

12/04/2016 - High Tea Session With Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement Negotiating Team

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh,
Good Evening and Salam 1Malaysia.

Y.B. Dato' Seri Mustapa Mohamed,
Minister of International Trade and Industry;

YBhg. Tan Sri Mohamad Zabidi Zainal,
Director-General of Public Service Malaysia;

YBhg. Tan Sri Dr Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria,
Secretary-General Ministry of International Trade and Industry;

YBhg. Dato' Nik Rahmat Nik Taib,
Deputy Secretary General (Industry), MITI;

YBhg. Datuk J. Jayasiri,
Deputy Secretary General (Strategy and Monitoring), MITI;

YBrs. En. Isham Ishak
Deputy Secretary General (Trade), MITI;

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

OPENING REMARKS

1. Today's event is in appreciation of all of you, who in one way or another have contributed to the Trans Pacific Partnership or TPP negotiations process, and continues to be involved in the post negotiations process towards the ratification of the TPP.

2. The TPP process has **put the civil service in the lime light** and **highlighted the challenges that the civil service faces in today's environment**. To name a few, the challenge of the IT era, the social media, the involvement of the NGOs as well as interested parties. Officers have to equip themselves with new skills to face all these challenges and realities. For example, some of you have been involved in various interactive sessions on air to explain and clarify the TPP issues. Also you have been involved in outreach sessions explaining the TPP content, to the various NGOs and interested parties.

3. As the TPP had highlighted several issues, the government had to take proactive steps to disseminate information to the general public, given the false information and allegations that were being circulated. It was also unprecedented for the government to table a free trade agreement in the parliament.

4. **These are the new realities for the civil service**, and we have to continuously upgrade our skills to meet the new demands and challenges.

MOVING FORWARD AS A TEAM

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. I wish to take this opportunity to thank the negotiators for the tireless efforts in preserving the interest of Malaysia. I have seen many of you struggle throughout the course of negotiations, especially in presenting your views and options on the more sensitive areas that were being negotiated to the Cabinet members for their consideration. For many of you, given that you are relatively new in the civil service, I am sure it was quite a daunting task. Nevertheless, I am proud to say that you have indeed delivered and done a good job.

6. At times, the most crucial negotiations are done with the domestic stakeholders, clarifying provisions of the text being negotiated, and arriving at a consolidated national position, as domestic stakeholders will be territorial in defence of their own positions. Hence, it

is essential going forward, for negotiating teams to **build bonds among officers from the various ministries and organisations**. Each and every one of you will have attributes in your area of expertise and can contribute to the team in moving forward negotiations.

7. As negotiators, you have faced both criticism and recognition. Hence, it is important for us to undertake the necessary preparation and groundwork to ensure the outcome of a negotiation is truly our best effort. This would also involve wider engagement with our various stakeholders, including the NGOs as well as utilising the social media as a platform to seek wider views and greater engagement with various stakeholders.

BEING RELEVANT

8. **Building our expertise and knowledge should be an on-going exercise if we are to remain relevant**. While we recognise that hands-on training through direct involvement in negotiations is important, it would have to be managed more prudently, given our current budget constraint. A good command of English is also very crucial among civil servants, especially for negotiators. I would urge all civil servants to improve their command of the English language by reading English newspapers, books and magazines, as well as conversing in English among your colleagues. I understand that MITI had initiated an in-house requirement for officers to adopt the English language for internal memos and reports, as this would provide a useful training environment. In addition, all officers are encouraged to upgrade their qualifications through the various masters and doctorate programmes that are being offered by the Malaysian government or by foreign government and organisations.

CLOSING REMARKS

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

9. Once again, I wish to thank our TPP negotiators for their tireless efforts during the countless rounds of negotiations and for their commitment to finalising the best possible deal for Malaysian businesses and workers.

10. However, the work has yet to be completed. In fact, the team would now have to work harder in reaching out to various stakeholders such as the business groups and Government agencies who will eventually be implementing the TPP commitments, as well as other stakeholders such as academia, students and NGOs.

11. I hope that all of you will remain committed in ensuring the successful implementation of the TPPA for the betterment of the rakyat and country. To all of you, I have this to say: Lead the profession with exemplary passion and serve the community with compassion. Congratulations to all of you.

Thank you. Wabillahitaufig Walhidayah Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

©2016 Copyright Reserved SMPKE, Prime Minister's Office

Source: <http://www.pmo.gov.my/ksn/home.php?frontpage/speech/detail/2055>