

# Do we have more integrity now?

The Sun  
- 25/4/2007

“There should be that sense, at least noticeable among those who have attended courses at the National Integrity Institute, so that the public will recognise the plan as useful instead of it being seen merely as a gesture of the government’s good intentions.”

**THE** National Integrity Plan is now more than three years old. Even though the government says that it is still too early to expect noticeable changes in the level of integrity among the people, especially among government and private sector employees, the public no doubt wants to know whether there are actually any improvements at all, no matter how miniscule.

It is, of course, difficult to quantify such improvements but there should be at least a sense that there is change – that people are beginning to arrive for work on time, officers are more polite and some actually smile when approached, that they are a little bit more efficient and, therefore, do not require to be bribed before things get done quickly and that generally people get their money’s worth of the things they purchase.

An example is whether there is now a sense of commitment and honesty among teachers to educate their pupils and prepare them to be good citizens in a multicultural country. There should be that sense, at least noticeable among those who have attended courses at the National Integrity Institute, so that the public will recognise the plan as useful instead of it being seen merely as a gesture of the government’s good intentions.

While the general objective of the NIP is integrity building and making integrity accepted as a virtue by everyone, they should result in improved efficiency and reduced incidents of corruption among public and private sector employees and the people in general. If, instead, there is a sense that things have not improved at all it is an indication that all is not well with the plan.

Public Accounts Committee chairman Datuk Shahrir Samad says that a weakness of the plan is that it does not have a time line. Indeed without a time line it is quite difficult for the NIP to show any form of progress in integrity-building among the people of the country, including the politicians.

Speaking at a forum on “Integrity: The Way Forward in Malaysian Society” held in conjunction with the third anniversary of the NIP and the National Integrity Institute, Shahrir also reiterated his view that for the NIP to be effective it must come under the supervision of Parliament. But he said for parliament to be able to do that it must first be allowed to become an institution with integrity once again.

Indeed for democracy to be more meaningful the integrity of parliament must be restored.