

Your duty to explain to the public, civil servants told

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KUALA LUMPUR: Government servants are duty-bound to provide explanations to the public on queries forwarded to them.

Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Mohd Sidek Hassan said civil servants should also justify the decisions made to ensure that people were satisfied.

"It is your responsibility to explain why a certain action had to be taken. You must also be able to justify as well as defend your decision on why you did not act on a matter," he said in a circular (dated March 9) sent to ministry secretaries-general, federal department heads and chief executive officers of statutory bodies.

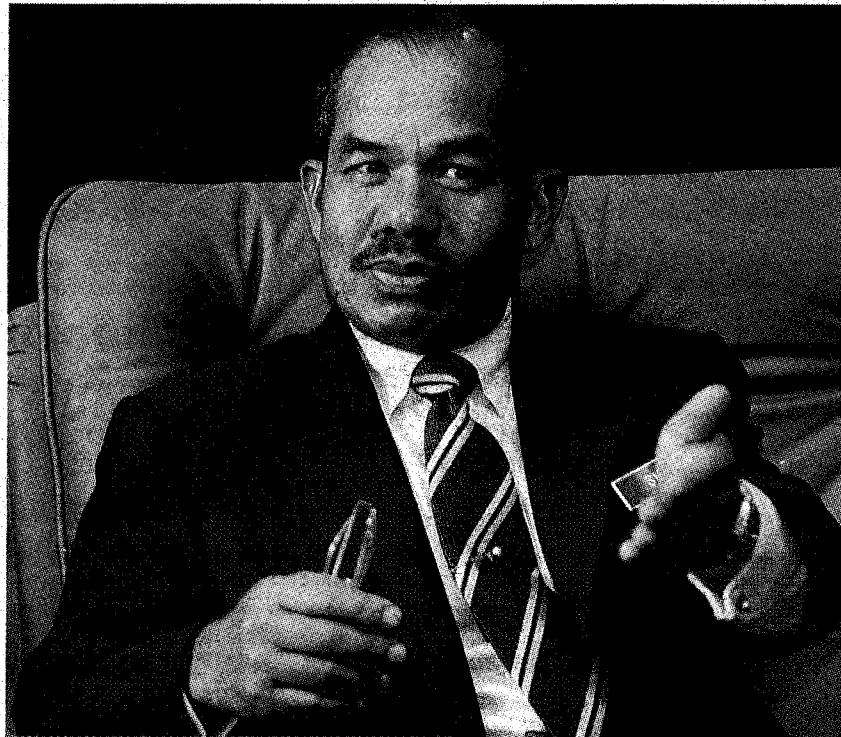
Sidek said the new provisions of "Guidelines to Enhance the Management and Administration of the Public Sector" were aimed at improving the public delivery system.

"These are important as we want the public to be confident that the government is able to implement all the policies announced as well as enhance accountability."

He said department heads should ensure that their subordinates understood this and abided by it diligently.

Department heads, he said, should show good leadership qualities and be committed in enhancing the public delivery system.

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sion, integrity, strategic thinking and a productive working relationship. He should inform his subordinates on the standards he wished to achieve."

Sidek said every agency should have an effective two-way communication channel to enable the public to give their feedback and rate their performance.

He said every agency should, among others, document:

- the powers and roles of secretaries-general, depart-

ment heads, executive officers, and board and committee members of statutory bodies;

- the objectives and roles of the administrative committees such as the Procurement Board, Account and Finance Management Committee, Human Resources Development Panel, and the Integrity Management Committee;

- the strategic operational plans to meet the objectives of the agency;

- the internal audits, where the management is responsible for taking measures to address problems; and

- detect and prevent fraud as well as attempts to defraud the agency.

Sidek said the new directive was important as it would ensure that all levels of the government — from the minister to the management staff — carried out their duties responsibly and were accountable for their actions.

"It is also a process to determine how an agency was managed and the responsibilities in carrying out its functions," he said, adding that civil servants should also be cautious when spending public funds.

The new directive will complement the instructions given under the Prime Minister's Order 1998 as well as the National Integration Plan 2004, which spells out measures to combat graft at all levels of the government.