

09/06/2009 - Connected Government For 1 Malaysia

Bismillahir rahmanir rahim

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakaatuh dan Salam Sejahtera.

Y. Bhg. Tan Sri Ismail Adam
Director General of Public Service Malaysia

Y. Bhg. Dato' Badlisham Ghazali,
Chief Executive Officer, MDeC

Y. Bhg. Dato' Dr. Muhamad bin Hamzah,
Director of INTAN

Y. Bhs. Dr. Nor Aliah bt Mohd Zahri
Timbalan Ketua Pengarah (ICT), MAMPU

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

Distinguished Guests, Speakers, Panel Members & Moderators of the Conference,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It gives me great pleasure to be here this afternoon. 'Connected Government for 1 Malaysia' is indeed a very fitting theme for this conference as it moves us another step towards realising the 1 Malaysia Vision of the Honourable Prime Minister, Y.A.B. Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

2. The way we do business in the public service is being challenged today on various fronts, not for providing more and more services, but instead being challenged to making our service delivery as ACCESSIBLE AND PAINLESS as possible to the public. Further, public are also demanding that the service provided is cost-effective and its delivery seamless. In such a scenario the choices for E-Government are limited, its design demanding.

3. When it comes to ICT projects people are supposed to be as important as technology, but in reality and from examples which we have seen in the past – people have become second to ICT projects.

4. I am often reminded that the use of ICT in any industry is not to be confused with the websites. Information and communications technology (ICTs) must make sense to our customers. I would go as far as saying that a meaningful E-initiative must be tool for public participation. It must enable immediate and rapid, almost instantaneous public contact to a point of service delivery. It must offer easy and comprehensible tools that can be used by anyone from any walk of life. These tools must simplify dealings and interaction with the public service, whilst still maintaining the integrity of intended recipients at the point of delivery.

5. In the 2008 UN E-Government Survey, Malaysia was ranked 34th amongst the 192 United Nation members in its expediency of ICT usage. Our relatively high ranking implies the success of e-government initiatives and readiness for connected government. E-government has indeed and without a doubt improved and facilitated communication and coordination of authorities at different tiers of government, within organisations and at departmental levels. It has allowed for connectivity with people at different time zones, across the globe, on issues management and resolution, through virtual offices which could not have been otherwise done or even conceived in the public service, previously.

6. But ICT has its challenges and paradoxes. ICT alone cannot steer a project to a desired outcome. The

managers of ICT must have a clear vision to why they need the improvement and more importantly how it benefits the stakeholders. They must take into account the needs of all citizens and stakeholders involved. The 'T' in ICT must be designed for the end users and not the provider. This has to be the basic assumption to those involved in driving ICT for the public sector. Nothing is more frustrating than to have to use a system that no one understands except for the originator.

7. Leaders and senior managers must comprehend the risks their project could face and plan carefully the impact this would have on stakeholders. The recent glitches in USM would make plain this point. All but ALL risk simulations must be determined and computed and the action plans for each must be thought through ahead of time and NOT at the time and post the event. Technology breakdowns could affect reputation of institutions, could impede on fortunes of public and could at times even bring a market to a halt as we saw in the case of Bursa Malaysia last year. In short technology upsets, could affect the level of TRUST in an institution.

8. ICT on its bright side has the ubiquitous power to make time and distance irrelevant making the efficacy of public service delivery that much more befitting of the 21st Century needs. The optimisation of the Internet and the World Wide Web has eliminated boundaries and allowed for integrated services to be available 24 by 7 promoting faster and efficient connection between agencies, processes and systems.

9. But within this context of speed, connectivity, and presence we cannot and must not lose the essence of service itself. There will be days when technology will fail us; days when systems do break down; and moments when delivery is not as specified in the manual. It is in days like these more than most when the fineness and essence of what make a service, boutique and a class above all shine, and shine beyond that point of delivery. A recent case of an immigration office technology failure in Pusat Bandar Damansara saw this example in full action. When the technology broke down, their levels of service delivery upped that much more, making the inconvenience caused by the breakdown, a pleasure replaced by SERVICE itself. It is essential that public and private sector use ICT as an enabler and not a replacement to service itself.

10. The government of Malaysia has been a strong advocate of ICT spearheading public service delivery. Under the 9th Malaysia Plan, the Government increased its expenditure for ICT related programmes to RM 12.9 billion from RM7.9 billion under the 8th Malaysia Plan. During the mid-term review of the 9th Malaysia Plan ICT spending remained a priority. But the essence, in my mind, is not how leading edge and innovative the technology is, but more how the technology has enabled us to better serve the people. I am always reminded that a customer is not dependent on us but that we are on them. They are the purpose of us even being here.

11. It is thus essential beyond measure that in whatever technology that we may inspire and implement must be led by the software parameters of sense and sensibility to the customers. That alone, in my mind must define the need for a technology innovation and enhancement. There is not much point in having a NASA equivalent of technology in a place where even literacy is a challenge, to illustrate my point. The technology must serve a purpose and that purpose must be in service delivery to our customers- PERIOD!

12. With this in mind, the public service has adapted and adopted ICT tools and applications as a means to enhancing the public service delivery. The eKL initiative, for example, is an impetus to integrate all e-Government services in a single platform within Klang Valley. Numerous online services are also currently being provided by government agencies via the myGOV portal extending from federal to state agencies, providing services for businesses, citizens and non-citizens alike. Other projects include MyKad, computerised travel documents, online income tax submissions, and online payment of traffic summons and road tax renewals.

13. However, what has been done up to now by most agencies is to create first stop portals instead of one stop experience. If we wish to realise a connected government, simple collation of information and service linked on a single portal is simply not good enough. What is needed is to integrate services from end-to-end, creating thus a seamless one-stop experience for the citizen when he or she transacts with

the government. That is our challenge

14. Delivering on the vision of connected government relies on the willingness and ability of agencies to collaborate. The public service agencies must no longer see themselves in isolation but rather as an integrated part of 'one government, many agencies, and one delivery'. Agencies must also be prepared to change mindsets, systems and processes even if this sometime means some loss of autonomy for the agency. Boundaries and silos will have to be broken down. Counter service will be done away with over time, as customers move online. Communications with the government via emails and other electronic channels will have to be made a norm – such that service can be delivered to the public any time of the day or night across any time zone, and in any continent.

15. Essentially the end game is NO WRONG DOOR in all our dealings with the public service. To achieve this, leaders in the public service must be able to design and deliver a wide variety of policies, programmes and services that cross organisational boundaries and bring together the various agencies to attain synergy in public service delivery.

16. The implementation of a connected government also demands empowering the government workforce. Agencies must focus their attention to empowering employees by giving them the tools to perform and deliver their jobs better and from any workspace. Thus, there is a pressing need to make human capital planning a strategic element in the agencies' initiatives.

17. The connected-government initiative poses challenges on how we might formulate policies to spur and stimulate local innovation and on how we might incorporate that technology to achieve our objectives well. Therefore, I call upon the industry to embrace the government's citizen-centric approach to solutions and to advise the government where necessary on what is in place and what can be done to maximise its use across government. I am certain we have ample locally innovative solutions to achieve this to provide total government solutions and NOT vendor solutions.

18. This conference should seek appropriate methods and strategies in improving service delivery systems across all agencies. It is my hope that this conference will gather ideas, approaches and strategies from both the public and private sectors on improved and new ways to growing Malaysia's ICT agenda towards a connected government.

19. Ultimately, any solutions and strategies developed must be one that simplifies interaction of the private sector, civil society and the rakyat with the public service. Therefore, the key success factor of this conference is to put forth ideas and solutions that could further leverage their organisations, integrating horizontally and vertically towards realising the theme of this conference, that is, Connected Government for 1 Malaysia.

20. I am happy to note that this conference also provides platform for business matching in which MDec is organising 1 to 1 business meeting sessions for MSC Malaysia status companies with counterparts from identified governments CIOs during this 3-day event. This is complemented with ICT Expo for the companies to showcase ICT solutions, softwares and technologies. I urge you to take this opportunity to developing long term business partnerships and collaborative ventures.

21. Allow me to take this opportunity to welcome all the distinguished speakers from both the public and private sectors, including those who have traveled from the United Kingdom, Korea and Singapore. Welcome to Malaysia and thank you for making the time to share your knowledge and experience with the conference participants.

22. I wish to congratulate and thank the National Institute of Public Administration (INTAN), the Multimedia Development Corporation (MDeC) and the Malaysian Administrative Modernization and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU) for their efforts in organising this conference.

23. ICT must create greater agility and freedom for our customers. ICTs are a goldmine of unexplored potentials that could improve economic productivity and quality of life of our people. They can transform

government into governance and change the relationship between government and citizen from one of master and servant to one of service provider and client. It is therefore crucial that we take an active part in that transformation.

24. On that note, I am pleased to declare the National ICT Conference 2009, officially opened.

Thank you.

Wabillahi taufiq wal hidayah, Wassalamu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabaratuh.