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Halim-Gifts

NO NEED FOR SPECIFIC CIRCULAR, SAYS HALIM

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 14 (Bernama) -- The government need not issue a specific circular on valuable gifts that should be declared to the Treasury by civil servants as there is already a standing instruction on the matter, Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Abdul Halim Ali said today.

He said it is obvious that all government officers must declare whatever valuable gifts they receive which can lead to wrong perception or interpreted as bribe.

There is already a standing instruction under the General Order, he told reporters after launching the logo of the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations, the institute's sixth anniversary celebrations and its Quality Day here.

He was asked on whether the government will issue a specific circular on the matter following Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed's statement last Saturday that all souvenirs received by politicians and civil servants should be sent to the Treasury to be valued.

Abdul Halim said there would not be a specific circular for the time being.

But it is clear that if somebody receives anything of value from anybody, the person has to declare it, he said.

"We will see...but obviously the spirit of that is, you receive something valuable, you have to declare and that rule, eventhough it has not been spelt out specifically..., but the intention of the rule is very clear," he said.

Earlier in his speech, Abdul Halim said Malaysia's proactive role at the global level in recent years has also imposed additional demands on Malaysian diplomats.

"Malaysia today is expected to make meaningful contributions in multilateral dialogues and negotiations on various issues. The moulding of a Malaysian diplomat however, need more than the acquisition of communication skills and multidisciplinary knowledge," he said.

Abdul Halim said the command of the English language and other foreign languages like French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Arabic is important for Malaysian diplomats.

Equally important is integrity and the upholding of high moral values, he said.

"All these elements should be flesh and blood of the new breed of Malaysian diplomats who are required to face the various challenges of a challenging occupation," he said.

In terms of the country's human resource development including diplomatic training, Abdul Halim urged the Foreign Ministry to take the initiative to implement the idea of making it mandatory for all categories of civil servants to undertake a certain training annually at various institutions within the country.

Meanwhile, the director-general of the institute, Ahmad Fuzi Abdul Razak, in his speech, said the number of participants of the institute increased from 119 in 1991 to 1,471 last year with the number of programmes also having increased from five to 55 and expected to increase to 71 this year.

He said that to further improve the academic prestige of the institute and pursuant of its basic objectives, a Master's programme in strategy and diplomacy was expected to be implemented next year.

Formal approval is also being awaited from the central agencies concerned to enable the institute to establish its own Research and Publication Division, he said.

The institute is also looking forward to moving to a new campus in Putrajaya or alternatively, to an appropriate location decided by the government, he added. -- BERNAMA

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