

DATE: 11 / 12 / 2007

Abdullah: Civil servants secret of nation's success

NST- 11/12/2007

KUALA LUMPUR: Civil servants received a ringing endorsement from Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday for improving the public delivery system.

The prime minister said the progress achieved so far was commendable as it had boosted investor confidence in the nation.

"There is a lot less criticism about the public delivery system these days," he said, adding that investors were confident the infrastructure was in place to support progress.

He attributed this to the cordial working relationship between civil servants and the private sector to develop the economy.

Launching the triennial Congress of Unions of Employees in the Public and Civil Service (Cuepacs) convention, he said this was a far cry from earlier days when civil servants suffered from a negative image.

"Any mention of the public delivery system was, in fact, civil service bashing. We have all felt the pain."

Abdullah said this should not, however, stop civil servants from further improving the delivery system.

"We need to pick up momentum. What we want is a work culture that is even better, so that our public service delivery system will be ranked as one of the best in the world.

"This is not something impossible but something achievable."

Abdullah told the 500 union representatives that he had good reason to be at the event yesterday, not only to meet with Cuepacs leaders but also to thank the organisation for its hard work and sacrifices in mobilising the civil service over the past 50 years.

"I have never hidden the fact that one of the secrets of this nation's success is the faith, strength and sincerity of the members of the civil service in discharging their duties."

He said the government was aware of the working conditions in the civil service and was always prepared to reward civil servants with higher wages, bonuses or extensions in their retirement age.

"We have done this before. I think that we have been fair to civil servants and we will continue to be fair to all of you," he said to thunderous applause.

Abdullah then turned to Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Mohd Sidek Hassan and quipped: "I am noting the reaction."

Later, Cuepacs president Omar Osman said that Abdullah had advised him to discuss some of the civil servants' demands with Sidek.

These include an extension of the retirement age to 60 and pension grousers.