

Integrity, excellence key to better image, says PM

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PUTRAJAYA: Civil servants should go back to the basics of honesty, integrity and excellence to improve their image in the public eye.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said there was no substitute for these qualities in the making of a superior public service.

The prime minister said the only way to overcome negative perceptions of the public service was to continue highlighting the positive traits necessary of a civil servant.

"It's difficult to get rid of (negative) perceptions... you can't do that in just a day, even a year.

"They (members of the public) will not notice any positive changes that we bring about because of the perceptions they have. So, the best thing to do is to continue serving the people to the best of our ability."

He said good intentions would lead to quality work and efficiency and make the public service a force to be reckoned with and respected by all.

"Civil servants can stand tall and walk tall through quality decisions made and good services rendered to the masses," he said

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when addressing civil servants under the Internal Security Ministry.

Also present were his deputy ministers, Datuk Mohd Johari Baharum and Datuk Fu Ah Kiow, and Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Musa Hassan.

Abdullah, who is also internal

security minister, also touched on the public perception of the civil service following disclosure of the results of a poll by the Malaysian Chapter of Transparency International.

The poll showed that the public and corporate sectors ranked the police the lowest among government services in relation to integrity and transparency.

Abdullah said such reports and other issues affecting the police would give the public the impression that the police were in disarray. He said improvements and changes brought about by the police like shorter response time were not appreciated as they were overwhelmed by such perceptions.

On Budget 2008, he urged government departments and agencies to start preparing for it.

"It's already March and we should start preparing the required proposals for allocations.

"In doing so, we must analyse our plans and what is actually needed before the tabling of the budget in Parliament in September."

Abdullah stressed the importance of the proposals being supported by recommendations from central agencies such as the Treasury.

The allocations proposed

should propel the ministries and agencies to execute their plans for programmes and projects outlined for implementation next year.

On the Millennium Development Report by the United Nations, he said it had stated that Malaysia had succeeded in achieving the percentages set in many sectors.

But when it came to dadah abuse and addiction, Malaysia fell below the required score.

He said dadah problems in the country began in the early 1970s and numerous anti-dadah campaigns, including those by the 4B Movement, were carried out.

"The problems then were not that widespread and the people were not bothered but today it has become a problem."

Abdullah also reminded departments and agencies under the Internal Security Ministry to act fast upon receiving directives from the ministry.

"Decisions made by the ministry must be quality ones that are timely, so that there will be no delay in implementation by departments and agencies.

"We must be sincere in helping as we are dependent on one another. This is our intention and objective."