

RSOG Joint Seminar

A Joint Seminar on “Public Sector Reforms-How to Make it Work?” – RSOG & INTAN

with

Professor Ngaire Woods

When : 4 December 2015
Where : INTAN Bukit Kiara
Speakers : Professor Ngaire Woods

About the Seminar

One of the famous words of Martin Luther King, Jr. was “the time is always right to do what is right”. Joining the public sector have always been the right thing to do for many young men and women who want to bring about positive changes to the society. Such conviction is still observed until today, though some would argue that job security matters more. Be that as it may, public sectors across the globe are reinventing themselves to keep up with the times and more importantly to convince the society that their role in bringing about positive changes are intact and remain so for many more years. Despite its professed importance, public sector reforms is often perceived as lacking support, patience, and perseverance to see it through. What is it about public sector that differs from other sectors that makes its reform harder? Are there any examples of successful public sector reforms? What did those public sectors do to make their reforms work. This seminar aims to discuss them.

Summary

The Malaysian public sector has undergone various stages of transformation since Independence. Our public sector has embraced changes and incorporated many reforms to enhance service delivery, improve quality and increase productivity. In this knowledge platform, Professor Ngaire shared her thoughts and knowledge on public sector reforms especially on what needs to be done and the challenges that may arise. In the current scenario seen in many countries around the world, the government of the day has been dogged by trust issues and often seen as corrupted by the public. The

trust deficit in the government has resulted in low investor confidence, weakening economy and political instability. Hence, it is imperative to spur public sector reforms to motivate the civil service to be more responsive to the needs of the people.

Professor Ngaire further elaborated that through the New Public Management, performance indicator and measuring outcomes has been introduced as a key indicator to create competitiveness. She added that in the past 30 years, the number of civil servants in the public sector has increased and Malaysia is no exception. Simultaneously, the cost of operations and expenditure has also increased. In this regard, she added that public service reforms should be motivated by intrinsic factors as compared to extrinsic factors. Hence, it is imperative for the public sector officials to place importance on values and integrity when they perform their duties and undertake their responsibilities. In addition, it is important for them to be more responsive to the needs of the people. They should be proactive to resolve the issues facing the people and seek the feedback of the people to improve on programmes and policies before it is implemented.

In concluding her remarks, Professor Ngaire stressed the importance of the public sector to continuously revamp itself and embrace changes accordingly. She added that the public sector is a dynamic entity that should be further empowered to carry out programmes and policies that will benefit the people.

Issues Raises

- Innovation is key for public service reforms. Public service officials should embrace initiatives that enhance delivery system and increase quality of services.
- Values and integrity are principles that each civil servant should possess and adhere to.
- It is important for the civil service to be more responsive to the citizens through efforts such as active listening, engaging the public and gaining the trust of the people.
- In changing the norms, one needs to ask oneself the purpose of his or her actions which is to bring about subtle transformations in their organizations. As a

change agent, one must remember that transformation initiatives will require significant amount of time and effort.

- The most important factor that one needs to consider is to prioritize the people as the main stakeholders and the purpose of their responsibilities as a civil servant. Civil servants should focus on the needs of the people to continuously improve performance as a motivation for them.
- Ensuing a good service delivery is far more important than downsizing. Public officers must be reminded to always perform to the best of their ability.
- Sense-giving and sense-making is essentially about identifying the clear and compelling reasons that should be considered before a reform process takes place in the organization.

About the Speaker

Professor Ngaire Woods is the inaugural Dean of the Blavatnik School of Government and Professor of Global Economic Governance. Her research focuses on global economic governance, the challenges of globalization, global development, and the role of international institutions. She founded and is the Director of the Global Economic Governance Programme. She is co-founder of the Oxford-Princeton Global Leaders Fellowship programme. She led the creation of the Blavatnik School of Government at Oxford University and, before her appointment as Dean, served as the School's Academic Director. Ngaire Woods was a regular presenter of the Analysis Program for BBC Radio 4, and in 1998 presented her own BBC TV series on public policy and author to numerous books and journal articles.

Contact

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