

TECHNICAL PRESENTATION:

**THE RELEVANCE OF ISM'S GLOBAL
PRESENCE**



The Institution *of* Surveyors, Malaysia

UK CHAPTER

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Introduction

Throughout the course of my career with Davis Langdon and Baharuddin Ali & Low, on few occasions, I have been given the opportunity to prepare and assist in preparing few technical papers and presentations.

Just last week, I was informed of ISM's request for me to present a technical paper today. Given that I only had just over a week to prepare, the '**survival mode**' in me kicked in! I thought I'd just present one of those papers and be done with it! Ship shape!

However, I eventually came to my senses, and I've decided against this based on two counts;

- Firstly; I thought it would be best to save these presentations for UK Chapters' forthcoming CPD events / seminars.
- Secondly and **mainly**, I stand here before you, representing the UK Chapter on this historic day, and as such I feel compelled to talk on a subject which I feel is more in line with the theme of the occasion.

Hence, the topic of my presentation today is "**The Relevance of ISM's Global Presence**".

ISM UK Chapter – A Brief Background of its formation

I wish to provide you with just a snapshot of the background to what had transpired that led to the formation of the UK Chapter.

I was made to understand that the concept have been discussed and bounced around about for quite some time. The final seal of approval was made at the ISM's Council Meeting dated 30th May 2008. It was then that the Board recommended the following:

1. ISM encourages the organizing of activities for Malaysian Surveyors abroad led by a Pro-Temp Committee;
2. Members of the said committee must be Members of ISM. Membership form may be downloaded from the ISM website;
3. The list of members must be forwarded to ISM;

4. The Chapter should be registered with Registrar of Societies in United Kingdom.
5. Other issues relating to Constitution and Bye-laws and payment of subscriptions shall be addressed or amended accordingly by ISM.

Prior to the Board Resolution as outlined above, the Registrar of Societies, Selangor (ROS) had advised that they have no objections to the establishment of a Chapter of the Institution of Surveyors Malaysia in United Kingdom. The establishment of the Chapter is to be governed by the local rules and legislation therefore must be approved by the Registrar of Societies in the UK.

Following the Board's approval and confirmation by the ROS, the wheels were then set in motion;

- On 2nd May 2009, the Pro-Temp Committee met up with PP Sr.Chua Siow Leng and PP Dato' Sr.Sri Kandan in London. It was then that the first list of Malaysian surveyors in United Kingdom was forwarded to the ISM delegates.
- A further meeting was organised by the Pro-Temp Committee on 31st May 2009 when PP Sr.Chua Siow Leng made a whistle stop to London.
- On 16th July 2009, the UK Chapter Pro-Temp Committee organised a talk at Davis Langdon's office in High Holborn, London. Out of 66 surveyors on the UK Chapters list, more than half (35 participants) attended the talk. Most notably, we were honoured to have PP Sr.Ong See Lian as the Guest Speaker for the event. The event was intended to be more of a dialogue and primarily centred on the mechanisms and objectives of the formation of the UK Chapter. The honourable speaker also articulated on current challenges facing the profession/industry and how we could better position ourselves moving forward. During the unsettling economic times in UK, it was reassuring to catch up with fellow surveyors and find comfort in the familiar.
- More recently on 16th April 2010, the Pro-Temp Committee organised a dialogue with distinguished delegates from ISM led by the then Madam President Assoc. Prof. Dr.Wan Maimun Wan Abdullah, PP Sr.Chua Siow Leng and Assoc. Prof. Sr.NorAinah Abdullah.

UK Chapter – First impression

At the very outset, inevitably there have been few sceptics on the relevance of establishing a UK Chapter. I'm sure this is true, perhaps even amongst those in this room. Much as I hate to admit, in all honesty, this was my initial reaction when the idea was first mooted by my then colleague Prof. Sr.Dr.Kamarul Salleh, over a year ago.

In an attempt to allay your concerns, I wish to draw upon my personal experience and my recent findings.

Malaysian Professionals Abroad

I first made the move to work abroad when I was offered a position in the Republic of Ireland. Back in 2004-2006, whilst the Irish economy enjoyed exceptional growth, to the best of my knowledge there were well over **100 to 150 construction professionals** who were employed in Ireland. Of course this number had significantly reduced due to the financial crisis, however at the height of its economic growth, Ireland's construction industry favoured Malaysian professional workforce.

Based on our latest finding, there are **approximately 70 surveyors** who are currently working in the United Kingdom. This is a significant number, considering the recent economic downturn that had severely affected the country. Additionally, this number **excludes surveying students** who are currently pursuing their ambition here in the United Kingdom.

As some of you may be aware, I've quite recently taken up a short term secondment to Davis Langdon's Saudi Arabian office in Jeddah. Based on my recent enquiry with the Malaysian Consulate in Riyadh, at present there are 1400 Malaysians employed in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia alone. Of this number, 600-700 are nurses and **the balance (700), with the majority consisting of construction industry professionals** and the remaining employed in the financial, legal and oil & gas industry. Note that this numbers are only in Saudi Arabia.

Despite the global financial crisis, Malaysian professionals are continually being employed and are kept in high regard by overseas employers.

I find this quite remarkable Ladies and Gentleman.

For a relatively small country which has gained its independence not too long ago; with a relatively small population, limited natural resources, far from ideal logistics; despite all these, Malaysia has progressed by leaps and bounds.

Whilst it may be too far fetched to claim that Malaysia is in the business of producing and exporting professionals, however, the numbers I've just presented to you is nothing short of impressive.

This, in my humble opinion, is testament to the fact that Malaysia offers the following;

- Malaysia produces **quality graduates**
- Malaysia offers **leading edge technology**
- Malaysia provides **world class professional environment**
- Malaysian professionals often **demonstrate resilience in challenging environments**

In short Ladies and Gentlemen, Malaysia churns out **world class professionals**.

Malaysian Businesses Abroad

In addition to the favourable job opportunities abroad for Malaysian professionals, Malaysian companies are also making inroads towards meeting global challenges.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The global economy is undergoing profound changes as the balance of power shifts from West to East and from North to South. MATRADE recently cited a Business Monitor International study forecasting that the global construction industry could potentially grow between 1% and more than 5% up to 2014. The projected increase was on account of growth expectations in the Middle East, North Africa, China and India.

A press statement issued on 31st March this year by MATRADE's Chief Executive, Datuk Noharuddin Nordin, "*Malaysian expertise in infrastructure building has been deployed in 73 projects across the Middle East, including landmark initiatives such as Burj Khalifa, Al Reem Island etc.*" The majority of projects are in United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman Syria, Iran, Jordan and Yemen.

It is believed that Malaysian construction companies, which already have an international project portfolio of US\$15billion, were aiming to lead the revival in key markets.

Conclusion

With the current positive trend in Malaysian construction companies operating across borders and the global recruitment trend of favouring Malaysian professionals, ISM is the very first professional organisation to make the initiative of establishing an overseas presence.

On the question of its relevance, I say this to you.... **IT'S HIGH TIME!**

Thank you.

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