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# Keep the pace, PM tells civil servants

by **Husna Yusop**  
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Civil servants must carry on with the momentum set by the public sector to further improve its delivery system so that it is recognised as among the best in the world.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said this is not impossible but achievable looking at the progress achieved so far, compared with the time when "civil service-bashing" was very common.

"Now we hear very little of this bashing against the public service delivery system. But, despite the changes introduced, there is still a need to improve on our performance, efficiency and work productivity levels," he said in his address at the 24th Cuepacs triennial convention here yesterday.

"There is already a momentum. So, we must continue with it so that the speed will pick up.

"I want the momentum for improvement, change and reform to be instilled more aggressively in future."

Abdullah said the government has done a lot to improve the public delivery system and succeeded to, among others, reduce processing time, red tape and bureaucratic procedures.

"At one time, we used to hear complaints that the public service delivery system was always a headache, very slow, troublesome and making the public suffer most of the time. That was the picture or

perception that we always get," he said. "Being the prime minister, I felt hurt by this civil service-bashing as well because we are in this together."

He said a strong public sector will also boost the private sector, and this will result in more investors, enterprises and businesses coming into the country readily.

Earlier, in his speech, Cuepacs president Omar Osman made several requests, including an honorarium of RM2,000 each for all the 1.2 million civil servants, pensions to be calculated based on the years of service, an overhaul of the salary and allowance structure and extension of retirement age.

To this, Abdullah said the congress should bring these matters up with the Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Mohd Sidek Hassan.

He said the government had always looked into the problems and situations affecting civil servants.

"From those days until now, whenever the time is appropriate, there would be handouts, be it in the form of allowance, pay increase, incentives, bonus or extension of pension age. All these we have done. It is not as if we have not done it before.

"To be objective, the government has always been fair to the civil servants and will continue to do so in future."

He advised civil servants to value add their service and strength so that they will be respected and their ability recognised.

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