ASGP | Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments

COMMUNICATION

by

Mr Muhd Sujairi ABDULLAH

Secretary General of the Senate of Malaysia

On

‘‘Digital Transformation in the Malaysian Parliament: Enhancing Efficiency, Transparency, and Accessibility”

Geneva Session
October 2024

INTRODUCTION

1. In recent years, the Malaysian Parliament has embarked on an ambitious journey of digital transformation and innovation, reflecting a broader commitment to modernise legislative processes and enhancing operational efficiency. This transformation is not merely about adopting new technologies but it represents a strategic overhaul of parliamentary practices to better meet the needs of a dynamic political environment and an increasingly digital society. The latest advancements in the Malaysian Parliament are indicative of a profound shift towards digital platforms, showcasing a range of innovative system to improve transparency, accessibility, and functionality.

<u>The Digital Revolution In Parliamentary Operations</u>

2. The cornerstone of the Malaysian Parliament's digital innovation is the implementation of several digital platforms aimed at streamlining parliamentary operations. Among the most significant developments is the introduction of the Parlimen Portal and Mobile Application, which has fundamentally transformed how information is being disseminated. This portal serves as a central hub for accessing parliamentary documents, session schedules, and legislative updates. Parliament of Malaysia has made critical information more accessible to both legislators and the public, enhancing transparency and facilitating more informed public engagement by digitising these processes.

3. The Parlimen Portal provides comprehensive access to a wide range of parliamentary materials, including bills, amendments, and reports, in a user-friendly format. This digital initiative not only simplifies the retrieval of parliamentary information but also fosters greater public involvement by making legislative processes more open and transparent. The accompanying Mobile Application extends this accessibility, allowing users to stay informed about parliamentary activities and updates on-the-go. This shift towards a digital-first approach reflects a broader trend of leveraging digital ecosystem to enhance communication and operational efficiency.

4. Another notable innovation is the e-Parlimen system, which has revolutionised the management of parliamentary calendars, order papers, and the database of Members of Parliament (MP). Previously, these tasks involved significant manual effort and were prone to delays and errors. The e-Parlimen platform automates the generation and management of these critical documents, reducing administrative burdens and improving accuracy. The e-Parlimen system streamlines workflows and ensures that legislative activities are managed more efficiently by integrating various functions into a single digital platform.

Enhancing Parliamentary Proceedings With Digital Tools

5. The digitisation of parliamentary proceedings has significantly advanced through the e-Hantar system, which facilitates the submission of MP questions for parliamentary sessions. This digital platform replaces the traditional paper-based submission process, offering a more efficient and organised approach of handling parliamentary inquiries. MPs can now submit questions electronically, track their status, and receive responses in a streamlined manner. This innovation not only speeds up the process but also reduces the potential for administrative errors and enhances the overall efficiency of parliamentary sessions.

6. Further supporting the legislative process is the Electronic Parliamentary Research Services (e-PRS) system. This platform enables MPs, parliamentary officials and officers to request research products and access the digital repository of information, enhancing their ability to make informed decisions. The e-PRS system provides a centralised platform for requesting and sharing research, making it easier for relevant individuals to access specific data and insights. This digital tool ensure that MPs, parliamentary officials and officers have timely access to critical information.

7. The e-Latihan system represents another significant advancement in parliamentary innovation, focusing on the tracking of annual training progress

for parliamentary staff. This digital platform allows for the monitoring and management of training activities, ensuring that staff development is aligned with organisational needs and priorities. The e-Latihan system helps to streamline staff development and enhance overall capacity building within the parliamentary institution by digitising the training process.

8. In addition, the e-Kenderaan system has modernised the process for requesting and managing vehicles. This digital platform simplifies vehicle requests, tracking, and management, reducing administrative process and improving the efficiency of transportation logistics. The Malaysian Parliament can improve coordination and allocate resources, ensuring that transportation needs are met in a timely and efficient manner by integrating vehicle management into a digital system.

Improving Accessibility and Efficiency with Digital Innovation

9. The Visitor Management System (VMS) is another key innovation that enhances the management of visitors entering the Malaysian Parliament Complex. This digital system streamlines the process of registering and tracking visitors, improving security and administrative efficiency. The VMS provides a more organised approach to managing visitor access, ensuring that all visitors are properly registered and monitored during their time within the vicinity of the parliament.

10. The Multimedia Indexing of Minutes (MIM) is a groundbreaking development that enhances the recording and retrieval of parliamentary sessions. This system was implemented in Parliament of Malaysia in 2008 which provides multimedia recordings of sessions with advanced indexing and search capabilities, allowing for more efficient access to recorded proceedings. The Malaysian Parliament has improved the accessibility and usability of parliamentary records, making it easier for users to locate specific information within recorded sessions by incorporating multimedia elements into the indexing process.

11. Last but not least, the Parliament Information Dissemination System (PIDS) represents a significant leap forward in the integration of information within the parliamentary sitting hall (Dewan Negara and Dewan Rakyat). PIDS offers an integrated display of parliamentary information, providing a comprehensive and cohesive view of legislative activities and proceedings. This system supports real-time information sharing and visualisation, enhancing the ability of MPs and staff to access and utilise relevant data. Additionally, PIDS allows for the seamless display of content from connected laptops, ensuring that all presentations and discussions are clearly visible to the attendees.

Addressing Challenges and Ensuring Responsible Implementation

12. While these innovations represent significant advancements, the integration of digital technologies in parliamentary operations also presents challenges. Ensuring the security and integrity of digital platforms is paramount, as cybersecurity threats can pose risks to sensitive parliamentary information. The Malaysian Parliament must adhere to strict ICT security policies and guidelines issued by relevant central agencies, including the National Digital Department (Jabatan Digital Negara - JDN), the National Cyber Security Agency (NACSA), and the Malaysian National Security Council (Majlis Keselamatan Negara - MKN). Compliance with these policies is essential to safeguard the integrity of digital systems and protecting against potential cyber threats.

13. Additionally, responsible deployment of digital technologies requires careful consideration of ethical and legal implications. As advanced technologies become increasingly integrated into parliamentary operations, it is crucial to address concerns related to data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the potential impact on jobs and legislative processes. The Parliament of Malaysia need to adopt responsible practices which prioritize transparency, accountability, and fairness in the use of digital tools.

Looking Ahead: The Future of Innovation in The Malaysian Parliament

14. The Malaysian Parliament's commitment towards innovation and digital transformation reflects a forward-looking approach to enhance legislative processes and operations. As technology continues to evolve, Parliament of Malaysia is well-positioned to leverage new advancements to further improve efficiency, transparency, and accessibility. Future innovations may include the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) for advanced data analysis, machine learning for predictive insights, and expanded use of digital platforms for public engagement and participation.

15. The ongoing efforts to modernise parliamentary operations demonstrate a dedication to embrace technology in a way that aligns with the needs of a rapidly changing world. The Malaysian Parliament is setting a precedent for other legislative bodies and institutions, showcasing how digital transformation can drive positive change and enhance governance by continuing to innovate and adapt.

CONCLUSIONS

16. In conclusion, the Malaysian Parliament's journey of advancements in digital innovation represents a significant milestone in the evolution of legislative processes. The implementation of various digital platforms and systems has streamlined operations, improved accessibility, and enhanced transparency. As Parliament of Malaysia navigates the complexities of digital transformation, it remains committed to address challenges and ensuring that technological advancements are deployed responsibly. The future of parliamentary innovation holds promise, with ongoing efforts to integrate emerging technologies and further enhance the effectiveness of legislative functions.