

## **MINORITY SHAREHOLDER WATCHDOG GROUP**

**BADAN PENGAWAS PEMEGANG SAHAM MINORITI BERHAD**

(Incorporated in Malaysia – Company No. 524989-M)

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'More belt-tightening measures inevitable'

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**RITA BENOY BUSHON**

**THE** raising of fuel prices by 20 sen per litre has had strong opinions from the public. The early fiscal policy measure by the government was to address concerns on the current account and budget deficit issues.

We believe we will be entering a period of more belt-tightening, which is inevitable. While the measures are painful, we view it as a mo-

ve in the right direction and we support such measures despite being unpopular. We would like to see such savings being channelled to targeted sectors that would bring multiplier effects in the longer term such as the public transport system.

If ever there is any cheer, I would like to share with my readers with respect to Malaysia moving up one-notch from the 25th placing to the 24th in terms of the "most compet-

itive nation" ranked by the World Economic Forum this year.

Separately, we would like to highlight the action taken by Bursa on significant deviations on audited vs unaudited figures. Among the actions were imposition of a fine of RM25,000 each on audit committee members. In addition, directors and relevant personnel were required to attend training pertaining to financial statements. These measures will

serve as a reminder to all board members on the need to be more vigilant on financial matters.

On the international front, Microsoft's acquisition of Nokia's phone business for US\$7.2 billion (RM23.90 billion) appears to make sense as both parties needed to build alliances to compete with the likes of Google and Apple in a very competitive space. This deal appears to have served the needs of both sides: Mi-

crosoft looking for a long-term platform to extend and penetrate its software application business into the smartphone market while Nokia is looking for funds to maintain its survival. With the purchase, shareholders of these firms would be hopeful the marriage would create synergistic value for them in the longer term.

**Rita Benoy Bushon** is the chief executive officer of Minority Shareholder Watchdog Group