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## SSM briefing for civil servants

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Cuepacs and the Public Services Department will brief civil servants on the revised remuneration scheme, Sistem Saraan Malaysia.

Cuepacs president Datuk N. Siva Subramaniam said today the briefing for every Government department would be done before Nov 1 when the SSM takes effect.

"We hope to conduct a seminar for all union heads and executive council members next month.

"After that, we will go nationwide to all the civil servants," who, he said, would have full details on the revised scheme by September.

The New Straits Times approached some civil servants today for their views on the SSM, but most said they were unclear on the details as they had not received any circular informing them of the scheme.

Some, however, said the SSM sounded like a fairer deal as their advancement would no longer be solely in the hands of their department heads.

One woman, who requested anonymity, said the extra work to pass the appraisal examinations might be a burden but felt that the system overall was fair and placed the onus for career advancement on the workers.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced details of the SSM yesterday.

Under the current New Remuneration Scheme (SSB), performances were decided by heads of department only.

The number of advancements (through horizontal and vertical pay increments) was also limited to five per cent of civil servants.

The SSM abolishes the quota and the horizontal and vertical movements.

Instead, salary advancements will be determined by examinations, courses, annual assessment reports and recommendations.

The SSM will thus see the creation of examination boards and human resource panels in every ministry.

"It won't be just exams, but civil servants will be tested on the application of ideas. This will encourage them to improve themselves," Siva Subramaniam said.

On the human resource panels, he said they would replace the current salary adjustment panels and would be better equipped to handle staff and work problems.

"So far, the salary adjustment panel has been the judge, jury and executioner of the civil servants' performances."

The human resource panels would comprise government officials. Siva Subramaniam said the ministries would have to begin the process of setting up their panels soon.

He said the approval of the scheme was a big victory for Cuepacs, as the main problem of unfair assessments by superiors had now been finally addressed.

"The issue has never been about salary increments. The basic problem was that the other system was open to abuse by heads of department.

"Now power has been taken out of the hands of department heads.

"Assessments will instead be based on international principles, such as self-improvement and knowledge, which are important in globalisation."

The SSM also opens up the excellent service awards to more people. Eight

per cent of civil servants will be selected for the award annually and will receive RM1,000 and a certificate.

Selection criteria for the eight per cent will be drafted by the Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit of the Prime Minister's Department.

The awards will also no longer be tied to increments, unlike under the SSB, where only those who received horizontal or vertical pay increments were entitled to the awards.

The revised system also creates more prospects for promotions by having new salary schemes for graduates and non-graduates.

Siva Subramaniam said other "goodies" included a reduced confirmation period of between one and three years.

Those who take full-pay leave to study will still be entitled to salary increments.

The SSB, however, will not be abolished and civil servants will have the option of being under it or the SSM.

Most are expected to opt for the SSM.