

**COMMONWEALTH ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND
MANAGEMENT (CAPAM) BIENNIAL CONFERENCE 2014 “PUBLIC SERVICE
TRANSFORMATION: A NEW CONVERSATION”
19/10/2014**

PUTRAJAYA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE (PICC) PUTRAJAYA

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh
Salam Sejahtera and Salam 1Malaysia

Honourable Elvin Nimrod
Deputy Prime Minister of Grenada

Honourable Marco M. Hausiku
Deputy Prime Minister of Namibia

Mr. Paul Zahra
President of the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management
(CAPAM)

Ms. Gay Hamilton
Executive Director / Chief Executive Officer of CAPAM

Honourable Ministers from Commonwealth Member Countries

H.E. Ali M.A. Abu Dyak, Secretary General of the Cabinet,
National Unity Government, State of Palestine

Heads of Public Service of Commonwealth Member Countries

YBhg. Tan Sri Dr. Ali Hamsa
Chief Secretary to the Government of Malaysia

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

Participants of CAPAM Biennial Conference 2014

1. A very good morning to each and every one of you at this CAPAM Biennial Conference. Malaysia is privileged and honoured to host the biennial conference for the second time, the first being in 1998. It is my pleasure to join all of you, and to deliver the keynote address on

this occasion. To our distinguished participants, and eminent panellists who have travelled from near and far across the Commonwealth, I bid you a very warm welcome or Selamat Datang.

2. The presence of such a large delegation from so many countries comprising deputy prime ministers, ministers, public administrators, academics, and members of civil society, indicates the growing prominence of CAPAM and the biennial conference. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate YBhg. Tan Sri Dr. Ali Hamsa, Chief Secretary to the Government of Malaysia, who was recently elected as the new President of CAPAM for the year 2014/16.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. I am delighted that this CAPAM 2014 Biennial Conference is being held here in this Garden City of Putrajaya. From this International Convention Centre, you will enjoy a panoramic view of the many federal government offices, amidst the greenery, and enchanting water landscapes. This is the seat of the Federal Government of Malaysia. Twenty years ago, this area was just a stretch of oil palm plantations, and tropical jungle. In many ways, I think this new federal administrative capital, symbolises the Malaysian transformation experience.

4. What began as a simple “idea” became a reality by the turn of the new millennium. To me, this is what transformation entails –it begins with a novel and forward looking idea, accompanied by a commitment to a clear plan of action.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. I am pleased to learn that CAPAM celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. Over the last two decades, CAPAM has become a globally renowned non-profit organization that promotes the practical requirements of good governance, just and honest government across the Commonwealth nation states and beyond. Through the years, CAPAM has served as an effective forum for the active exchange of information and knowledge on best practices in public administration.

6. It has also provided opportunities for building alliances, and networking between diverse participants from its member countries in learning about innovation, best practices in citizen-centred service delivery, leadership development and growth, as well as public service management, and renewal.

7. This year’s CAPAM conference is themed “Public Service Transformation: A New Conversation”. This theme, in my opinion, is timely as there is a renewed interest on

revitalising the Public Service all over the globe. When we scan the experiences of Commonwealth nations, it is a clear indication that many countries have initiated Public Service reforms in recent years. Everywhere there are renewed efforts to bring significant transformation to existing structures and operations of the Public Service. The factors driving this change are diverse and varied. In some countries, they are economic and financial concerns whilst in others, social and security issues.

8. Today, delivering cost savings and citizen-centred services with widespread exploitation of smart technologies are taking centre stage in the transformation agenda. One cannot fail to notice that the demands of the younger generation for greater inclusiveness, and liberalisation are also becoming turning points for change. I am sure this CAPAM Biennial Conference will deliberate on these driving forces of change, and elevate the conversation to new heights by drawing on new ideas, thoughts and experiences of Commonwealth countries.

9. We must come to terms with the fact that any new conversation about transformation cannot take place within the traditional mould. Face-to-face communications will no longer suffice. How the world communicates today has been totally re-shaped with the advent of Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. Millions of people are in daily conversation through social media. Even major magazines like Newsweek and the Economist have gone digital, and local newspapers are shutting down printing presses while television networks are competing for face time with smartphones, tablets and laptops.

10. A new revolution has begun. The public service must not hold back by refusing to join this revolution. Change is inevitable, and we have to transform in order to remain relevant in today's world.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Governance in Public Service

11. There can be little doubt that good governance can make a real difference to the performance, and the outcomes sought by governments everywhere. Therefore, the public service needs to periodically review, and refine approaches to governance. Effective governance arrangements need to position public sector agencies to achieve the best results for the government consistent with their respective legislative, and policy requirements. At the same time, they must focus on performance that encompasses efficient, effective and sustainable delivery.

12. Today, the public service is faced with multi-faceted challenges in delivering programmes and services to citizens. It needs to innovate and effectively manage risks in

the face of financial constraints. It needs to engage constructively with stakeholders and citizens in the delivery of programmes and services. It needs to collaborate strategically within, and across boundaries to address complex issues. Therefore, effective governance arrangements and practices are important in enabling a strong, sustainable and accountable public service.

13. Achieving good governance is the outcome of positive interaction between two essential elements – the structural as well as the people elements. The establishment of appropriate fit-for-purpose frameworks and processes to achieve the expected outcomes are critical to support high performance.

14. At the same time, there must be the right combination of skills and behaviours in the people that nurture positive relationships within and across organisations. These are the “hard” and “soft” elements of governance, which when well-placed in any public entity, will contribute to significant improvement in performance. For this to happen, leadership is key. When leaders are committed to these ideals, they will ensure appropriate governance arrangements are in place and foster ownership to achieve the goals of organisations.

15. In this regard, I see that CAPAM has a critical role in enhancing public sector governance capabilities, and promoting organisational cultures that can respond readily, and resourcefully to changing priorities.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Citizen Engagement for Better Outcomes

16. A global megatrend that impacts all governments today is the empowerment of the individual. Increasing income, rising levels of education, as well as a networked technological environment have contributed to a highly motivated citizenry that demands a higher quality of service from the government and service providers.

17. Today, the average citizen is an informed citizen, who can access, and share information as well as engage in the discourse on any subject of interest, both within and across boundaries. They not only expect an efficient delivery of quality service, but also seek a higher degree of interaction, and participation in decision making processes. It is anticipated that this pattern will continue over the next decade ushering a new era in human history with an ever expanding middle class.

18. Accordingly, social innovation, as highlighted by the Honourable Dato’ Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak, Prime Minister of Malaysia in the recent 2014 Prime Minister’s Innovation Award, offers new solutions, methodologies and conceptual frameworks by promoting

creation of new ideas, experiments, prototypes, and pilot projects. It allocates access channels to let our customers – the rakyat (the people) – articulate their needs, and expectations of government service delivery. In other words, social innovation is developed ‘with’ and ‘by’ the people, instead of ‘to’ or ‘for’ the people.

19. The need for citizen engagement in the planning, and delivery process is demanding change in the way governments plan, and implement programmes. Listening to and understanding user needs through customer insight, and delivering the outcomes that people want, requires new modes of operation. Allow me to share Malaysia’s recent experience in this regard.

20. In 2009, a new and elevated conversation began with the “1Malaysia: People First, Performance Now” initiative. A key pillar supporting this initiative is the Government Transformation Programme or GTP. GTP is driven by the awareness that citizens’ demands are constantly changing. The GTP was designed based on extensive consultation and feedback from all stakeholders and crowdsourcing. This is the first time that the Government of Malaysia had undertaken such an extensive exercise to gather views and feedback from citizens, and to then design a comprehensive plan to address valuable inputs of the citizens themselves.

21. The views of the citizens were sourced through an “Open Day” where the problems and strategies were presented to the citizens. Feedback from the citizens was also sourced through direct discussions, as well as through SMS, Twitter, Facebook and even television and radio networks. Special “Labs” involving all the relevant stakeholders were then held to discuss the feedbacks received. Out of these exercises emerged seven National Key Result Areas (NKRAs) that were identified as areas of high priority for the transformation of the nation. The areas included infrastructure, healthcare, education and security.

22. For each NKRA, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were set and the respective Ministers and Secretaries-General were made accountable. The entire Public Service was mobilised to give the highest priority to these targets. Within four years of its implementation, an average achievement rate of 104% has been reported, making significant difference in the lives of Malaysians.

23. The next phase of implementation will see the GTP increasing the visibility of its achievements by introducing improvements and implementing lessons from key challenges faced earlier. I believe that these NKRA achievements have contributed significantly to Malaysia being ranked 6th in the World Bank Ease of Doing Business Report 2014, and climbing four notches to the 20th position among 144 economies in the Global Competitiveness Report 2014-2015.

24. Mindful of the importance to win the hearts and minds of the people, the Malaysian Civil Service introduced the concept of Merakyatkan Perkhidmatan Awam or “Humanising the Public Service”. This concept encapsulates the role of public officials who not only provide services to the people, but also receive services from their own colleagues in the civil service.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

NBOS - Changing Organisational Culture and Public Service Mind Set

25. I am certain you will agree with me that one of the greatest challenges facing all governments is how to break silos within the public service. Public servants learn quite early in their career to work in organisational compartments. Their knowledge and technical expertise are jealously guarded within those organisational walls. These organisations often tend to become rivals when vying for limited funds and resources. Management styles often are traditional, and either paternalistic or authoritarian. In such an environment, initiative and innovation are often frowned upon.

26. The silo mentality needs to be broken down and organisations have to learn to work in unison just like the fingers of a hand. Structures and procedures need to be simplified and streamlined, to provide public servants the ability to network among themselves, and with others.

27. In Malaysia, the Government has taken this matter seriously. One approach that has been initiated to break the barriers between government organisations and to bring them together is the National Blue Ocean Strategy or NBOS. NBOS aims to deliver programmes and services to the public that are of high-impact, low cost, and that can be rapidly executed. NBOS advocates 'thinking out of the box' in implementing projects, and programmes which address issues confronting the economy.

28. There are over 60 NBOS initiatives that benefit the people and touch their lives at a more personal level. NBOS consists of simple ideas but when exercised in a collaborative manner, it breaks the silos and brings manifold results and impacts. Over 80 public sector organisations across several ministries – from the police and military, to women, youth, and higher education – are collaborating to formulate, and execute creative blue ocean strategy initiatives. Among the NBOS initiatives are the Urban Transformation Centre (UTC), Rural Transformation Centre (RTC), 1Malaysia for Youth (1M4U), 1Malaysia Family Care (1MFC), and My Beautiful Neighbourhood (MyBN). I hope over the course of the next few days you will get a chance to visit some of these NBOS initiatives.

29. I think it will be useful if CAPAM can bring together more experiences on how public

sector organisations have been able to rise above this silo mentality, and work together across boundaries in bringing significant impact to citizens.

Public Private Partnership (PPP)

30. It is not sufficient for government agencies alone to work together as one entity in serving the public. They must also learn to work in close collaboration with businesses, and non-governmental organisations. In Malaysia, Public Private Partnership (PPP) has been instrumental in accelerating growth, and economic development.

31. Malaysia has more than thirty years of experience in PPP, and has implemented more than 600 PPP projects involving a total capital expenditure of RM182 billion. Projects like Putrajaya, the North-South Highway, Port of Tanjung Pelepas and Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) have spurred Malaysia's economic growth, created new areas of development as well as improved accessibility, and mobility. The interest in PPPs has grown in recent years across the world, and the need for fiscal restraint in some countries is expected to further widen its application.

32. Given our vast experience in PPP, Malaysia is open to collaborate with our Commonwealth partners, particularly in capacity building and consultancy. We are ready to cooperate with CAPAM and the Commonwealth Secretariat in establishing a PPP Commonwealth Centre of Excellence. This would allow Malaysia's experience in PPP to be shared via CAPAM's vast network. The proposed centre would also allow exchange of information on PPP efforts undertaken in other Commonwealth countries and allow best practices to be benchmarked, as well as to be shared by all.

Public Service of the Future

33. To my mind, any conversation about the Public Service will not be complete without touching on its future. Here, I am reminded of that epic bestseller "Future Shock" penned by Alvin Toffler some 45 years ago. Long before computers and hand phones were even thought of, this futurist predicted the future that is to come. He began a conversation about the psychological state of individuals, and entire societies that will emerge when "too much change will take place in too short a period of time". His prediction included the "electronic frontier" of the Internet, Prozac, YouTube, cloning, home-schooling, the self-induced paralysis of too many choices, and the end of blue-collar "second-wave" manufacturing, to be replaced by a "third wave" of knowledge workers. That future is today.

34. In Malaysia, Vision 2020 provided the nation with such a scenario. For more than two decades, we have been able to pursue a strategic path of wanting to become a developed nation by 2020. Now, as we enter into the final lap of realising Vision 2020, it is also timely

for us to look beyond 2020, and ask where we will be in, say 2050 or beyond. I think that this visioning or futuring is a capability that all Public Services will need to acquire.

35. As we now live in a globalised world, no nation is capable of existing in isolation. I therefore think that such foresight and futuring capabilities, would be more beneficial when done collectively with greater sharing of ideas and possibilities between many parties.

36. I am certain that CAPAM can provide an effective platform for the sharing of experiences and knowledge in building these futuring and foresight capabilities among its member countries.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

37. It is here that I see the value of CAPAM as a platform for our conversation on Public Service Transformation. The network and partnership through CAPAM offers a unique forum to public service practitioners to deliberate, and exchange views and best practices throughout the Commonwealth.

38. In hosting this Biennial Conference which coincides with the 20th anniversary of CAPAM, Malaysia is happy to play its role in advancing this conversation, and how the Public Service can be empowered to fulfil the aspirations of our citizens, and meet the strategic goals of our nations.

39. With those thoughts, I wish all of you the very best in your deliberations over the next two days. I hope you will enjoy your stay in Malaysia, and take time to visit places of interest and experience our warm Malaysian hospitality.

Thank you.