

SPEECH BY CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT, TAN SRI MOHD. SIDEK B. HJ. HASSAN AT THE PEMUDAH MEDIA CONFERENCE, PUTRAJAYA ON JULY 31,2008

Assalamualaikum and Good Afternoon

Y.Bhg. Tan Sri/Dato' Sri/ Dato'/Datin,  
Members of the Media,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for attending this media conference. This is PEMUDAH's second meeting with the members of the media this year. When we last met, on Friday 29th February 2008, we presented to you the annual report which detailed the improvements undertaken since the inception of the Task Force. We are here today to update you on the initiatives that PEMUDAH has facilitated these past six months.

2. As we indicated to you when we last met, Y.A.B Perdana Menteri has directed that this Task Force continue with the work of being the catalyst for change and improvements in the public delivery system. The members, from the private sector and the public sector continue to give their best and their enthusiasm has not waned.

3. I speak for each and every one of us when I say that the members of PEMUDAH are very committed to the tasks at hand and will keep the momentum going. The Task Force will carry on working for the good of the nation. We must also add that the measure of success that PEMUDAH has achieved is in large part due to the commitment on the part of ministries and agencies to ensure continuous improvements.

4. I must commend my colleagues from the public sector for accepting the challenge presented to us in the form of the constructive criticism and proposals put forward by PEMUDAH and working to improve public service delivery. This winning formula of private-public sector partnership is now evolving into a system of governance as PEMUDAH moves to focus on monitoring the improvements that have been put in place.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. This Task Force was born of the need to rectify international perception about the ease of doing business in Malaysia. However, as the Task Force engaged with ministries and agencies, that rationale has been supplanted by the drive to improve service on a larger scale. We are doing it not for anyone but ourselves; for the good of the country!

6. When this Task Force was formed, there were expectations about what should be achieved. Members of the private sector had their wish list. To effectively deal with the host of issues highlighted, PEMUDAH formed a number of Focus Groups to address them. Today, we are pleased to inform you that we have been able to address a significant number of the concerns raised, and will continue to work on the others.

7. As was already announced last week, the infrastructure to enable e-Payment is in place. However, counter services will still be made available to those who prefer to make payments the traditional/conventional way. Through the e-payment infrastructure, members of the public can opt to make payment by:

- i. credit card or debit card at the counter;
- ii. direct debit or credit card using the Financial Process Exchange or FPX as the Payment Gateway via an agency's portal or the MyGov Portal; or
- iii. Internet banking by direct debit or credit card via a bank's portal.

8. Among the numerous e-payment services available are driver's licence and road tax renewals, and settlement of summonses at the Road Transport Department branches. Payment through e-services is also accepted at 111 approved sites for the booking of theory tests, issuance and renewal of learner driving licences, and renewal of competent driving licences.

9. Other departments and ministries that have extended their online services include PDRM for traffic summonses, the Immigration Department, Land and Mines Department, Inland Revenue Board, Education Ministry, Finance Ministry and Public Service Department. Settlement of the Assessment Tax through e-payment is also accepted for most of the local councils throughout the country.

10. In addition, Pos Malaysia has been appointed as the one-stop agency for Government's revenue collection via PosPantas service. This will be operational by October 2008.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. Among the complaints brought to the attention of the Task Force had to do with starting a business, in terms of both the process and the costs. In this regard, a One-Stop-Centre to expedite the incorporation of companies will be established in the Small and Medium Industries Development Corporation, SMIDEC. This will begin operations on 11 August 2008.

12. Besides working on improvements in the Government, PEMUDAH also works with private sector entities to reduce the cost of doing business. With the intervention of PEMUDAH, the Malaysian Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators, or MAICSA, has agreed to reduce the charges for incorporating a company from about RM3,700 to RM2,800 and annual corporate fees from about RM1,850 to RM1,200.

13. This is a start, and we can expect the Task Force to engage with other private sector organisations, banks, for example, that has a direct impact on the cost of doing business.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

14. Another concern brought to the attention of the Task Force had to do with registering property. Last week we also announced that the process of registering freehold property now will take 41 days from the signing of the Sales and Purchase Agreement. Down from 144 days previously. PEMUDAH's Focus Group on Registering Property worked with private sector organisations such as REDHA (Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association Malaysia), Association of Banks, Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Federation of Malaysia Manufacturers, Master Builders Association as well as relevant Government departments and agencies at both the State and Federal levels to streamline the processes for registering property.

15. The processes for free-hold property have been completed. The processes and procedures for registration of such property have been documented into a guidebook, which we are

pleased to launch today. This guidebook is part of PEMUDAH's efforts to assist members of the business community, potential investors and the man-in-the-street in navigating through the processes and procedures for registering property. This publication is reader-friendly with the relevant flow charts and check-lists. This is in line with PEMUDAH's objective of enhancing transparency and clarity in public delivery of service. I want to record my appreciation to all involved in this Guidebook.

16. The next step would be to work on properties with strata-titles, and subsequently, leasehold property.

Ladies and Gentlemen

17. Over the last 1? years PEMUDAH has managed to harvest what we termed as 'low hanging fruits'. Going forward, as mandated by the Prime Minister, we will be turning our attention to 'higher hanging fruits'. Here, we are referring to the issues that relate to policy such as the Foreign Investment Committee or FIC Guidelines, employment of foreign labour, and Government procurement. PEMUDAH will deliberate on these and provide collective input and proposals to the Government.

18. It must be stressed here that the Task Force is not mandated to change policy, ONLY provide objective feedback/inputs to the Government as they impact the business environment. This is integral to PEMUDAH's governance role.

19. The spirit in which PEMUDAH operates is that the members confront the issues objectively and analyse the costs/benefits that can burden/be derived for Malaysia as a whole. The focus is not on the narrow short term gains but on moving Malaysia to a higher level of competition.

20. In this context, members, be they private or public sector members of PEMUDAH recognises that facts and figures are crucial to support their proposals. By the same token, those wishing to maintain the status quo must also provide bases for retention of specific policies. This must be the way forward in the process of harvesting those high and difficult to reach fruits.

21. These are some of the areas PEMUDAH will work on in the year ahead. I want to repeat my call to the members of the public to continue raising issues and concerns and suggestions through the PEMUDAH website. We welcome your comments and assure you that every one of your feedback is acted upon. Please continue to use the website to interact with us.

22. We would also like to thank you, members of the media, for your balanced coverage over the months as you watched and covered PEMUDAH's efforts to transform the public delivery systems towards a truly customer-centric Public Service.

With that, I thank you.

Wabillahittaufik walhidayah,  
Wassalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.

Tan Sri Yong and I will be happy to take your questions now.