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VSS to 'keep govt servants on their toes'

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KOTA BARU: A voluntary separation scheme (VSS) for "problematic" civil servants is a good idea as it can also act as a deterrent to curb corruption, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

The move can be used as a reminder for civil servants to work hard, he said after launching the development plan for the 19th public university, Universiti Kelantan Malaysia (UMK), here yesterday.

The newest addition to the country's public institution of higher learning, the RM24mil campus is temporary situated at Taman Bendahara in Pengkalan Chepa.

It is scheduled to move into its permanent campus in Bachok and a satellite one in Jeli by 2010.

The university's inaugural intake comprises 268 students.

It is expected to have 2,500 students by 2010 and its main academic focus is entrepreneurship and linguistics studies.

On Thursday, Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Sidek Hassan had said VSS practised by the private sector should be studied.

He said the Public Service Department should have in place an exit policy that was very clear for problematic, indisciplined and underperforming civil servants.

Abdullah said he needed to get more details from Sidek's proposal before any concrete efforts could be taken to adopt it.

On Cuepacs' views that such a proposal was tantamount to punishing civil servants as many may face difficulty getting jobs in the private sector, Abdullah said:

"Previously, we have expelled those with problems. We took disciplinary action such as sacking. It is done for the greater good. We did early retirement schemes for some. We have taken action. It is only that we did not announce it through the media."

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said Sidek's proposal was a good one, adding that it was a "way out" for those who were no longer interested to serve in the public sector.

"The Government must study the implementation of the VSS very carefully. "They should also discuss with Cuepacs the details of the VSS such as the compensation and how they would implement the system.

"We do not want civil servants being marked problematic employees just because they make a small mistake. "We want civil servants to receive fair treatment," he said.

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DATUK SERI NAJIB TUN RAZAK