

PLENARY SESSION ONE: CREATING BLUE OCEANS IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
16 AUGUST 2016

Moderator:

- **Professor Tan Sri Zakri Abdul Hamid,**
Science Advisor to Prime Minister of Malaysia

Speakers:

- **Speaker 1: Rt. Hon. Patricia Scotland QC,**
Secretary General of the Commonwealth
- **Speaker 2: H.E. Iyad Ameen Madani, Secretary General,**
Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)
- **Speaker 3: Dr Shamsad Akhtar,**
United Nations Under Secretary General and ESCAP Executive Secretary
- **Speaker 4: The Hon. Dato' Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein,**
Minister of Defence, Malaysia
- **Speaker 5: The Hon. Dato' Rahman Dahlan,**
Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Malaysia

Objective of the Session:

Creating blue oceans in national development requires looking beyond conventional boundaries within and across public and private sectors, adopting creative and innovative approaches to achieving strong economic growth and enhancing public well being, and motivating all stakeholders to actively participate. This session will explore how a blue ocean approach of creativity and collaboration can be applied at the national level.

Key takeaways:

1. From multilateral perspectives (Commonwealth, OIC and UN) the challenges of its member nations are similar from what any nation faces, albeit with varying intensity.
 - a. The UN, for instance, uses its ability to bring nations together in agreeing to a common principle or framework as a global guideline in addressing challenges in the 21st century. This inadvertently lead to governments or nations to adhere to certain commonly acceptable practice to ensure that the people benefit from policies in place that addresses issues such as climate change, income inequality, and service delivery.
 - b. As for the OIC, the reference point for member countries remains the Islamic principles that encourages free market approach to the business market, pragmatic leadership, and how wealth should be distributed in difficult times where resources are shrinking and competition intensifies.

- c. The Commonwealth, on the other hand, focuses on countries that faces wide-ranging issues despite sharing common law, common languages and common cultural acceptability. For instance some nations are facing its very survival due to climate change and rising seawater level that other wealthier members may have a hand in preventing.
2. Changing status quo is difficult and requires strong leadership, agreed set of principles, aims and goals, and meaningful engagement with the people on the ground and stakeholders who are key to successful collaborative initiative implementation.
3. The Malaysian story provides an example of how Blue Ocean Strategy can be successfully implemented and communicated to its targeted segment of society as it has permeate in its development plans, cross-ministry and agency initiatives in improving people's livelihood and wellbeing, ensuring that the bureaucracy works for the right purpose (accountability of stakeholders and eliminating unnecessary processes).

Issues and challenges:

1. To make the leap towards *blue oceans* from the status quo of red oceans, it requires a paradigm shift in thinking, mindset, and leadership. While some countries like Malaysia may be exemplary in its approach towards Blue Ocean, challenges remain for countries and multilateral organizations.

General recommendations:

1. We need to recognize that we are not that different from one another, and we are likely to be contextually similar. For instance, the issue of domestic violence that affects 1:3 women in the Commonwealth countries, the patterns that emerge from these situation are similar. Therefore, if a risk assessment with real data is conducted in a pilot, other countries or segment of the world can adopt it. It is likely that there can be common solution for equally common problems and big data can play a huge role in pursuit of these solution.
2. Robustness of innovation relies on strong leadership and commitment of stakeholders involved in implementation, therefore communicating such aspiration is key to ensuring that innovation and creativity prevails.

Questions and Answers:

1. A gentlemen from Chad - We have seen the correlation between income growth and people's happiness, which usually is inversely related. African countries are often rich in resources but its outcome is almost never translated into people's wellbeing and welfare. With the need to attain peace and stability, addressing climate change, and

competing resources, yet at the same time creating culture of creativity and advancing innovation intents, how would all these elements intersect? How can it be done?

- a. Referring to his experience reading and understanding the Blue Ocean Strategy, Speaker 4 was struck by its simplicity yet addressing the need to relook at unorthodox approaches. He believes that four elements are needed to ensure that mindset are open for collaboration and cooperation. Firstly, political will is needed - must not stray with what is being set for the wellbeing of the people. Secondly, leadership is crucial in ensuring such changes happen (the book spoke about convincing and converting the kingpins - key persons/agents instead of attempting to convince everyone). Thirdly, engagement leads to better working relationship and collaboration. Fourth, results remain the outcome that all stakeholders look for therefore implementability of ideas and innovation are crucial.
2. Moderator - What can be done together, as nations, as multilateral agencies?
- a. Speaker 1 believed that in an interdependent world, silo based working doesn't work internally, nationally, nor internationally. The quest is to ensure that globalisation works for everyone. As problems are complex, there is a need to be holistic in our approaches.
 - b. Speaker 2 encouraged the audience to imagine that everyone lives in a small village together. However, he believes that there are no magical formula in addressing these complexities of issues as it is reliant on ensuring processes are clear, laboured with hard work. As everything is interrelated, the global community needs to also identify ways of ensuring that the regulating environment are contributing to the overall growth and happiness of citizens of the world.
 - c. Speaker 3 reiterated that the Sustainable Development Agenda (SDGs) as a universally adopted agenda has somehow enabled changes in mindset of leadership and cabinet members.
 - d. Speaker 5 believed that the Blue Ocean Strategy provided the government the opportunity of doing things differently where the government no longer knows best.