

## **Civil service freeze should be more than three months**

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The cabinet committee on employment and salaries in the civil service, chaired by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, should be congratulated for deciding to freeze the hiring and filling of vacancies for three months.

If this decision is in line with plans to rationalise the public service, then I think a longer freeze is necessary.

This will be in keeping with the need to reduce the large budget deficit, to reshape and revamp the bloated public service and to bring about greater efficiencies through a leaner service that is based on meritocracy and productivity.

The Government's Transformation Programme must start with a thorough review of the public service.

This has not been done for a long time. The review will have to cover the new role of the civil service as an innovator to enable it to function more effectively as an agent of change and transformation.

Hence forth recruitment must, like the earlier times, be based on more competitiveness and quality and should not serve to provide employment for those who can't compete for private sector jobs.

If the PSD is to audit all government departments and agencies to ensure they have enough staff, the PSD itself needs to get outside experts to audit itself, so as to avoid mal-administration as in the case of the recent scholarship fiasco.

Cuepacs also should cooperate with the government's efforts to streamline the civil service rather than to ask for another 100,000 employees to serve our people.

The ratio of our 1.2 million civil servants to our population of 27 million, is already high by international standards and we don't want to worsen the situation at the expense of the tax payer and the national budget.

The large budget deficits, low productivity, inadequate meritocracy and poor competitiveness and corruption are some of the factors causing inflationary pressure.

The public will fully back the government for taking a tougher stand to restructure and transform the civil service and not to pander to it for short term popular gains and long term losses to the whole economy, please.

The people should come first and the civil service must pursue that noble purpose by becoming more lean and efficient in better serving the public.

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