

## **26/10/2014 - Sharing Malaysia's Success Stories**

PUTRAJAYA (Bernama) -- Here is an excerpt of Bernama's exclusive interview with Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Dr Ali Hamsa, in conjunction with the recent Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) 2014 biennial conference at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre (PICC).

**Q:** What can Malaysia bring to the Commonwealth as far as its experience in public administration is concerned?

**A:** Since its inception, Malaysia has been among the countries that have been active in the Commonwealth. Malaysia has played a significant role and has contributed to the Commonwealth and CAPAM activities, especially in the fields of public administration and management.

Malaysia brings with it a host of examples of success stories to be shared with the rest of the Commonwealth. For example, we have had many successes in terms of our transformation programmes, particularly the Government Transformation Programme and the concept of 'Merakyatkan Perkhidmatan Awam' or humanising the public service, which have been accepted by the Commonwealth countries.

**Q:** CAPAM is celebrating the 20th anniversary of its

establishment this year. How will this significant milestone boost networking in promoting good governance among participating countries?

**A:** Malaysia is fortunate to have hosted the conference during the 20th anniversary of CAPAM's establishment. I believe this is a good opportunity for us to look back on the past 20 years and see how far we have come, to evaluate our shortfalls and successes, and to look ahead by learning from each other and transforming our future together.

The network of 53 countries with its diverse background and peoples is a boost to this endeavour, as the sharing of knowledge, expertise and information took place during the conference was immeasurable.

As the ninth CAPAM president, I would like CAPAM to revitalise its profile or brand within the Commonwealth and beyond, and for CAPAM to focus on helping our colleagues in the small developing island states, and adopt a regional approach with transformation and good governance of the public service as our main focus areas.

**Q:** After 20 years of CAPAM's establishment, where do you put the organisation now in comparison with the public administrations of western and advanced countries such as the United States, Europe, Japan, South Korea? How has it helped

members to improve the public administration and management in their countries?

**A:** CAPAM is unique in the sense that it consists of 53 Commonwealth countries throughout the four main continents in the world.

A great strength of the Commonwealth and CAPAM is its ability to speak with one voice while not losing the richness of its inherent diversity and geographical reach. Global integration brings us closer together, and such proximity can heighten stresses as well as open up fresh opportunities.

In a spirit of solidarity and shared purpose, and of exploiting opportunities for joint action, we need to find imaginative, creative and innovative ways of using the potential of CAPAM meetings/conferences and its networks to enlarge and enrich our common ground.

**Q:** Can you elaborate on the theme of this year's CAPAM conference, 'Public Service Transformation: A New Conversation'? What are the reasons for such a theme, especially after 20 years of its establishment?

**A:** The conference this year was divided into three sub-themes, as follows:

(i) Shaping the Future Together, which focused on the 'people' aspect of transformation, highlighting the critical importance of active engagement with both citizens and the public service itself;

(ii) Towards a Better Future, which emphasised the 'mechanisms' employed during transformation and details what processes, technologies, policies and/or other devices have been utilised; and

(iii) Building Global Resilience, which provided insightful lessons and country-specific context that governments have experienced when building a public service that can nimbly react to shifting trends in the future.

From the sub-themes, it is clear that this year's conference focused on the people who are the core behind the transformation envisioned, how to use policies and technologies to our advantage, and sharing of real-life examples among countries.

The Commonwealth is a wonderful avenue to share best practices, particularly with the rich history and development experiences of its members. Malaysia is more than happy to share our successes and at the same time, learn from others.

**Q:** Can you elaborate on the media forum and why you think this component is important to the Commonwealth's public administration?

**A:** This is the first time that we were organising the CAPAM Media Forum, and the theme chosen at this inaugural event was 'Engaging the Commonwealth'.

The theme of this conference was to examine up-and-coming paradigms and innovative practices within the broader Commonwealth media realm. It also aimed to create a platform for sharing experiences and best practices and provide an opportunity for participants to interact through networking among Commonwealth countries, and media practitioners.

**Q:** As CAPAM chief executive officer Gay Hamilton has commended Malaysia's public governance as a good example for other Commonwealth countries to replicate, in which specific areas has Malaysia excelled? Is the GTP, ETP, PEMUDAH/Teraju or ease of doing business a case in point?

**A:** There are many areas in which Malaysia has excelled and made tremendous achievements, and where we can highlight our success stories to the Commonwealth.

For example, the Government Transformation Programme's (GTP) 2013 Annual Report noted that it achieved 104 per cent of its key performance indicators (KPIs) last year.

The GTP comprises seven national key results areas (NKRAs),

which are reducing crime, fighting corruption, assuring quality education, raising the living standards of low-income households, improving urban public transport, improving rural development and addressing the rising cost of living.

Another good story to tell is the success of the initiatives under our concept of humanising the public service (MPA) and the National Blue Ocean Strategy (NBOS). For example, there are over 60 NBOS initiatives that have been introduced and implemented, and the essence of these initiatives is not only to improve the effectiveness of public service delivery to the rakyat but to leverage on the strengths of the different ministries and agencies and enhance collaboration in the public service.

As for the success of the Special Task Force to Facilitate Business (PEMUDAH), we have improved by leaps and bound in the World Bank Ease of Doing Business Report, (we have climbed up) from 23rd position in 2009 to sixth position currently among 189 countries in the world. PEMUDAH was established to address the urgent need for closer collaboration between both the public and private sectors to enhance the public service delivery and improve Malaysia's business environment. PEMUDAH has, in the course of these seven years, successfully introduced many initiatives to enhance the business environment in Malaysia.

Malaysia also ranks very favourably in international reports, which is testament to our nation's competitiveness. For example, the

World Economic Forum ranked Malaysia the 20th most competitive economy from 144 economies in the World Competitiveness Report 2014-2015, whereas we are ranked 12th in the IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook 2014 from among 60 economies.

**Q:** How crucial and relevant is the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) to the Commonwealth countries today? What about Malaysia's progress in implementing PPP?

**A:** The PPP is smart partnership between the government and the private sector for the purpose of providing public infrastructure, community facilities and related services. Generally, PPP is characterised by the sharing of investments, risks, responsibilities and rewards among partners. The main reasons for establishing such partnerships are to ensure efficient design, construction, operation and maintenance of infrastructure for enhanced services.

PPP can deliver value for money, by harnessing the private sector's expertise in combining the design and operation of an asset, thereby providing services in a more efficient manner compared to traditional forms of procurement.

Malaysia's success stories can be seen in the development of tolled highways, airports, ports, education infrastructure as well as our federal government's administrative centre, Putrajaya.

PPP has been implemented in Malaysia for more than 30 years and has contributed significantly towards Malaysia's rapid economic growth. With this in mind, Malaysia is ever willing to share our experience in PPP implementation with the Commonwealth and I urge our friends in the Commonwealth to take advantage of the capacity building, consultancy and advisory programmes offered by the PPP Centre of Excellence under UKAS (which is the Private-Public Partnership Unit under the Prime Minister's Department).

**Q:** How far has the public delivery system improved in Malaysia? Is there room for improvement?

**A:** Malaysia's public delivery system has improved significantly in recent years, as we continue to be a world-class public service, delivering services to the people according to their expectations and ever-growing demand.

However, we acknowledge that there are still challenges and room for improvement. For example, in order to close the gap between policy aspiration and service delivery, we have embarked on greater and wider engagement with our various stakeholders, including our public service workforce.

New models of partnership and strategic collaboration are being formed and the days of the government knows best are slowly

becoming a thing of the past.

Social media is also a platform that is increasingly being utilised to seek more views and greater engagement with our stakeholder communities and at the same time deliver messages to the masses.

We need to have competent public servants who have the requisite skills and knowledge to implement the policies that have been laid down by the government.

It means that we must invest in human capital development, investing in developing skills that are not only relevant today but also emerging skills to enable the public service to lift its performance beyond the execution of traditional processes.

At the same time, re-engineering of public organisations is also a prerogative as these organisations need to become more agile and more responsive to changing needs. ICT (Information and Communication Technology) will also be continually capitalised and leveraged upon to cut down the layers of bureaucracy that the public service is noted for.

-- BERNAMA