

'Don't be afraid to admit mistakes'

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KUALA LUMPUR: The public sector cannot be in a state of self-denial and *its* has to improve if it is not up to mark, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said last night.

"We must admit our mistakes, so as to be aware of where we had gone wrong and to know how to improve," he told senior civil servants attending Public Sector Quality Awards 2006.

He added that the quest to improve the public service delivery system so that Malaysia becomes a developed nation was a race that had no finish line.

"More than 500 different government agencies have received the Public Sector Quality awards since its inception in 1991," he noted.

"This proves that there are agencies that have reached a stage where they can compete or have something good to offer.

"But even then, there are still complaints about the public service delivery system."

Abdullah said this was because frequent reports or "critical appraisals" targeting the public service delivery system gave the public the impression that there were problems.

"I have asked why this is so. I have asked myself 1,000 times. But I still cannot understand why," he said.

Abdullah said the quest to improve the public service delivery system was pertinent if Malaysia was to realise Vision 2020.

He said improving capacity and ability required continuous effort, and innovation and creativity would be the keys to success.

"We are in a race that has no end, with each success succeeding the next, chasing the objective of becoming a developed nation," he said.

Abdullah added that the public service sector also needed to ask if it was merely a victim of negative perception, and also to uncover of the causes of inefficiencies within the system.

"Are the few bad apples the ones causing all the problems? In all probability, yes," he said.

He said if that was the case, then everyone had to be perfect, or the country would be perceived negatively and considered undeveloped.

"If we have that kind of image, we must get rid of it."

Abdullah said Malaysia's name had to be improved, and urged the public sector to focus on their job and not get sidetracked with what people were saying.

He added that he would continue to work hard and that Malaysia must succeed, and the success had to be visible.