

Penyampai : TAN SRI ABDUL HALIM BIN ALI  
Tajuk : THE CLOSING OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON "BEST PRACTICE IN ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT"  
Lokasi : HOTEL SHANGRI-LA, KUALA LUMPUR  
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Let me first say how honoured we are to be given the opportunity to organise this symposium in collaboration with COMNET-IT. Collaboration and cooperation in the context of the Commonwealth is not new to us but this particular symposium could not have come at a better time for Malaysia. As you might have learnt over the past 2 1/2 days or so, we are now in the midst of a very intensive preparation to turn the Electronic Government vision into reality. In the process we require a lot of advice and assistance from different quarters, local and foreign, for we do not have all the expertise that we need within the public service. Even at this juncture when considerable progress has been made in the preparation to introduce electronic government in the country, we still need to learn from the experience of others who have been ahead of us in similar endeavour.

May I therefore congratulate the Manpower Management and Planning Unit of The Prime Minister's Department and COMNET-IT for all their efforts and contribution in organising this symposium. We are very gratified at the presence of so many experts corporate managers, as well as public servants sitting together sharing their knowledge and experiences on the development of IT and electronic government in their respective agencies and organisations either in Malaysia or abroad.

2. Malaysian participants, I am told, have learnt a lot during this symposium. I hope those from overseas would have also benefitted from their interaction with their Malaysian counterparts, further strengthening the existing close cooperation between Commonwealth countries. A deeper understanding of the different implications of electronic government which this symposium generates is certainly helpful if we were to ensure that society benefits fully from IT & EG and that no unnecessary wastage is incurred.

3. At this point in time, we are working towards the establishment of a national common database. More than just eliminating resource wastage resulting from redundant data-entry, a national common database is necessary to support the viability of a single-window service delivery that transcends departmental boundaries. A single common repository of unified identification codes is especially needed to provide consistently correct information for Electronic Government applications that more often than not cut across multiple government agencies. The biggest challenge is to encourage agencies to accept a common unified coding system because most agencies have legacy systems based on their respective coding structure.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. During your deliberations, you may wondered why a small nation such as ours has embarked on such a huge undertaking. The answer is quite simple. This nation strongly believes in preempting and proacting to the challenges of the new millenium. Our limited natural resources requires us to look for the best alternative and we think the answer lies is the nurturing of a knowledge-based workforce and striving towards a knowledge society.

5. It is obvious that no man is an island and no one is self-sufficient. But thanks to the intricate web of Internet and other enabling technologies, the sharing of ideas and experiences has never been easier. We must continue this fruitful exchange of knowledge and best practices for mutual enrichment even as we return home to our respective countries. We must now seize the opportunity open to us by the Net, which has rendered the once dominant dimensions like time and space much less inhibiting.

6. Therefore, may I humbly suggest that MAMPU and COMNET-IT explore the possibility of setting up of a repository of Best Practices in Electronic Government where all members of the Commonwealth can contribute to and also benefit from the contribution of the others.

The database can be made accessible to all members through the Internet. Some information sharing is

currently taking place through formal publication and informal electronic communication. But I think an electronic repository such as a shared database will be more sustaining and will help further strengthen our long-standing relationship, particularly among member countries of the Commonwealth.

7. The symposium has obviously allowed a free exchange of ideas and practical experiences from multi-cultural and different operational backgrounds offering tremendous knowledge opportunities. I certainly hope you have benefited from the discussions over the past three days. For the foreign participants it is my sincere wish that you have enjoyed your stay here. You are always welcome to stay on; perhaps to explore business opportunities or simply to relax and enjoy the beauty of our country. We have a lot to offer to visitors in terms of sights and sound as well as culture. We hope you will bring back with you not only a better understanding of the Electronic Government initiative in Malaysia but also pleasant memories of the country. I wish you a safe journey home.