

BRACE UP TO MEET THE CHALLENGES, SAYS DR M

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Civil servants should adopt an action-orientated attitude to face the challenges of the present era of international economic competition. Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said the period of waiting for opportunities to appear was over.

"The present period not only demands that we find new opportunities, but also to shape opportunities. To achieve this, we would need to have methods of thinking that are lateral and strategic." Dr Mahathir said at the launch of the Public Services Depart-

ment's 55th year celebrations.

He said heads of government departments would also need to have foresight or vision and the capability to plan effective strategies.

Dr Mahathir said external and internal factors and pressures affecting the administration of the country had to be identified and analysed to achieve effective strategic planning and management.

He said the measure of achievement of the public services could no longer be based on certain quantitative criteria like the ability to implement development in terms of the number of

personnel, total allocation, as well as the number of development programmes and projects.

He said the successful implementation of projects and effective management was more important.

"Unspent allocation is one of the measures of the level of achievement of the public services," he said.

As for the people, what was important was not plans and intentions but projects that were implemented to fulfil their needs and aspirations, he said.

Dr Mahathir also said efforts to modernise offices must continue, adding that old work systems needed to be studied and improved.

"Counter services, in particular, need to be given special attention as such services are where the people come in contact most with the public services," he said.

The physical appearance and the cleanliness of gov-

ernment offices must be maintained at all times to project a good image, Dr Mahathir said, adding that employees would also benefit from a clean working environment as they would be more comfortable while performing their duties.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir said that many middle and lower rung civil servants still did not fully understand the Malaysia Incorporated concept.

He said because of this lack of understanding the effects of implementing this policy had not been fully felt.

He said those in the private sector were still plagued with problems when dealing with the public sector.

"The core of the policy is the concept of close mutual co-operation between the two sectors, where the private sector would develop commerce and industry

while the public sector would draw up the main policies and provide support services," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he believed that the public services had made preparations to face the challenges of the time through careful strategic planning.

However, at the same time weaknesses must be corrected speedily, he added.

Dr Mahathir reassured civil servants that the privatisation policy was for the benefit of all.

He said that through the implementation of the policy, the container services in Port Klang, MAS, MISC and STM have been achieved.

Workers with organisations where privatisation had been carried out like Port Klang, MAS, MISC and STM had not lost out in any way, he said. Some had got even better pay schemes.

"At the same time, the services provided by these organisations have not been jeopardised but improved. The amount of taxes collected has also shown an increase," he said.

He added that this would mean that all sectors would be able to enjoy the benefits derived from the privatisation policy.

He said that with the reduced Government burden and enlarged coffers, the Government would be better able to give better wages and increase spending in other areas.

However, Dr Mahathir said, increased wages must be accompanied by higher productivity.

He said increased wages not matched by increased productivity would make the country uncompetitive in the economic market, which would eventually cause workers to suffer.