



FORUM TERTUTUP PTD ALUMNI:
Ke Arah Keunggulan Perkhidmatan Tadbir dan Diplomatik

7 OKTOBER 2010

L A P O R A N



FORUM TERTUTUP PTD ALUMNI:

Ke Arah Keunggulan Perkhidmatan Tadbir dan Diplomatik

PROGRAMME

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 08:30 | • Registration |
| 09:00 | • Welcoming speech from Tan Sri Sallehuddin Mohamed, President, PTD Alumni |
| 09:15 | • Presentation by Panel Members:
Tan Sri Dato' Setia Ambrin Buang
Tan Sri Hasmy Agam
Dato' Rahmah Hj. Abu Kassim
Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Mohamad
Tan Sri Jamaluddin Damanhuri |
| 11:00 | • Coffee break |
| 11:30 | • Summary of issues for discussion |
| 12:30 | • Lunch break |
| 14:00 | • Forum Discussion |
| 16:00 | • Forum Summary/End of Forum |
| 16:30 | • Tea and refreshments |

‘KE ARAH KEUNGGULAN PERKHIDMATAN TADBIR DAN DIPLOMATIK’

REPORT ON THE CLOSED-DOOR FORUM OF THE PTD ALUMNI

HELD ON 7 OCTOBER 2010

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The main objective in organising Closed-Door Forums is to provide a platform for open, honest and sincere discussions among a select group of members of the *Persatuan Alumni Pegawai Tadbir dan Diplomatik* (PTD Alumni) and serving officers of the *Perkhidmatan Tadbir dan Diplomatik* (PTD) on issues that are important to the Public Service, in general, and the PTD, in particular.

1.2 The first Closed-Door Forum of the PTD Alumni was held at the premises of the Malaysian Institute of Integrity, Kuala Lumpur, on 7 October 2010 to deliberate on the issues pertaining to the topic of *‘Ke Arah Keunggulan Perkhidmatan Tadbir dan Diplomatik’*.

1.3 The specific objective was to discuss the issues relevant to the current and future role and position of the PTD in the context of ensuring that the performance of the PTD officers will be at the level that will enable them to retain their special role and position as management leaders in the Ministries, Central Agencies, Foreign Missions, Federal Departments, State and District Administration as well as maintain the confidence and trust of the government and the community. This Forum would provide the opportunity to explore this matter and the issues involved with the intention of defining the means to further upgrade the performance of the PTD, especially in the context of the new demands

of the Government's Economic Transformation Plan (ETP), so that it would have the capacity and capability to face future challenges and retain its position and stature as the 'Premier Service' in the public sector.

1.4 Five Panel Members were selected to present their views from different perspectives:

1.4.1 Tan Sri Ambrin Buang focussed on management and leadership issues of PTD officers based on the cases that have been identified and reported in the AG's reports;

1.4.2 Tan Sri Hasmy Agam gave his views on leadership and management issues in the foreign sector;

1.4.3 Dato' Rahmah Hj. Abu Kassim made an assessment of the *Advanced Leadership and Management Programme (ALMP)*, INTAN, as a basis to analyse the quality and performance of PTD officers at the JUSA level from her long experience as a member of the Panel of Evaluators for the ALMP;

1.4.4 Tan Sri Rahim Mohammed gave his views and observations from a corporate perspective based on his dealings with public sector agencies; and

1.4.5 Tan Sri Jamaluddin Damanhuri gave an overview of the quality of PTD officers based on the policies and processes of recruitment, appointment and performance evaluation.

The CVs of the five Panel Members are provided in **Appendices 1 – 5**.

1.5 A total of forty-five participants took part in the Forum, representing the Executive Committee of the PTD Alumni, the Executive Committee of the PTD Association (PPTD), PTD Alumni members and senior PTD serving officers.

1.6 The Programme of the Forum is at **Appendix 6** and the Organising Committee is at **Appendix 7**.

2. THE ISSUES IDENTIFIED

Many views were expressed and discussed by the Panel Members as well as participants from the floor. These have been put together under relevant topics in the following paragraphs.

2.1 The Role of the PTD

2.1.1 In our system of Parliamentary Democracy, the Public Service is, fundamentally, the main instrument or machinery of the government in power. The Public Service is responsible for the implementation of government policies and laws, and to provide the essential goods and services to the general public. The government can only be successful and perform well if it is supported by an efficient, effective and responsible Public Service. A close and enduring partnership between the government and the Public Service is of paramount importance in the process of nation-building.

2.1.2 The Forum stressed the fact that history has given the PTD the legacy of being the '*Premier Service*' relative to the other services in the public sector. By virtue of its origins in the British Colonial Malayan Civil Service (the change of name to PTD took place in 1972) the PTD, with its total of 9,906 members (on 2 July 2010 with 482 or 5% at the *Jawatan Utama Sektor Awam* (JUSA) level), fills the top leadership positions in the Public Service, including those of the Chief Secretary to the Government (KSN), Secretary-General of Ministries, Director-General of Central Agencies and several Federal Departments as well as most State-Secretaries, State Financial Officers, District Officers, and Heads of Local Authorities. The PTD has long been an important source for appointments into top positions in important government agencies, statutory bodies as well as corporate

organisations, for example, FELDA, PETRONAS, MARA, EPF and Bank Negara. Many of the retirees from the PTD are also selected to become Chairmen and Directors in Public Corporations and Government-linked Companies , Chairmen of Public Commissions as well as Chairmen of Councils of the public universities. A number of them had also been appointed as Yang DiPertua Negeri of Penang and Melaka.

2.1.3 In the Public Service, the PTD plays a crucial role in ensuring the success of the whole process of advising the government on management matters as well as drafting and implementing the policies for national development. The PTD is not only the important driver but is also the ‘face of the government’, whether good or bad. Due to its visibility and the extensive presence of the PTD and its leadership positions, the PTD cannot avoid the responsibility and public scrutiny of its performance or non-performance as being, synonymously, that of the whole Public Service as well.

2.1.4 The general feeling in the Forum was that the PTD has lost much of the initiative and the drive it used to have in the early years after Independence when the PTD led the way in coming out with new ideas, strategies and innovations. It seems to lack the ‘towering personalities’ that the PTD used to be recognised by, the ones who were in the forefront in advising the Government on crucial issues, those who led important institutions and headed committees, and those selected to manage difficult situations. It was observed that, to some extent, recognition and attention have now diverted to corporate leaders, political advisers and academicians rather than the senior members of the PTD. In fact, a significant number of them have been appointed to fill important positions in the Public Service, including cadre posts of the PTD. The image of the PTD, in terms of performance and substance, has suffered in the eyes of the public and the political leadership.

2.1.5 Three main reasons were analysed in the Forum as follows:

a. Delivery of Public Service

An important gauge of the performance of the Government is the efficiency and effectiveness of the Public Service Delivery System. Visions, policies and plans are not self-executing. A good implementation system is essential to achieve the predicted consequences or to achieve the desired objectives.

The Public Service is required to undertake positive actions since the implementation phase requires a wide variety of actions: project planning and execution; acquiring and disbursing financial resources; managing human resource; negotiating and awarding contracts; project monitoring and evaluation; facilitating and simplifying processes and procedures; managing issues and providing solutions; installing and utilising communications technologies; media management and many more complicated tasks.

As the management leaders helming the Public Service, the PTD in top positions in the Ministries, Departments and other Government Agencies, must display their specialised knowledge and skills in implementation processes and in the task of leadership and organisational management. They must also be effective in communications and boundary management. The objective is to achieve high performance, the production of the output and outcome desired by the political leadership and the people. The PTD must earn the full trust and confidence of the political leadership; to be not only “on -tap” but also “on-top” in any situation; they get things done and deliver on time; they stay “a step ahead” of the rest.

However, unfortunately, the studies carried out and the annual reports tabled by the Auditor-General (AG) have shown that there is much to be desired when it comes to the Public Service Delivery System. It would seem that many of those in leadership positions are not taking responsibility. PTD officers who are State Financial Officers, for example, must be accountable and have the responsibility to monitor

and take action, where and when necessary, to avoid bad management of finances. Almost all AG reports show shortcomings, which will become very serious if they involve fraud and corruption. The cases cited get a lot of negative publicity in the media and the Internet will circulate the comments from bloggers to incite further criticisms from other users. These give a negative image of those in charge of management in the relevant agencies and, invariably, the blame would be put on the ‘Civil Servants’ or the PTD officers in charge.

There is also a lot of blurring in management boundaries such that there would be uncertainty as to whether the Secretary-General should be held responsible where the Technical Heads are, actually, at fault. Intervention by politicians in the management processes has also become more evident of late which could lead to questionable decisions being made and rules and procedures being ignored, especially in the tendering processes. Whilst political intervention could be a logical cause, the question that was asked is whether it could also be a case of the PTD heads ‘surrendering’ their authority and responsibility? Indeed, aspersions have also been cast on the PTD heads themselves of being more ‘politicised’ than the politicians themselves.

Many of the cases highlighted also expose the fact that, generally, PTD heads are not competent to negotiate especially when they lack knowledge of the subject matter. Thus, many resort to convenient interpretations of the procedures, often leading to delays in delivery and cost escalation. This is a common situation especially in cases where the projects involve ICT systems and supplies and are, mostly, vendor or contractor-driven.

b. The New Challenges

The Public Service is continuously being confronted by changes and new challenges. It has to deal with several of them already: a more sophisticated economic structure;

the exponential development of information and communication technologies; expanding involvement of the private sector in national development; globalization and growing competitiveness in the international market place; current sluggishness and uncertainty of the national economy; the increasing need for greater creativity, innovation and productivity; growing demands and expectations for better distribution of wealth among racial groups within a more open, complex and demanding society; dealing with State Governments which are non-*Barisan Nasional* and many more. While they are, fundamentally, reflecting issues that have a political and policy perspective, nevertheless, at the ground level, they will be manifested in dissatisfaction with the non-performance and non-delivery of Public Service, translated as the non-performance of the PTD.

The new vision of nation-building as indicated by the concept of 1Malaysia, the New Economic Model (NEM), the Economic Transformation Plan (ETP), the Government Transformation Plan (GTP), the principle of People First and Performance Now, the vision of a high-income society, in line with Vision 2020, are, collectively, new challenges that demand new strategies and actions by the Public Service.

As the ones holding the reins, the PTD must take the lead in this new and more challenging environment, to take a critical stock of the realities and to design the new strategies and develop the action plans. The PTD must provide the appropriate response to the demand for changes and better performance. The PTD must set the pace and be an excellent model for the whole Public Service. What the nation needs is a new brand of strategic leadership in the Public Service, not the traditional administrative leaders.

Yet, the perception that is generally shared, especially among members of the corporate sector, is that the Public Service, the PTD particularly, has not reinvented itself to face and manage all these changes and challenges, at both the national and

global levels. Much of this is deemed the result of the ‘attitude’ that seems to persist as a common culture among its members. Some of the common traits that have been identified are:

- lack of specialised knowledge
- not easily accessible and not communicative
- not private sector friendly nor responsive to its needs
- you need to pay to get things done
- slow and reluctant to make decisions
- problems in communication due to language incompetency (English)
- constantly suspicious of those from the private sector
- ‘I know all’ but actually not well informed of new developments in economics and technologies within and outside the country
- too bureaucratic and negative, choosing to hide behind systems and procedures.

It would appear that the private sector is concerned that the Public Service, in particular the PTD, which plays a vital role in determining the success of the NEM may not be able to rise to the occasion to ensure successful implementation of the plan, especially to reenergize the private sector-led growth. Thus, the natural tendency on the part of the Government is to seek those who would be able to deliver what the Government wants, even outside of the Public Service, notwithstanding the rules and regulations of Public Service appointments.

c. Boundary Management

The dimensions and the boundaries of public administration have changed and the PTD needs to revisit its role and functions in the context of the changes taking place

and the new challenges to be faced. Among the matters that are of concern are the following:

i) The number of public sector agencies have grown and their functions have become more complicated and specialised. There is a strong case for collaboration and integration of efforts, stronger *esprit d'corps* and more optimum use of resources to avoid wastage and establish a more coherent and coordinated system in trying to meet common national objectives.

ii) Non-government organizations, pressure groups, media analysts as well as vocal individuals that have views and commentaries about government policies, programmes and projects have become a regular feature. This is something new that heads of Ministries, Agencies and State Administration must learn how to deal with and manage well. In the past, PTD officers had, mostly, operated in the background. In the new environment, PTD heads must develop the skills to deal with these new tasks hands-on. Among others, they demand that the PTD officers acquire the expertise in utilising the modern communication tools and the ICT network since the new media is now the most popular and most effective.

iii) The PTD officers should no longer be confined to their offices and their desks. They must not only be hands-on but must also “go to the ground”, to develop close contacts and develop a better understanding and appreciation of the problems and needs of the people in their respective constituencies and homes, and to truly understand the needs of the *rakyat* before policies are formulated and plans are made.

iv) New skills must be acquired to deal with the emerging issues within their working environment: greater interpersonal or “people-skills” is vital in dealing with ‘political encroachments’ in management processes; professional neutrality is required to deal with state governments considered as ‘opposition’; good

communication and language skills will be necessary to deal with the media, the public, and the community; continuing knowledge acquisition is crucial to keep up and abreast with the political, economic and social developments at home and on the international front.

v) The PTD officers need to enhance their knowledge in finance and business management to enable them to deal and negotiate successfully with the private sector. Their competency must extend to communicating and negotiating at the global level and to meet the challenges of global competition. The PTD officers who serve in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of International Trade and Industry, for example, should also have some proficiency in other foreign languages, e.g. Mandarin, French and Japanese.

The Forum was of the view that, with knowledge, skills and exposure, the PTD officers will feel more confident and competent to express their opinions and give their advice. Otherwise, the political leadership cannot be blamed if it decides to seek elsewhere for management advice.

2.2 Professionalism and High Performance Culture

2.2.1 Since the lack of professionalism and a high-performance culture seems to be the issue affecting the role and perception of the PTD, the question asked by the Forum was, what is being done to correct this?

2.2.2 It is not possible for the PTD officers to be really effective, and to deliver, if they lack a clear understanding of and empathy with the new political landscape and the new visions of development and nation-building of the government in power.

2.2.3 It is acknowledged that the Public Service Department (PSD) has an extensive training programme for PTD officers. In fact, a big percentage of them

have acquired at least a Masters (about 1,200 of the current serving officers) while quite a significant number have a PhD (about 100 in total). About 20% of those at the JUSA level have also attended the Advanced Management Programme at prestigious universities like Harvard and Cambridge. However, these are really academic achievements. At a more practical level, the training and development programmes for the PTD, must incorporate new priorities that encompass the areas of acquiring new knowledge, skills and attitude with the focus on exposing them to the new vision of development as expressed by the Prime Minister. At the more personal level, there seems to be the need also for PTD officers to develop the habit of reading and keeping abreast of new developments within and outside of the country, as part of a life-long learning and enrichment process.

2.2.4 Based on the current situation, there should also be concern to focus the training and development programmes for PTD officers to deal with the problems of the day, particularly programmes which have a bearing on the performance of those in the JUSA group, those attaining leadership positions. From the Forum discussion, it could be concluded that the overall design for the Advanced Leadership and Management Programme (ALMP), that is specially conducted by INTAN for the first level JUSA officers (including non-PTD), does not fully address current concerns and demands or how to face the new challenges, such as:

- a. Dealing with political encroachments;
- b. Enhancing command of knowledge;
- c. Developing confidence and self expression;
- d. Undertaking research on weak agencies as assessed under MAMPU's STAR Rating;
- e. Project discussions and presentations on the 6 NKRA's and 12 NKEA's under

the GTP;

- f. On-line exposure on the use of appropriate management and communication tools.

2.2.5 It was also felt that training and development programmes of those in the JUSA group need to cover both the need for professional as well as leadership skills and organisational management. The planning and implementation of the training and career development plan must be undertaken proactively by the PSD and in consultation with the agencies and officers involved. It should be a transparent and planned exercise. This is important since, it was noted, that in some of the Ministries, eg Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Heads of Division are sometimes reluctant to release their subordinates for training and knowledge-aquisition. This could result in them, who are supposed to be well-versed in foreign relations, having a silo-mentality. Being mainly confined to the Ministry and in our Missions overseas, many do not have sufficient exposure and experience in management matters. This would prevent them from having a comprehensive exposure to the expected professional functions of a PTD officer.

2.2.6 In fact, there seems to be a case for revisiting the long-standing separation of PTD officers in the domestic and foreign sectors in the need to ensure a balance development in their expertise, experience and professional abilities. Malaysian diplomats used to lead before at the international level, at least in Asia. However, this is no longer the case. Even the Vietnamese are now more professional and can speak fluent English. Other than weakness in communications skills, there seems to also be an 'attitude' problem with those serving in the Foreign Sector that should be of concern since those serving overseas would be our front-liners to potential visitors and investors.

2.2.7 There is logic in looking at an integration of the PTD service in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of International Trade and Industry, in terms of recruitment, posting, training and career development. Perhaps, we could then have, once again, a team of high-class, bright, articulate and prominent diplomats like Tan Sri Zain Azraai, Tan Sri Zainal Abidin Sulong, Tan Sri Zaiton Ibrahim, Tan Sri Zakaria Ali, Tan Sri Razali Ismail and others who were not only well-known in Malaysia but also in the ASEAN region, in the OIC, in the UN and other parts of the world where they had not only served their nation well but had made significant impact through their diplomatic skills and knowledge of international affairs. Perhaps, also, there will be less inclination on the part of Government to have ‘political appointees’ heading our Missions.

2.2.8 Succession planning is also a very important element in enhancing professionalism and high-performance culture. There is doubt whether this process is really undertaken in a systematic manner especially when, of late, officers in very ‘junior’ positions are appointed to head Ministries and Departments, well ahead of their ‘seniors’. There have also been many cases of senior JUSA PTD officers, including Secretary-Generals and Deputy Secretary-Generals as well as Director-Generals, being put in the ‘pool’, the question asked is why were they given those appointments in the first place? Or, were they removed from their posts because they became unacceptable to the political heads in their Ministries or Departments? Unlike the Armed Forces and the Police, as well as some of the Professional Services, there is not much transparency in the succession planning for top positions in the PTD. This can lead to a lot of unhealthy speculation especially pertaining to the issue of ‘political acceptability’. Such a situation, while creating uncertainty, can also have a negative impact on morale and performance.

2.3 Recruitment into the PTD

2.3.1 The quality of PTD officers we have in the Public Service depends very much on the qualifications and personality traits of the people recruited into the service. The Forum was very impressed with the great efforts currently undertaken by the Public Services Commission (PSC) to recruit the best candidates into the PTD. However, it was noted that the new system of recruitment only started in 2005 meaning that the first batch would now only be about five years in service and not yet at the level to play a significant role as senior PTD officers. On the other hand, there was also the concern that these young officers may not get the right kind of supervision and nurturing if they are assigned to work with heads who may not have the desired leadership qualities to guide and develop them into excellent performers and future leaders. This is a matter that should be looked into by the PSD in the context of job assignment and emplacement.

2.3.2 Where the recruitment system is concerned, the Forum felt that the following should be given due consideration:

- a. Whatever system is employed, it must result in the recruitment of the top academic talent into the PTD, especially those who obtain First Class Honours degree, and from among those being sent through the PSD scholarship programme, doing their undergraduate and Masters at Foreign Universities in England, U.S.A., Australia, New Zealand and Canada.
- b. The recruitment system should solve the current phenomenon of the Public Service/PTD losing the top academic talent to the private sector companies. We expect these top academic talents to assist the service in providing the strategic thinkers and the policy analysts, that are needed by the nation. These national strategic thinkers and policy analysts should be produced and developed “home-grown”, within and among the members of the PTD, rather than being imported and outsourced from the private sector.

- c. There is a need to re-introduce the PTD scholar scheme which allows for future PTD recruits to be identified from among the top academic talent in the schools (i.e. after the Form 5 School Certificate or at the HSC). These scholars are then sent for the A-level courses and later to be admitted to the top local and foreign universities, e.g. Cambridge, Oxford, etc. On getting good results, (e.g. First Class Honours and Second Class Upper) they will be directly recruited into the PTD. This scheme was fully utilised during the time of Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun Abdul Razak and Tun Hussein Onn. During those years, the PTD succeeded in getting the top available talent into the service. Many of these PTD scholars later blossomed into top-class administrators, providing excellent service to the nation.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 It was the Forum's conclusion that we have gone beyond the traditional administrative leadership role that the PTD used to play. We are now in the realm of strategic leadership and we need PTD leaders who can play that role. Their character, their competence and their contribution will enable us to reinvent the PTD for tomorrow so that our beloved nation will be able to better face the changing world and the very competitive global environment. We need to have again 'towering' individuals in the PTD who can command the respect of our political leaders through their administrative wisdom, integrity and professional expertise and act as their most trusted advisers while able to garner the loyalty and quality performance from their staff.

3.2 It cannot be ignored that, historically, the PTD service has a truly rich heritage. The PTD is the successor to the old colonial British institution of the MCS, the premier central institution in the British colonial government, employed by the British to run its colonial empire in Malaya and in the Straits Settlements. After independence in 1957, Tunku

Abdul Rahman and Tun Abdul Razak decided to keep alive the institution of the MCS, Malaynising it and giving it new functions and new purposes. The MCS was reformed as the central machinery to run and manage this new independent nation. The new MCS was the professional partner to the new political leadership. It was galvanized to manage the new ministries and departments and to implement the massive rural development plan and the New Economic Policy. Renamed as the PTD (Administrative and Diplomatic Service) in 1972, it was the main partner of the political leadership in nation-building and one of the select few services that are protected under Article 153 of the Malaysian Constitution. It is, therefore, an inherent responsibility of the PTD to ensure that the fundamental provisions in the Malaysian Constitution are honoured and respected, and to keep the integrity of the nation intact and prospering. Therefore, it becomes more vital and urgent that the nation be assured that the PTD will continue to possess the ability and competency to undertake its important role and tasks.

3.3 The time has come for the PTD to reinvent and to reenergize itself to meet the changing environment and the new challenges. The task to become the PTD for the future must be undertaken now and with a renewed sense of urgency.

ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Adviser

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Chairman

Tan Sri Nuraizah Abdul Hamid

Members

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