

Vision of digital governance

THE evolving landscape of today's digital world underscores the unparalleled importance of digital governance in shaping the future of nations globally.

With the digital revolution transforming every facet of our lives, establishing a coherent and inclusive digital governance structure is imperative. Thus, the round table discussion organised by Akademi Profesor Malaysia (APM) in Kuala Lumpur in August this year revolved around the themes of digital governance, transformation and innovation ecosystems.

The 18th annual meeting of the UN-backed Internet Governance Forum (IGF) 2023, which is currently going on in Kyoto, Japan, brings this need into sharper focus with its theme "The Internet We Want - Empowering All People".

It resonates deeply with the broader vision of establishing an Internet ecosystem that is whole, open, universal, rights-respecting and, above all, inclusive.

The IGF has outlined a multi-stakeholder model that emphasises collaboration across governments, the private sector and civil society. This comprehensive approach ensures that digital governance doesn't just remain a state-driven initiative but also includes diverse perspectives to enhance its effectiveness.

The synergies between the out-



Multistakeholder model: Orang Asli children in Pos Kuala Mu, Sungai Siput, Perak, accessing the Internet through a shared phone. Digital governance resonates deeply with the broader vision of establishing an Internet ecosystem that is whole, open, universal, rights-respecting and, above all, inclusive. — Bernama

comes of both events are evident. While APM's round table discussion underscores the importance of solid governance in the country's digital trajectory, the IGF forum provides the global context and framework to anchor these local aspirations.

Simply put, the confluence of local and global insights offers Malaysia a unique opportunity to craft a digital governance strategy that is both locally relevant and globally aligned.

So, where should Malaysia go from here? Taking inspiration from the IGF's multistakeholder

model, it becomes clear that Malaysia's digital governance strategy must be a collective endeavour. Engaging private entities, technical communities, academia and civil society will bring a plethora of ideas to the table, making governance more resilient, adaptive and holistic.

The backbone of effective digital services is robust digital infrastructure. As emphasised by the IGF panel, guaranteeing affordable and meaningful connectivity for all is vital. To ensure that digital services are accessible, reliable and effective, Malaysia

should invest significantly in bolstering its digital infrastructure.

Digital governance should rest on transparency and accountability. As digital services become integrated in the daily lives of Malaysians, clear standards and regulatory frameworks must be drawn up and implemented. Such frameworks must not only set the path for the digital trajectory but also be open to public scrutiny to foster trust.

Embracing the IGF's call for a human-centric Internet means that Malaysia's digital transformation journey should prioritise its citizens. Data privacy, human rights and policies tailored to the needs and aspirations of the Malaysian people should be at the heart of the government's digital endeavours.

Lastly, the importance of Malaysia's engagement at global platforms cannot be stressed enough. Engaging actively in global forums like IGF will not only bring international best practices to Malaysia but also allow the nation to share its successes and challenges, thereby enriching the global digital governance discourse.

PROF TS. DR SUHAIDI HASSAN
Fellow

Science, Technology and Innovation Cluster
Akademi Profesor Malaysia