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Bismillahir rahmanir rahim

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh dan Selamat Sejahtera.

Y. A. Bhg. Tun,

Y.Bhg. Tan Sri / Dato' / Datin,

Distinguished Guests,

Speakers and facilitators of the Seminar,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank the National Institute of Public Administration (INTAN) for the invitation to officiate the first of five series of the "Government of the Future Seminars". I am indeed very honoured to be here today. Thank you for the invitation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

INTRODUCTION – HOW WE HAVE EVOLVED

2. Over the years, the Government of Malaysia has introduced and implemented reforms and policies to meet the changing needs of time. The New Economic Policy introduced in 1971 which spanned 20 years, was instituted to drive the "Developmentalist" role, if you will, of national development and nation-building. Public officials during this period were focused in enhancing and upgrading capacity and capabilities.

3. There from, the role of the Government evolved to that of a "Facilitator" in the 1990s, for ten years, with the introduction of the National Development Policy. The priority here was to facilitate industrial growth. This called on the Government of the day to facilitate national reforms in the advancement of a production-based economy.

4. When the National Vision Policy was introduced in 2001, it necessitated a strategic shift of roles from the Government and the Public Service. This Policy demanded the combined role of a developmentalist as well as facilitator in realising the Vision set in these commitments. It also requires the Government of the day to assume the role of an innovator, incorporating the functions of a leader, a pacesetter, a moderniser and a trendsetter.

Ladies and gentlemen,

5. I share this with you to reflect on how, if at all, the progression of National needs of the last 30 years affected the Malaysian Public Service today. In layman terms, have we moved forward, backwards, or remained stagnant? Indeed what are the measures of this yardstick, one might even ask? Is it the standard of living? Ease of Living or Ease of doing business that measures our success?

6. I would say that the yardstick has to be whether we have a Public Service that continues to be relevant for the time and all times. The end game is to keep pace with the rising expectations and demands of the people, stakeholders and our competitors alike. Let me correct myself. It is NOT just to keep pace. It is to be AHEAD of the expectations, and AHEAD of the competition. We need to have the tools and skills to

reform not only in anticipation of needs but rather in response to crises that arise when those needs are not met. The challenge for us in the Service is to move towards a more strategic reform; where there is a clear vision, building a constituency that devises tactics which are results and outcome based and being able to communicate this vision and results to ALL our stakeholders effectively. That indeed is the measure of our progress.

Ladies and gentlemen,

OUR CURRENT SCENARIO

7. Today, Malaysia ranks well when compared to others in the region. For instance,

- In the 2007 World Competitiveness ranking, out of 55 countries, we are ranked 8th;
- We ranked 6th on Government efficiency;
- On Business efficiency, we are ranked 4th;
- On Infrastructure development, we ranked 10th;
- In the World Bank's "Doing Business 2008" Malaysia ranked 24th out of 178 countries on the ease of doing business.

8. But we can and must do better than this. Malaysia is blessed with resources to achieve greater heights, and we must rise to these obligations in building a better tomorrow for our children and grand children. This indeed is a moral imperative for all those with the means to make that difference.

THE WORLD VIEW

9. In the development of the Malaysian Public Service, we need to consider the likely future developments in Public Service Administration both locally and globally. In this respect, there are some possibilities that may develop into opportunities for the betterment of mankind and some that may cause difficulties, if not resolved properly.

10. One area which poses both opportunities and threats is globalisation. Globalisation, almost a flogged horse, brings not only new economic opportunities but also new political, social, technological, and institutional complexities. Therefore, it would be safe to say that in order to benefit from more open and widespread economic interaction we need a Public Service that supports an economic system that promotes and facilitates the ability of business enterprises to compete effectively in international markets and ensure the betterment of standard of living locally.

11. We need Public Officials who possess a world view which marries dynamism with entrepreneurial characteristics. This will have the Service leap frog from being mere administrators, as we are reputed for being the world over, to one of an enabler of partnerships between the private and public sectors in developing a dynamic Malaysia that is very attractive to foreign and domestic investors, alike. The creation of PEMUDAH is but a first step towards realisation of the vision of this journey.

12. Malaysian Public Service has been pursuing reform efforts since 1980s such as the Privatisation Policy supported by Malaysian Incorporated Policy and other efforts reflected in initiatives such as MSC, KPIs, One Stop Centre (OSC), Customer Service Office (CSO), and "One Service, One Delivery, No Wrong Door" policy of late.

ADAPTING TO CHANGES & CHALLENGES

13. However, these initiatives are no longer sufficient to face the challenges and opportunities posed by globalisation, rapidly evolving technologies, changing demographics and rising citizen expectations. We

need the skills to pre-empt future challenges and move beyond our laurel's comforts.

Ladies and gentlemen,

14. Allow me to spend a few minutes on some of the possible threats and opportunities which I think the Public Service may face globally in the world of tomorrow; our future world as it were.

15. Two main possible threats of tomorrow are:-

- Expansion of E-Commerce and Taxation. We will without doubt see the increasing proliferation of e-commerce cause difficulties for nations to identify which business transactions occurred within their legal jurisdiction for taxation purposes. Are we prepared for this expansion?
- Ensuring Access to Clean Water. Much of the world lives without access to clean water. Privatisation of water resources, promoted as a means to bring business efficiency into water service management, has instead led to reduced access for the poor around the world as prices for these essential services have risen. How the Service deals with this is essential in addressing poverty issues?

16. With these threats, I also see three areas of opportunities:

- Growth from Digital Media - The media landscape is changing at a breakneck pace. Media can now be consumed over a plethora of devices anywhere, anytime, and on-demand. The advent of digital convergence and broadband wireless technology creates enormous opportunities to fulfill pressing public needs in areas such as education and workforce development, civic discourse, and public health. This allows for service without borders – be it borders of time or geography.
- Dependency on Public Goods - Everyone depends on “public goods”; neither markets nor the wealthiest person can do without them. Clean environment, health, knowledge, property rights, peace and security are all examples of public goods that could be made global. The Public Service has and must continue to enhance its role in this area for the betterment of societies.

and finally,

- Public/Private Sector Cooperation - Following on from these ideas on “Public Goods”, the private sector assumes increasingly important roles in producing goods and providing services that were once considered “public” and therefore exclusively the responsibility of governments. Public-private-partnerships (PPP) and other forms of cooperation between the private sector and local and national governments are used frequently around the world to develop better standards of living for all.

17. These are but some of our threats we need to fend and opportunities we can ride on. To balance and optimise the two, we need public officials to be the change that we wish to see in this government. We therefore need a Public Service that will rise to these changing yet unchartered expectations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

GOVERNMENT OF THE FUTURE

18. I face you today with the scenarios of the past, present and future before us. I ask of us one question. What makes the Government of the Future? Is it driven by digital expansion with reduced headcount in public administration? Or is it in the intellectual rise with eradication of poverty? Is it perhaps in the death of bureaucracy that thrives on customer driven space? Could it be on a Service that drives Climate and Environmental Agenda? Or all of the above, as they say?

19. My take would be that The Government of the Future is a Nation that empowers its Public Service to respond to the threats and opportunities of the times locally and globally. We need to collectively reflect if

today, we have an underlying model of continuous improvement to see all these scenarios. Have we the mechanism for best practices, and effective accountability to enable us to deal with the future of all faces and facets? Have we built the Government of the Future for our children and grand children?

WHY THIS SEMINAR?

20. And this, my colleagues, is why we are here today. I believe that these sessions will provide means to unclog unproductive bureaucracy, enable us with the solutions required to integrate unnecessary and scattered processes for effective business, people and government interaction. We must use this session as a platform to deliberate and share ideas to produce, strengthen and recreate the Public Service that will serve all times.

21. Upon completion of these Seminars, we will develop implementable action plans on issues pertinent to developing the Government of the Future for Malaysia. This must encompass common goals and measurable action plans. INTAN will then produce documented proceedings which will be the basis for preparation to setting up new pace in the Public Service.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

22. Allow me to take this opportunity to welcome all the speakers who have travelled from Singapore, Tokyo and the United States of America to share your experiences with us. Welcome to Malaysia. I wish to thank INTAN for their efforts in organising this workshop. My appreciation also goes to the co-organisers, MAMPU, Innovation Associates Consulting Sdn. Bhd. (iA) and ISIS for their contributions.

My fellow friends and colleagues in the Service,

23. Let us bear in mind, the Government of the Future starts with our own abilities to move beyond our comfort zones to one that challenges definitions to being responsive to changes in society, yet remain the leaders in achieving common public objectives and the national agenda.

24. With Bismillahhir rahmannir rahim, it is now my pleasure to declare the first series of the "Government of the Future" workshop officially open.

Thank you.