

# Steady rise in govt effectiveness

NST- 11/7/2007

**KUALA LUMPUR:** In a decade, Malaysia has only improved in the quality of its public services and the civil service, with five other aspects of governance lower than 1996 levels.

Malaysia's voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence or terrorism, regulatory quality, rule of law and control of corruption have dropped in the span of 10 years, according to the *Governance Matters 2007: Worldwide Governance Indicators 1996-2006* report released yesterday.

In all areas, scores over the 10 years fluctuated with no significant improvements, except for a slow but steady rise in the indicator titled "government effectiveness".

For government effectiveness, which measures the quality of public services and the civil service as well as the quality of policy formulation and the government's commitment to such policies, Malaysia is at 80.6 per cent, the highest level it has scored in a decade. In 1996, it scored 79.6 per cent.

The report, released by the World Bank's Development Research Group and the World Bank Institute, presents aggregate indicators based on 33 data sources which include

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Daniel Kaufmann  
Co-author of report

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survey institutes, think tanks, non-governmental organisations and international organisations such as Transparency International.

Released annually, the report this year provided a look at how countries improved or declined in a span of 10 years, beginning from 1996.

For voice and accountability, which measures the extent to which a country's citizens can participate in selecting their government, as well as their freedom of expression, association and media, Malaysia scored 39.2 per cent in 1996, and ended up at 38 per cent last year.

When it comes to political stability, Malaysia had been on the way up to 63 per cent in 2005 but this dropped to 58.7

per cent last year, scoring lower than 1996's 65.4 per cent.

In the area of promoting private sector development through sound policies under "regulatory quality", Malaysia improved from a drop in 2005 but, at 69.8 per cent, is still lower than the 80 per cent it scored 10 years ago.

Its score for rule of law stayed at 65.7 per cent for three years since 2004, which means the 71 per cent level in 1996 remains unbeaten.

As for control of corruption, the country sits at 68 per cent, an improvement from 2005. However, it is lower than the 73.3 per cent score in 1996.

Daniel Kaufmann, co-author of the report and director of global programmes at the World Bank Institute, said a number of countries was making progress in governance and fighting corruption.

He said bribery around the world was estimated at US\$1 trillion (RM3.45 trillion) and the "burden of corruption falls on the bottom billion people living in poverty".

This year's report, covering 212 countries, represents a decade-long effort by the researchers to build and update the most comprehensive cross-country set of governance indicators available to the public.