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**PEMANDU: It's about effectiveness, not about size**

I refer to your article entitled "World Bank report: PEMANDU biggest government 'delivery unit' globally published on 28 April 2017.

As one of the PEMANDU team members who provided input to the World Bank Group in preparing their assessment "Driving Performance from the Centre: Malaysia's Experience with PEMANDU", we are pleased that Malay Mail Online has seen it fit to highlight the report. Unfortunately, the focus on the size of PEMANDU misses the whole point of the report. Allow me to explain.

The reports state that many governments have introduced delivery units to tackle pressing implementation challenges, deliver on key priorities and better respond to citizen needs. Despite adopting good policies, governments often face implementation challenges in delivering outcome. Delivery units at the centre of government is one of the solutions. Under the right circumstances, delivery units can help to strengthen the link between a given policy and citizen outcomes.

The report went on to state that PEMANDU has been effective for the following reasons, among others:

- PEMANDU'S signature methodology, "Eight Steps of Transformation", ensures its focus on key tasks at every point in time: from strategic direction setting by the cabinet on government priorities, developing concrete (or three-feet) interventions contained in the National Transformation Programme (NTP) and creating stakeholder ownership, to acting as technical support to ministries, departments and agencies in implementing the NTP, problem-solving to de-bottleneck the implementation, reporting KPIs validated by independent third-party and communicating to the stakeholder and public through the annual report.
- PEMANDU's goals are specific and granular in order to create maximum focus and accountability for results. The key to success of any delivery unit is to focus on a limited number of well-defined priorities. For PEMANDU, these priorities were defined by the NTP: eight NKRA's, 12 NKEA's and six SRI's.
- "Labs" were one of PEMANDU's signature innovations that created ownership of the NTP among a wide variety of stakeholders. It is a consultative process lasting six to nine weeks, where participants from government, business community and civil society work together to design solutions to identified policy challenges. Through labs, PEMANDU ensured that the NTP was demand-driven and widely owned by the implementation agencies.
- PEMANDU creates incentives at all levels through rigorous monitoring and reporting of KPIs, which cascade down from the Minister to the staff of ministries, departments and agencies. While the initial KPIs were set during the original labs, annual targets are set jointly between PEMANDU and the relevant government bodies. The KPIs are tracked and updated weekly using a dashboard which surfaces implementation problems, which are then bumped up for resolution at technical and steering committee levels, or otherwise referred to the semi-annual Problem-Solving meeting chaired by the Prime

Minister himself for final resolution, if they persist. The latter is also known as the "Putrajaya Inquisition".

- PEMANDU's interaction with stakeholders within and outside the government is key to achieve results. The implementation of the NTP is enabled by institutional structures, such as the Delivery Management Offices (DMOs) within the ministries, which become the vehicles that allow PEMANDU to drive the NTP implementation.

As an objective assessment, the report also defined challenges that countries may face on emulating PEMANDU, one of which is the size of PEMANDU. As your article rightly pointed out, this is directly related to the breadth of its mandate, which is unique among delivery units worldwide. Most other delivery units focussed only on the service delivery aspects (akin to NKRAAs and SRIs) while PEMANDU also covered a wide swath of industry policy (akin to NKEAs). The benefits to the Malaysian economy far outweighs its costs as the ETP labs garnered private-sector investment commitment of USD406 billion, which is expected to create 3.3 million jobs and deliver an additional GNI of USD250 million in 2020. As reported in the NTP Annual reports audited by PwC, the realisation of these figures are on track and on this basis, the return on investment is likely to be significant.

Hence, while your article copy fairly described the rationale for its size, the headline is unfortunately misleading as the key point of the report was about PEMANDU's effectiveness, not its size.

The effectiveness of PEMANDU is evidenced by many recognitions it has received over the years including the Best Public Sector Reform Programme Award 2016 bestowed by Cambridge IF Analytica and Top 20 Government Innovation Teams by Bloomberg Philanthropies and Nesta. Our CEO, Dato' Sri Idris Jala, was listed among the 10 Most Influential Policy Makers by Bloomberg Markets in 2014. PEMANDU's accomplishments were also well recorded by case studies written by Harvard Business School, Princeton University and Competitive Industry and Innovation Program.

At the recent World Bank and International Monetary Fund Spring Meetings 2017, Dato' Sri Idris Jala was invited to share the Malaysian journey and experience in national transformation to his policy-making peers through multiple engagements. He received tremendous commendations and acclaim from the live and online audience, comprising leaders and professionals from governments, multilateral organisations, private sector and civil society. What made the PEMANDU methodology even more compelling was its applicability in countries such as Tanzania, Oman and India, among others. It is a model that is now look up by many as a panacea to implementation woes around the world.

For me, it was privilege to be present to witness the genuine admiration and desire to emulate. For in addition to being able to technically assist governments in need of help globally, our body of work has also put Malaysia firmly on the world map of public sector delivery par excellence.

In the interest on balanced and accurate reporting, I hope you will publish my letter in full so that your readers can form judgements with proper perspective. The public is encouraged and welcomed to download and read the report in full via this link <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/318041492513503891/Driving-performance-from-the-center-Malaysia-s-experience-with-PEMANDU>

Thank you.

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