

21/10/2014 - CAPAM President's Dinner Speech

Mr. Paul Zahra
8th President of CAPAM

Ms. Gay Hamilton
Executive Director / Chief Executive Officer of CAPAM

Honourable Ministers from Commonwealth Member Countries

Heads of Public Service of Commonwealth Member Countries

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

Participants of CAPAM Biennial Conference 2014

A very good evening to everyone. Tonight, we will honour our public service colleagues who have gone the extra mile to provide better service to the public by awarding them the prestigious 2014 CAPAM International Innovation Awards. We are indeed privileged and honoured to be giving out the Awards here in Putrajaya this evening.

INTERNATIONAL INNOVATION AWARDS(IIA)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

2. It is often perceived that innovation is about new ideas and being able to come up with something different. This is not innovation; this is called an invention. It only becomes an innovation when we are able to apply this new idea and create social or economic value from it.

3. The theme for this year's Biennial Conference is "Public Service Transformation: A New Conversation". You might ask, what is the difference between 'transformation' and 'innovation'? They are closely related to each other and you cannot have one without the other. To put it simply, transformation is about organisational change, but to do that, it will require a fair bit of innovation. Innovation is deemed to be the enabler in driving public sector transformation.

4. The delivery of public services today has to go beyond efficiency and effectiveness. Steering the public sector in today's environment of constant change, coupled with the emergence of social media, has become a challenge for civil servants and policy makers.

5. We are not only tasked with solving very complex policy problems, but we must also juggle the demands of our stakeholders – their cry for transparency, to be included in the policy making process and that we reply to their concerns in ‘real time’.
6. How we successfully tackle these challenges require a broad recognition and understanding from every layer of the public service. We have to reassess our traditional ways of working and engagement with the public. There are no quick fixes or solutions. We require more collaborative and innovative approaches. Innovation is not a phase or a ‘flash in the pan’, but it serves as a complement to our regular government mechanisms.
7. CAPAM has been awarding the International Innovations Awards to recognise and celebrate the spirit of innovation in the public service. These are the only international awards that recognise and celebrate innovation in the public service, and aims to encourage innovators in the public sector to challenge current trends and boost new and innovative ideas for public service enhancement.
8. The award is divided into four major categories namely, Innovations in Public Service Management, Innovative Use of Technology in the Public Service, Innovations in Government Services & Programmes, and Innovations in Citizen Engagement & Dialogue.

9. This year CAPAM has received over 100 submissions of projects, out of which, three were shortlisted for the Innovations in Public Service Management Award, four shortlisted for the Innovative Use of Technology in the Public Service Award, three for the Innovations in Government Services & Programmes Award and finally three for the Innovations in Citizen Engagement & Dialogue Award. Without a doubt, the shortlisted finalists in each category have been putting remarkable efforts in making sure their projects are feasible and most importantly, qualified to be crowned as the worthy winners. We hope that this spirit of competitiveness and innovation will always be ingrained in our minds for the advancement of the public sector.

HOPES & WAY FORWARD

Ladies and Gentlemen,

10. The awards to be presented tonight underline the importance of innovation. To encourage innovativeness, we need to develop an ecosystem that will spur the growth of innovative talent. Therefore, a transformed and resilient public sector should tap on talent management strategies to develop such quality to enhance public sector transformation. It is important that officers continue to impart their policy knowledge, expertise and experience to the wider public service.

11. I am happy to share that our Honourable Prime Minister of Malaysia, YAB. Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Hj. Abdul Razak, has been inculcating the culture of innovation in the Malaysian Civil Service. In other words,

innovation challenges the status quo, breaks the norms of doing business as usual and propels creativity within the public sector.

12. We must endeavour to give the public or the people the best. This is what we call our journey of “Public Service Transformation: A New Conversation”. As the public service transformation moves forward, a new strategic direction is emerging in terms of leadership, process and implementation. Leaders increasingly understand that success rests with clear articulation of strategies and involvement of employees and citizens if reform is to take hold. This is a major change in the mindset of public service management – from a top down to a more collaborative model.

CLOSING

Ladies and Gentlemen,

13. Thank you for coming and making this Conference a successful and memorable one. Our highest gratitude and sincere appreciation to all eminent speakers, panellists and delegates for your contribution and participation throughout the CAPAM 2014 Biennial Conference.
14. I hope you have found the proceedings stimulating, both in terms of learning what our challenges are, as well as the opportunities that we have learned together throughout this event. It is a learning curve that I believe you have enjoyed and found rewarding and thought-provoking.

15. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the panel of juries who had the unenviable task of deciding the winners of the International Innovation Awards. Your commitment and wisdom is greatly appreciated.

16. To the winners of the International Innovation Awards 2014 which will be announced shortly, congratulations and well done! To those who were not successful this year, we thank you for your commitment and participation and hope you will try again next year.

17. I hope we will take all the learnings from the Conference, and the innovations showcased in the awards back to our home countries and make our respective public service even better!

18. With that, I would like to wish everyone a safe journey back to your loved ones, and may you share with them the many lovely memories you have made in Malaysia. Selamat Jalan and Terima Kasih!

Wabillahitaufik Walhidayah Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi
Wabarakatuh.