of the Government to be a service agency serving everyone, including the private sector.

We wish Government officials to consider the private sector as a source of their livelihood. The success of the private sector is also their success. Surely we know that when the private sector is successful, the Government too shares in this success.

More specifically we know that in the present system whenever businessmen and all those involved in trading activities make profits they have to pay taxes, not

only income tax but all sorts of taxes. And it is from these taxes that we pay for the administration.

More success achieved by the private sector means more taxes that can be collected by the Government; the Government will be rich and therefore the country will prosper. That is why we want to see the private sector achieve success all the time. In this way we can live a symbiotic life where the Government has sufficient funds to run its administration.

In view of this we have introduced a system which may be known as Malaysia Incorporated, where Malaysia is a company; where there is close co-operation between the Government and the private sector to ensure the progress of the company. The fruits of this progress will be distributed to all the people in this country.

Therefore there must be close co-operation between the private sector and the Government so

that the Malaysia Incorporated concept will be more meaningful.

Feedback

Also through this forum we will be able to get feedback from all sectors, especially from people who are not in the Government, on what is happening and what the Government does not know or what the Government knows but not fully.

We know sometimes that there are things happening which we do not know about but which the private sector is fully aware of because they are forced to experience it.

For instance, if they face problems in their dealings with a Government department. Sometimes the official concerned is not aware of the problem, and in this situation we surely cannot correct this shortcoming. But through this forum, with the feedback we can get, we are convinced all shortcomings, all mis-

deeds and all proof to support allegations that the Government is inefficient can be raised. All this and ways of overcoming them can be discussed.

I hope you will not hold your punches in discussions in this series of the Intan Forum. We should be frank even if the truth hurts certain quarters. If there is no frankness or no willingness to be frank in this forum, once more it will not result in suggestions beneficial to the administration and the nation.

In this forum we can even discuss problems unrelated to national administration. Matters related to strategies in national security, Malaysia's international relations, domestic and foreign affairs can also be discussed.

If there are views which should be conveyed to the Government, I hope all will use this Intan Forum as the channel. I hope the forum will not be well attended

only during the early stages, the popularity and attendance declining with time. If this happens it will mean we have allowed an opportunity to help upgrade national administrative efficiency and national development escape us.

If we are responsible Government officials and members of the private sector, we will attend this forum. And in this forum discussions will be decorously conducted and the views raised well-intentioned and frank so that valuable feedback useful to everyone can be obtained.

Once again I must congratulate Intan for holding this Intan Forum and I hope it will be part of a campaign to upgrade cleanliness, efficiency and trustworthiness of our national administration, and form part of the Leading by Example campaign. This is the expectation of the Government and I am convinced you will not let the Government down.