

**Leadership Crucial For Culture of Innovation in Public Service - Ahmad Zahid
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PUTRAJAYA, Aug 20 (Bernama) -- Leadership plays a crucial role in creating a culture of innovation in the public sector to achieve lasting and meaningful change in the public service delivery system, said Malaysia's Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

He said leadership was vital for innovation initiatives in today's vibrant working conditions, with public sector leaders required to function with fewer resources and continually find new ways to tackle challenges.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also Home Minister, said leaders in public sector organizations need to capture best practices from other organizations, both in the public and private sectors, to drive innovation.

"Mobilizing new sources of ideas that are better suited to today's technologies, norms and expectations of the citizens will allow leaders in the public sector to respond coherently to ever increasing challenges," he said.

Closing the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) 2016 biennial conference at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre (PICC) here today, Ahmad Zahid stressed that creating a culture of innovation involved changing old mindsets and would take time.

He said challenges were the norm as an organization grows and that the management structures as well as bureaucracy, which are designed to channel growth, tend to create barriers.

"The commitment of establishing the right psychological conditions for innovation needs to start at the top, which means that leaders need to consider their own practices and their role in creating new processes and changing their organization's culture.

"Forging an organizational culture that promotes innovation, getting closer to customers to find out what they really need and directing innovation accordingly, is more important than ever," he said.

Ahmad Zahid said a high performance public service was a service with strategic clarity, solid execution, strategic resource management and performance-oriented organizational culture.

"Public service must be able to look ahead, forecast, scout and utilize new technologies to innovate the service delivery system," he said, adding that innovation was the key to the successful implementation of any government transformation initiatives today.

Ahmad Zahid pointed out that the Malaysian government had adopted an innovative approach through the National Blue Ocean Strategy (NBOS) in delivering improved touch point services to the people.

He said the NBOS had been very influential and effective in reducing operational costs of the public

service today besides fostering an innovation culture among government agencies.

Ahmad Zahid said he viewed the CAPAM biennial conference as a relevant mechanism to promote active exchange of ideas related to innovation in the public service among Commonwealth countries.

"I believe CAPAM can play an effective role in nurturing a culture of innovation in the public sector by hosting more forums to share best practices, particularly among Commonwealth nations," he added.

CAPAM was established in 1994 to facilitate the sharing of information and best practices between public administrations of Commonwealth countries, in addition to promoting good governance in the government.

This year's conference is themed 'Innovation: A Public Service Imperative'.

This is the third time Malaysia is hosting the conference after successfully organizing the event in 2014 and 1998.

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