



LETTER TO EDITOR

18 December 2016

Dear Editor,

In response to the article *"A new start for old neighbours"* first published on 16 December 2016 in The Star, I would firstly like to state that the Kuala Lumpur – Singapore High Speed Rail (HSR) project, after years of research and analysis by the Government of Malaysia, will immensely benefit the country economically, socially and technologically through the connection between two of Southeast Asia's most vibrant and fast-growing economic engines.

As Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak mentioned before, the HSR will dramatically improve the connectivity between Malaysia and Singapore by ushering in a new era of strong growth, prosperity and opportunities for both countries. We believe the HSR serves as a win-win scenario and catalyst for both countries as it links two urban agglomerations to meet growing demand, spurs economic growth and enhances long-term economic competitiveness while improving the quality of life of the rakyat.

The connectivity will enable businesses to be more productive and access a broader market place, while the public will enjoy an improved travel experience of shorter travel time (90 minutes between KL and Singapore) and a comfortable ride, through the HSR's city centre to city centre connection along the corridor. The experience is unlike air travel, where passengers have to spend up to 3 hours before flights, travelling to the airport, going through the check-in procedures, immigration and security and boarding processes.

Besides the delivery of the HSR project, we have also started looking into the socio-economic development across the cities along the HSR corridor. We have a team working in partnership with the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) to outline the Strategic Development Framework (SDF) which will chart the direction to accelerate inclusive growth and maximise potential benefits for each city and the people.

We have identified over 80 catalytic projects from our initial studies to develop economic growth areas along the corridor with the HSR presence expected to directly impact and stimulate the development of new industries, while strengthening existing local businesses.

Based on our early estimates, it will create an estimated 67,000 additional jobs in the first ten years of HSR operations (2026-2036) from the agglomeration of the many high-value economies and synergies along the corridor. This will provide an impetus to accelerate plans in sectors such as digital economy, bioeconomy, tourism, healthcare, and several others that are potential key drivers along the corridor.

Through our learnings of global success stories from the London-Paris HSR and the Tokyo-Osaka HSR, we believe the KL-SG HSR alignment will allow cities to grow to exploit economies of agglomeration, by increasing mobility and accessibility of the cities. As a reference, this outcome can be seen in the development of the biotechnology and ICT industries in Shin-Yokohama, Japan with target policies and incentives driving the efforts. The city saw an increase of 147% in the population and approximately 700,000 jobs created from 1966 to 2006.

In a press statement on 11 December 2016, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan mentioned that based on a World Bank study on other international projects, the wider economic benefits that could be leveraged from the KL-SG HSR project are conservatively estimated at an additional RM 21 billion of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the year 2060 with 111,000 jobs created as a result of the holistic planning of the socio-economic development taking place now. The GDP impact resulting from construction, operations, ancillary services, and indirect multiplier benefits (e.g. tourism, property appreciation) will be approximately RM 100 billion.

At the same time, we will ensure the HSR development stimulates a shift towards ensuring the wellbeing of local communities by focusing on sustainable urban development and social inclusion initiatives in tandem with economic development.

Several areas such as provision of affordable housing, access to skills training, job and entrepreneurship opportunities, and public transportation are part of this development to be inclusive in providing opportunities for all and at the same time, provide liveable spaces to attract diverse groups of people. We hope for the local communities and businesses to be brought closer together, spurring greater trade cooperation and collective growth.

I sincerely hope that the above provides clarity on the longer term gains from the iconic and game-changing KL-SG HSR project which are key to ensuring the future of people-centric connectivity that will serve both the people and future generations. The project will transform how we live, work and do business as the benefits of bringing the two major cities closer set in.

Sincerely,

Mohd Nur Ismal Mohamed Kamal
Chief Executive Officer, MyHSR Corporation