

19/06/2014 - Interaction Session with Participants Of Advanced Leadership and Management Programme (ALMP) Course Series 44

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim,

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh, Salam Sejahtera and Salam 1Malaysia.

Thank you YBhg. Dato' Abd. Malek bin Abdul Aziz, Ambassador of Malaysia to Jordan, the moderator for this session.

Yang Berbahagia Tan Sri Mohamad Zabidi Zainal,
Director-General of Public Service Malaysia;

Yang Berbahagia Dato' Dr. Sharifah Zarah Syed Ahmad,
Deputy Director-General (Development), Public Service Department;

Yang Berbahagia Dato' Seri Zainal Rahim Seman,
Deputy Director-General (Operations), Public Service Department;

Yang Berbahagia Dato' Dr. Mazlan Yusoff,
Director of INTAN;

Senior officials from the Public Service Department;

Yang Berbahagia Dato'-Dato', participants of the Advanced Leadership and Management Programme (ALMP) Series 44, No. 2/2014;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

OPENING REMARKS

1. First of all, thank you for inviting me to this interaction session and giving me the opportunity to be a part of the Advanced Leadership and Management Programme (ALMP) Series 44, No. 1/2014. I was informed that there are 37 participants from 15 Ministries and Agencies in this ALMP.
2. I have been invited to previous ALMPs held, and I always look forward to the honest and frank discourse that results from these sessions. Particularly, I would like to hear from all of you this evening, your thoughts, views and ideas on the future direction of the public service, especially when Malaysia will enter into the final lap of the transformation process towards Vision 2020.

LEADERSHIP AND INTEGRITY

Ladies and gentleman,

3. I would like to begin this evening's session with some insight on "Leadership and Integrity". In 2012, the **Center for Creative Leadership (CCL), United States of America** conducted a research on leadership and integrity, which examined the **importance of character strengths** in the performance of leaders in organisations.
4. The research examined the character strengths of **integrity, bravery, social intelligence** and **perspective at work** among 246 mid-level managers and 191 top-level executives in USA, and yielded some surprising results. Among the findings are:
 - a. **The character strength** viewed as most important for performance for **top-level executives was integrity**. Bravery was a close second;
 - b. for **mid-level managers**, the most important character strength was **social intelligence**; and
 - c. when all the four character strengths were examined together, it was found that **integrity has less to do with the performance of mid-level managers**.

5. The study found that job promotion is performance-based, and organisations are not aware that **integrity is also a crucial character strength** needed in the higher levels of management. Failure to address this aspect can bring about a negative and devastating impact, especially when organisational and public scandals occur.
6. Given this scenario, how can organisations increase the chances of developing leaders with integrity? According to CCL, there are **three main rules** to be adhered to.
 - i. **Emphasise Integrity In The Talent Pipeline**
 - o CCL's research shows that integrity is a pre-requisite for **mid-level managers when they reach top-level positions**. Therefore, we need to help the mid-level managers understand the importance of integrity in discharging their duties and the decisions that they make.
 - ii. **Walk The Talk — At Work And In Life**
 - o **Top-level management set the direction and they model normative behaviour**. They are the driver, energizer and navigator of their organisations. If the top leaders fail to embrace integrity and do not epitomize integrity in reality, then we can be quite sure that their followers are not likely to care much about integrity either.
 - iii. **Make Time For Feedback**
 - o There is hardly a free moment for executives and managers. But to understand character strengths, executives and managers need to **take time and ask for feedback** from peers, direct reports, managers and supervisors. Another finding from CCL's research was that **top-level leaders tend to overrate their own integrity compared to how their direct reports rate it**. In other words, leaders may not even know they have problems with integrity

when they reach the top level. Therefore, it is important that managers and executives receive comprehensive, timely and honest feedback.

7. Having said all this, I strongly urge all of you here who have been selected to participate in this course to reflect on the points I have highlighted. In our endeavour to build a better civil service, I hope that you will be instrumental in allowing your officers to excel, guided by values and a high level of integrity in their respective areas of work. Your role is important because you are shaping the future generation of leaders for our civil service.

ENHANCING INTEGRITY IN THE MALAYSIAN PUBLIC SECTOR

Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. As senior representatives of the civil service, it is imperative that you exhibit high standards of **integrity and accountability**. Accountability and integrity are two of the most important qualities in any organisation especially within the context of a citizen-centric public sector. With the *rakyat's* voice growing more strident over what they perceive to be negligent and fraudulent acts by public officials that result in billions of public funds being squandered, demands for accountability and integrity have grown to a clamour that cannot be ignored.
9. Officers with high moral character and integrity is an important component in the equation to strengthen service delivery. Being civil servants is not just about being efficient in discharging your duties but also upholding your moral integrity by rejecting corruption and abuse of power. Therefore, senior officials, you must uphold integrity of the public service at all times. John Adams, the second president of the United States of America, aptly said **"Society's demands for moral authority and character increase as the importance of the position increases"**. It is your responsibility as head of departments and divisions to ensure that integrity is upheld at all times.
10. The Government views seriously the issues highlighted in the 2013 Auditor-General's Report. A special committee chaired by me has been established to

investigate and take stern action against errant civil servants in order to enhance confidence of the rakyat as well as uphold the image and credibility of the public service. The **public service is being scrutinised like never before**, and as recent as last Tuesday, 17 June 2014, a press conference with members of the media was held on matters related to the AG's Report. Hence, I cannot but stress on the importance of upholding the integrity of the service in dispensing our duties.

11. The Public Service Department (JPA) is investigating and taking action on cases of non-compliance with financial procedures including procurement, while the Malaysia Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has also started investigation cases for prosecution. The Government has also established an **Integrity Management Unit** in every ministry to increase compliance and adherence to government procedures. I hope that you will constantly remind yourself and your colleagues to never compromise on the integrity and credibility of our service, as we cannot afford our image to be tarnished.

ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS

Ladies and gentlemen,

12. I would like to bring you now to the concept of "**Merakyatkan Perkhidmatan Awam**" or loosely translated as "Humanising the Public Service" which was introduced in 2012. There are six principles of equal importance under this concept, but I would like to focus on just one of the principles this evening, that is the partnership between the public and private sector, and NGOs.
13. We must not only leverage on the strengths of the different Ministries and Agencies and enhance collaboration through the **National Blue Ocean Strategy**, but also work together with the private sector and civil society

towards strengthening the public service delivery mechanism. To excel and perform, we have to work with others, leveraging upon strengths and expertise. Davis and Spekman in their publication, *The Extended Enterprise* stated that **“You can’t compete and win alone. Today, constellations of firms ally against each other... and the firm that stands alone, may fail alone.”**

14. Similarly, Kenichi Ohmae, an internationally renowned Japanese guru who is known for his thinking about strategy promulgates the importance of alliances. Likewise, for a nation to be in a momentum toward success, the public sector alone cannot sustain the achievements for long without the support of the private sector and the people, including non-governmental and community-based organisations.
15. There is a need for all of us to **work together as a team to solve interdependent problems** – problems that no one entity can solve alone. There must be shared responsibility among various stakeholders and constituencies. Therefore, I urge all of you to move ahead in synergy to meet the expectations of stakeholders and the *rakyat*.
16. I wish to also emphasise that it is important for you to actively engage with the stakeholders and the citizens that you serve. Civil servants should reach out and engage the citizens in a **co-production effort** to understand the needs or interests of the public. Co-production refers to delivering public service in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families and neighbours with the aim of making better use of each other’s assets and resources to achieve better outcomes and improved efficiency. Always remember to embody the commitment of **“People First, Performance Now”**.

CLOSING REMARKS

Ladies and Gentlemen,

17. As we look forward, we see the winds of change upon us. We are a public sector in transformation, with the Public Service Department and Ministry of Finance leading the way, and there is no doubt that we need to change in order to respond to governance challenges. Upon returning to your respective organisations, I would like to see yourselves becoming not only effective managers, but also good leaders, with the ability to create and effect positive change. Think about what it is that you can improve, and develop your people to achieve this shared idea.

18. Last but not least, I would like to thank INTAN for organising the ALMP course, and I look forward to hearing your views and ideas after this.

Thank you. Wabillahitaufik Walhidayah Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.