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Charting strategies to realise noble objectives

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NEW Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has rightly proven he is sensitive to the people's needs when he performed his first official duty by distributing aid worth RM32 million to padi and livestock farmers affected by the floods in both Penang and Kedah.

The first official act of the new PM to render much-needed financial assistance to the rural poor and put a glow back on their faces was very significant.

It reflected very much the thoughts and deeds of a man at the helm of Government who is sensitive to the needs of the poor.

Addressing the issue of poverty and particularly the rural farmers affected by the recent flood disaster was certainly the right start for Pak Lah as the new PM as it clearly sent a message that he knew exactly what his priorities should be.

The new PM's call to the people to "work with him" and not "work for him" clearly signifies an era of a more consultative Government under his leadership.

His sincere and forthright statements portray a political leader who is very down to earth and realises the importance of touching base with the people.

It is hoped that Pak Lah's sincere commitment to work with the people will be emulated by his Cabinet colleagues, State administrations and the local authorities.

In a subsequent speech in Parliament while tabling a motion of thanks to Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the Prime Minister pledged to carry out his duties with integrity, trustworthiness, efficiency and fairness.

All Malaysians will look forward to see how he lives up to his pledge.

He has called on all legislators, administrators, political parties, the private sector, non-governmental organisations, the media and Malaysians from all walks of life to work with him to take Malaysia to greater heights.

I am glad that the PM concurs with me that the promotion of moral values among the young, a strong family institution, crime prevention and national unity are among the important issues his Government should focus in the days ahead.

His emphasis on providing quality service to the rakyat is also highly commendable. In this connection his call to cut red tape, fight corruption and strengthen the public service has evoked very positive response. What remains to be done is to chart the various strategies and put in place the various mechanisms to ensure the realisation of these noble objectives.

I have proposed to upgrade the Public Complaints Bureau into an ombudsman who can play the role of the citizen's friend and protector.

I also welcome the PM's proposal to set up the Malaysian Institute for Public Ethics.

Abdullah has also expressed his desire to set up special task forces to revamp and "re-engineer" all district and land offices as well as all local councils and authorities with a view to removing red tape and improving efficiency.

This is a very appropriate step as district and land offices as well as local authorities are frequented by the rakyat daily.