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KUALA LUMPUR, JUNE 12 (BERNAMA) -- THE LEAST EFFICIENCY IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE IS FOUND IN THE CONTACTS AMONG EMPLOYEES AND BETWEEN EMPLOYEES AND THE PEOPLE THEY ARE EXPECTED TO SERVE, SAYS DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD.

"IT IS THE ATTITUDE OF EACH WORKER TOWARDS THE OTHERS, WHETHER OF THE SAME RANK, OR SUBORDINATE OR SUPERIOR," HE ADDS. "WORK IS NOT DONE AS A TEAM BUT RATHER AS INDIVIDUALS INTERESTED ONLY IN THAT PART OF THE WORK THAT INVOLVES THEMSELVES PERSONALLY."

IN AN ARTICLE ON QUALITY CONTROL IN GOVERNMENT IN THE LATEST ISSUE OF BULETIN INTAN, THE PRIME MINISTER DRIVES HOME THE POINT THAT QUALITY INVOLVES EVERYONE, THAT ONE MUST PUT QUALITY INTO WHATEVER WORK HE DOES JUST AS MUCH AS HE EXPECTS QUALITY IN SERVICE AND PRODUCTS FROM OTHERS.

HE SAYS WHILE NO MALAYSIAN IN HIS RIGHT MIND WOULD WANT TO SEE A MALAYSIA THAT IS ILL-MANAGED AND SHODDY, "THOSE SAME MALAYSIANS ASSUME THAT THE ONUS OF MAKING MALAYSIANS EFFICIENT AND QUALITY-CONSCIOUS REST WITH A FEW PEOPLE AT THE TOP."--MORE 1640/AJ

THE FACT IS THAT EVERYONE HAS A ROLE IN MAKING MALAYSIA A GREAT COUNTRY, AND "CERTAINLY GOVERNMENT SERVANTS HAVE A DEFINITE ROLE TO PLAY.

"SO LONG AS THE EMPLOYEES OF THE GOVERNMENT THINK ONLY OF THEIR INCOME, MALAYSIA WILL NOT BE A GREAT COUNTRY," HE ADDS.

"IT IS ONLY WHEN THESE PEOPLE ARE CONSCIOUS OF THEIR DUTY WELL THAT THE NATION WILL PROGRESS AND BEAT PAR WITH THE MOST POWERFUL COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD.

"MALAYSIA NEEDS QUALITY IN EVERYTHING. IT CERTAINLY NEEDS QUALITY IN THE SERVICE THAT THE GOVERNMENT PROVIDES."

THE PRIME MINISTER SAYS THE MOST FREQUENT COMPLAINT IS THE INABILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT STAFF TO SERVE THE PUBLIC WELL, AND THIS POOR SERVICE MAY BE DUE TO PLAIN LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT HOW TO GO ABOUT DOING THE WORK OR SHEER LACK OF COURTESY.

THIS, PLUS THE ATTITUDE OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES TOWARDS EACH OTHER AND THE PEOPLE THEY SERVE "CANNOT BUT RESULT IN A VERY POOR QUALITY OF SERVICE."--MORE 1648/AJ

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR GIVES INSTANCES OF HOW QUALITY FALLS THROUGH DELAYS AND PROCRASTINATION, HAPHAZARD WORK, AND UNCLEAR AUTHORITY OF THE PERSONNEL INVOLVED.

THE MOST URGENT NEED, HE SAYS, IS TO IMPROVE COUNTER SERVICE, WHERE EMPLOYEES MUST BE MADE CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED FOR QUALITY IN THEIR WORK AND BE RETRAINED TO ENSURE THAT A SUITABLE STANDARD IS MAINTAINED ALL THE TIME.

WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THE KIND OF TRAINING THAT THE MALAYSIAN AIRLINE SYSTEM INSISTS FOR ITS CABIN CREW MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR ALL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES SERVING AT COUNTERS, HE FEELS SOME ASPECTS OF THIS TRAINING SHOULD BE INCORPORATED IN THE TRAINING PROGRAMME.

HE RATIONALISES THAT IF IN THE UNITED STATES COUNTER SERVICE PERSONNEL ARE TRAINED TO SMILE AND SAY "HAVE A GOOD DAY," THERE IS NO REASON WHY AT LEAST THIS CANNOT BE DONE HERE.

"A 'SELAMAT DATANG' AND A SMILE FROM A CUSTOMS OFFICER AT THE AIRPORT CAN DO WONDERS FOR TOURISM AND THE IMAGE OF THE NATION," HE ADDS.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAYS AFTER COUNTER SERVICE PERSONNEL, THE NEXT MOST IMPORTANT GROUP ARE THOSE WHO HANDLE MATTERS DEALING WITH THE PUBLIC THOUGH THEY MAY NOT HAVE DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE PUBLIC, SUCH AS PROCESSING DOCUMENTS AND APPLICATIONS.--MORE 1653/AJ

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THE WORK IS LARGELY ROUTINE ALTHOUGH A NUMBER OF DECISION-MAKING STEPS ARE INVOLVED, AND IF THE EMPLOYEES ARE CONVERSANT WITH THEIR WORK THEN THE PUBLIC WILL BE EFFICIENTLY SERVED.

"BUT FREQUENTLY THE CORRECT FLOW OF WORK IS NOT KNOWN EITHER TO THE ACTUAL PERSONNEL OR THOSE WHO SUPERVISE THEM, AND THE RESULT IS INORDINATE DELAYS WHICH COST MONEY BOTH TO THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PUBLIC," DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR ADDS.

"GOOD QUALITY SERVICE MEANS PROMPT, COURTEOUS AND TROUBLE-FREE SERVICE THAT INCURS MINIMUM COST -- THERE SHOULD NOT BE EVEN A HINT OF CORRUPTION ANYWHERE."

HE STRESSES THAT WHILE QUALITY IS MOST NOTICEABLE WHEN THE PUBLIC IS INVOLVED IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT WORK WHICH DOES NOT INVOLVE THE PUBLIC CAN BE ALLOWED TO BE MEDIOCRE OR POOR.

ALL GOVERNMENT WORK MUST INVOLVE THE PUBLIC, AT LEAST INDIRECTLY, BUT EVEN IF THE INVOLVEMENT IS NOT OBVIOUS QUALITY SERVICE IS STILL ESSENTIAL FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY AND WELL.

"IT IS THEREFORE IMPRATIVE THAT EVERYONE IN GOVERNMENT FROM POLITICAL LEADERS TO THE LIFT ATTENDAT CULTIVATE QUALITY ASSIDUOUSLY IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR DUTIES," THE PRIME MINISTER ADDS - *BERMUDA*

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