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Governing around the Globe—Expanding the Center’s Reach to Help Connect Leaders and Promote Excellence

In the past year, the IBM Center for The Business of Government has entered a compelling and new phase in how we carry out our mission to help government. Increasingly, governments around the world are asking questions about government efficiency and effectiveness that are similar to those that have engaged the Center with U.S. government leaders for nearly two decades. These questions include how the public sector can best manage to achieve outcomes given limited resources; how government can leverage innovation, social media, and open data to improve services; and what leaders can do to inspire agencies and stakeholders to perform well for their citizens. The U.S. Government can learn much from, as well as provide a source of expertise for, its international partners; the Center seeks to help expand actionable pathways to expand such exchanges.

Interest in these issues comes to us from a broad range of nations, including parliamentary and democratic forms of government, as well as countries in various stages of development. In recent months, we have engaged with officials from national governments, including the United Kingdom, India, Canada, Korea, the Netherlands, and Peru. Visiting dignitaries are very interested in learning about successes and lessons learned in the United States and abroad, as well as commercial practices that can be adapted for the public sector. And these meetings help the Center to bring new ideas to our U.S. colleagues. For example, we have highlighted the Indian government’s comprehensive “digital India” strategy as an effective and comprehensive modernization platform, and we have learned much from the shared services experience in Canada. Here are some examples:

- In the last two years, the Center has briefed a delegation from the government of Peru, which spends a month at the University of Maryland on the general topic of open data, innovation, and economic growth. We helped these executives understand how they might adapt innovations from the EU and the U.S.
- The leader of Canada’s Shared Services office, Liseanne Forehand, worked with the Center to deliver a keynote address for a meeting that we co-hosted with the Partnership for Public Service around incorporating management priorities into the 2016 presidential transition process. Ms. Forehand addressed how government agencies can collaborate and integrate to function as an enterprise.
- A delegation of IT leaders from the Korean government that is visiting American University will meet with the Center for insight on what they can learn from trends in the U.S., specifically around cloud, analytics, and cybersecurity.

Many of these experiences relate to topics that we also highlight in the current edition of *The Business of Government*. As we interact with U.S. and international leaders through

“The Business of Government Hour,” in forums like the Management Roadmap activity that we have undertaken with the Partnership for Public Service to support the 2016 Presidential transition (see my piece on p.82), and in meetings and briefings for visiting delegations, we will continue to highlight areas of opportunity for collaboration around management excellence.

In speaking with a range of leaders in the U.S. and overseas, we have learned that their engagement on collaborating for effective management ideas mirrors the increase in collective engagement by governments across a range of issues, from policy to technology to security. We are seeing significant growth in the use of cross-border online networks to develop and advance approaches that benefit from a much wider set of experiences among trading partners. Lead U.S. government agencies, including the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and General Services Administration (GSA), have spoken publicly about benefitting from the examples of their counterparts, and about leveraging international institutions including the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) or the World Bank to expand mutual learning. As a result, the Center has similarly connected government leaders to serve as another channel for improving government through information sharing.

We welcome thoughts from the Center’s many stakeholders as to how this rich, cross-border dialogue can be of greatest benefit for government, both in the U.S. and around the world. ■

