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# 4 benchmarks for civil service

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PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia must transform or risk becoming a failed nation.

However, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said transformation could only happen with the active participation of all stakeholders.

Also vital, he said, was an environment allowing key players to implement change and the readiness of everyone in embracing the culture of always reaching for above and beyond.

"An institutional and structural change can happen only when public leaders understand not only what must be done but also have the integrity, humility and determination to bring this nation forward.

"Malaysians can no longer be satisfied with the way things are," he said during the the inaugural lecture of the Razak Perdana Lecture Series

at the launch of Razak. School of Government (RSOG) here yesterday.

The prime minister said a world-class leadership was not merely about leading but also about inspiring others to follow suit. It also required the ability to make the right decision based on informed reasoning and an outcome-driven mentality.

"To do this, we need to cultivate a knowledge-based civil service. Thus, our immediate challenge is ensuring that talented and knowledgeable Malaysians will contribute towards the nation and making it a better place to live in."

Najib added that the quality of human capital and the civil service must be effectively measured to ensure that Malaysia was on the right path to becoming a high-income nation.

In underlining four benchmarks for the civil service, he said in ensuring transparency and accountability, it must not only provide for the demands and expectations of the

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public but must also include them in decision-making processes.

This, he said, was important as the people were the ultimate stakeholders of the government.

Secondly, the civil service must en-

sure that being receptive to change became its second nature. The service, he added, could only achieve competitiveness if it allowed competition to flourish within.

"Without a competitor, it is unlikely that we will be challenged. Thus, we will forever remain static."

Najib underlined merit-based advancement as the third benchmarking of the civil service, saying individual capacity and potential should be the operational yardstick to assess a public servant.

He said the tradition of promotions based on seniority and clique without taking into account one's performance, talent and potential should cease as Malaysia could not afford to have deadwoods and seat warmers in the public service.

On the fourth benchmark, he said it was crucial for those in the sector to gain knowledge.

"With the the advancement of information and communication tech-

nology, our public service cannot lag behind even for a moment.

"Lifelong learning should be the way of life for our public servants."

Najib said Malaysia needed to be a society-centric government, where the public's voice would be heard by the civil service, adding that listening to the rakyat was the best assessor to the quality of the public sector.

"The day where 'the government knows best' is over.

"The government must be able to feel the pulse of the citizens as it is no longer the absolute arbiter of wisdom but a respondent to the people's needs and demands."

On the establishment of RSOG, Najib said it was founded on two main thrusts: leadership and knowledge.

He said transformational leadership coupled with knowledge, capacity and capability was the golden formula for creating an environment that was conducive to effective problem solving and innovation.