PERSIDANGAN KEBANGSAAN MENGENAI MASYARAKAT BERMAKLUMAT
NATIONAL SUMMIT ON INFORMATION SOCIETY (NASIS)
7 – 8 SEPTEMBER 2005
INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER, BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

Date of issue: 8th September 2005   **Doc. R-S7**

Report from

Session 7: Plenary Session

(Thursday, 8th September 2005, 1.45pm – 4.30pm)

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

7 - 8 September 2005

International Convention Centre

SESSION 7: PLENARY SESSION

I.   **Introduction**

The final session for the National Summit on Information Society (NASIS) was chaired by Dr Yong Chee Thuan, Director of ICT Center, Universiti Brunei Darussalam.

II.   **Plenary Session**

2.1   Tuan Haji Ibrahim Ali, Senior Special Duties Officer, Ministry of Communications introduced the Deputy Minister of Communications, Dato Paduka Hj Yusof bin Hj Hamid.

2.2   The session commenced with remarks from the Deputy Minister of Communications, Dato Paduka Hj Yusof bin Hj Hamid.

Dato Yusof thanked the participants at NASIS. It is hoped that the discussions yesterday and this morning will help the Ministry of Communications to prepare Brunei Darussalam's e-Strategy Paper. NASIS is an opportunity for all stakeholders to be heard before the e-Strategy Paper is completed.

2.3   The session was chaired by Dr Yong Chee Thuan, Director of ICT Center, Universiti Brunei Darussalam.

The Chairman commented that this session is approaching the end of NASIS. This opens a new beginning for Brunei Darussalam to prepare an e-Strategy Paper to benefit the nation.

2.4   Reports were given by the Chairpersons of the preceding sessions.

2.4.1   Session 2: Enabling Environment & Policies
Dr Yong Chee Thuan, Director of ICT Center, Universiti Brunei Darussalam.

The session started with a keynote speaker from Thailand, Dr Somnuk Keretho who provided an overview of the e-Government approach in Thailand. Thailand is aligning itself with international standards and best practices.

A local speaker voiced concern about the rampant software piracy prevalent in Brunei Darussalam. An overview of e-transactions and security issues was also provided. The perspective of a local bank was

also given and its commitment to support local SMEs was underlined. A representative from BEDB emphasized the importance of Brunei Darussalam tapping into the lucrative ICT market. Pg Kasmirhan Hj Tahir from the Attorney Generals Chambers who spoke of the overall ICT environment and the implications of convergence.

2.4.2   Session 3: Human Resource Capacity Development
Pg Dr Hjh Rahmah Pg Jadid, Consultant & Lecturer, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Institute of Education at Universiti Brunei Darussalam.

They keynote speaker emphasized that people are the core of NASIS. The Government cannot implement an e-Strategy on its own. ICT skills must be defined and training must be provided. There were speakers and discussion on ICT human capacity building, in particular, what skills are required, how to build these skills and how to apply them.

Many ICT projects have been embarked upon in Brunei Darussalam, hwoever, there are many factors which need to change to encourage ICT literacy and skill acquisition e.g. education mindset, employment attitude and policies amongst them.

ICT capacity development needs to start in school. Readiness, ICT skills, developmental and analytical skills all need to be developed. ICT literacy is a necessary part of career development. Continuous training is needed to maintain an edge on these skills. There are means provided by the Ministry of Education to partake in ICT skill training.

2.4.3   Session 4: Content & Applications
Dr Hj Suhaimi bin Hj Abdul Karim, Chief Librarian, Universiti Brunei Darussalam.

From the e-commerce perspective, there has been several examples of successful e-commerce deployment in Brunei Darussalam e.g. RBA's blue skies.

Online banking provided by banks is secure but the take up has not been favourable. The local population do not seem to have the confidence in it.

Local content and digitization are taking shape in Brunei Darussalam. Government and local media websites provide an avenue for local content. Digital libraries should be deployed. The success of e-government projects will enrich and provide more content.

An overview of the TAFIS project and implementation was provided. The capabilities of the TAFIS system was highlighted. Key challenges were project management, commitment and control, infrastructure and stakeholder integration.

2.4.4   Session 5: Bridging the Digital Divide
Dato Paduka Buntar Osman, Member of the Authority for Info-communications Technology Industry of Brunei Darussalam (AiTi).

Dato Paduka Buntar Osman was represented by Abdul Mutalib Yussof, Assistant Chief Executive, AiTi. Abdul Mutalib extended Dato Buntar's apologies for not being able to present the report himself.

The Digital Divide refers to the socio-political gap between communities that have access to computers and the internet and those who do not and also refers gaps which exist between groups regarding their ability to use ICT effectively due to differing levels of literacy and technical skills.

The importance of an inclusive Information Society was highlighted to maintain competitiveness. Strong political and individual will and support is needed to create an inclusive Information Society.

E-government challenges and possible solutions were also discussed.

The internet is indispensable in today's world making it important to address issues of affordability and accessibility. A skills gap exists between the young and the old, technology may not have existed or have been easily accessible to the older generation. This technophobia can be addressed by technological solutions, training and building confidence.

The ICT development gap between urban and rural areas can be clearly seen in the Temburong District. Access to ICT and services including cellular mobile coverage is not available in some areas. There is also a lack of skills in the population.

Investment in internet infrastructure is expensive. A balance need to be struck between affordability and Quality of Service (QoS). At what point will we decide the trade off with the quality of services and affordability.

2.4.5   Session 6: Ethical Dimension of the Information Society
Dr Hj Mahali bin Momin, Deputy Secretary General, PGGMB.

Technology can be used for illegal activities. This can be dealt with by legislating and providing harsh penalties and also by integrating topics on ICT safety into the school curriculum. Children do not know the difference between good and bad content. There is a need for a universal positive ethical framework to be put in place. Some parents may also need guidance as not all parents are aware of the contents available on the internet. There is a need for constant communication between the industry and society to ensure that societal concerns are addressed. Research on the impact of ICT is also needed, to determine the extent of its impact both positive and negative.

2.5   The Chairman provided an overview of the previous day's sessions and invited Hj Ibrahim Ali, Senior Special Duties Officer, Ministry of Communications to present *"Brunei Information Society – The Strategy"*.

2.6   Hj Ibrahim Ali, Senior Special Duties Officer, Ministry of Communications presented the introduction to *"Brunei Information Society – The Strategy"*.

The e-Strategy Paper is based on the WSIS declaration of principles and plan of action. The first draft was prepared in 2003 and circulated to all stakeholders. Input from NASIS will be incorporated.

An overview of the e-Strategy Paper was presented; vision, objectives, core strategies, focus and improvement areas, targets, action plan and next steps.

Dr Hj Mahali bin Momin commented that the vision should include preservation of information and knowledge.

It was commented that it would be helpful if the Government could help provide assistance towards the cost of investment and maintenance costs and queried whether it is worthwhile to invest.

Ms Aurora Rubio suggested that the e-Strategy Paper's targets may aligned with the WSIS Plan of Action. The Chairman explained that all targets are addressed within the targets for each Ministry.

Comments are invited from all participants. Comments may be sent on to the Ministry of Communications.

2.7 The Chairman opened the floor for comments.

Mahathir suggested that there should be a target for human capacity building. Without the human skills, there would be no use for infrastructure.

Dr. Milagros observed that care must be taken not to define the Digital Divide only in terms of access to technology. ICT literacy and knowledge and skills on how to access information, assess its integrity and accuracy and how to make use of such information. There may also be problems of access to content, content accessible through broadband may not be accessible through dial up.

Dr Hj Suhaimi bin Hj Abdul Karim commented that a means of measuring and quantifying success rates for investment, Government or otherwise.

Pg Kasmirhan agreed that the dollars and cents of return on investment (ROI) is important but as a Government agency, the ROI may be intangible e.g. in terms of efficiency. Global competitiveness in terms of attracting business and FDI can only be measured in terms of efficiency in Government and business services.

Dr Hj Mahali bin Momin commented that the future generation should be taught skills on how to filter quality of information. Not all information is good or relevant.

Dr Somnuk Keretho commented that ICT indicators and an action plan for ICT assessment and maturing the country as a whole to ensure readiness. There are no indicators to measure usage and access.

Lord John commented that terminology needs to be defined as used in the document. There is no international definition of broadband, not even the ITU.

Broadband means different things to different people. Also, it must be noted that fixed line penetration worldwide is declining.

Hj Omar Ali commented that on trying to relate the targets to the action plan, Target d has no action plan to support it, suggested to develop an action plan on maturing local industries and also emphasize ICT education. Further, in the implementation of e-Government projects, it was noted that local companies need to take a more active role.

2.8   The Chairman expressed his gratitude to all present for participating in and contributing to the success of the National Summit on Information Society.

2.9   Hj Ibrahim Ali expressed his gratitude to the Ministry of Communications, AiTi and all others who contributed to the success of the event.