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# I've nothing to hide, says Hishammuddin

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Declaring he has nothing to hide, Education Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said claims on the misuse of funds by the Youth and Sports Ministry when he was the minister should be investigated thoroughly.

But he cautioned that any probe must be conducted fairly.

"It should be investigated. What's wrong is wrong. Action has to be taken against wrongdoers, including me if I have done wrong," he said yesterday when commenting on the awarding of contracts worth RM450 million and doubtful purchases for the National Youth Skills Institute in 2002.

Hishammuddin was the Youth and Sports Minister from 1999 to 2004.

It was reported that the ministry's secretary-general, only authorised to approve contracts which did not exceed RM5 million, was allowed to approve contracts worth RM449.42 million by the minister.

The Treasury, in its reply to the Auditor-General who highlighted various questionable expenditure by ministries and government departments in his 2006 audit report, stated that the youth and sports minister gave a letter of authority to the secretary-general to sign the contracts.

However, the Auditor-General said during the audit, "no such letter presented itself".

The Auditor-General also said the ministry paid RM8.39 million more than the market price for 13 items for the institute's programmes.

Among these were RM224 for a set of four screwdrivers costing RM32 in the market; RM5.72 million for two crane towers against the market price of RM2.98 million; technical books consisting of 10 titles priced at RM10,700; and a 3.1 megapixel digital camera that was bought for RM8,254.

Speaking to the *New Straits Times*, Hishammuddin, in an obvious reference to Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said's statement on Monday that the contracts dated back to 2002 before she was appointed to the post, said: "On the allegations, my advice to them is no matter where we are, all are jointly responsible under the same government."

Azalina had said that the purchase of equipment for the institute was done through direct negotiations by the ministry two years before she was sworn in as the minister.

She said the contracts were awarded under the Eighth Malaysia Plan and was under the supervision of Project Management Consultants (PMC).

Azalina said she was told the ministry had given its justification on the issue, adding she did not really understand the contracts neither was she involved in them.



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*Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein  
Education Minister*



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*Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said  
Youth and Sports Minister*