

Penyampai : TAN SRI DATO SERI AHMAD SARJI BIN ABDUL HAMID
Tajuk : THE FUNCTION TO PRESENT THE MANAGER OF THE YEAR AWARD 1993 BY THE HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL ALUMNI CLUB OF MALAYSIA
Lokasi : THE REGENT HOTEL KUALA LUMPUR
Tarikh : 24-11-1993

I would like to thank the Harvard Business School Alumni Club of Malaysia for inviting me to address you tonight. This invitation to me as President of the Harvard Club of Malaysia is a testimony to the close cooperation which should be fostered between our two clubs. It is sometimes very difficult to deliver an after-dinner speech.

A reporter once asked Winston Churchill what in his life he finds the most difficult test. Churchill replied: "To climb a ladder leaning towards you, to kiss a girl leaning away from you, and third, to give an after-dinner speech". I am in the third situation, because I am confident that I could have beaten the old statesman with regard to the second.

The Harvard Business School Alumni Club by presenting an award for "Manager Of The Year" at this annual function is setting a good tradition indeed. May I take this opportunity to offer my heartiest congratulations to the winner of this year's award whose name will be added to the list of managers of distinction who have been the previous recipients of this award. The availability of high-calibre managers is a critical factor for success in our endeavour to develop and sustain an economy that is fully competitive, dynamic, robust and resilient. My own Harvard Club of Malaysia is fully committed not only in providing training in the field of management of business and finance, but in the field of ethics and values as well. The Harvard Club of Malaysia, with the participation of the Harvard Business School has conducted two training programs in "project appraisal and risk analysis management, and a seminar on "business ethics". The topic for our annual Prime Ministerial speech this year was on "a moral and ethical society". We fear the crook in modern business, as well as the honest man who does not know what he is doing. Ethics in business is important. Wealth without work, knowledge without character, and business without morality are deadly sins we should avoid. I have been requested to speak this evening on the Malaysia Incorporated Policy and how it has helped Malaysia's businessmen in dealing with the Civil Service.

Since the year 1983, the Malaysia Incorporated Policy has become the major means by which cooperation and collaboration between the civil service and the private sector is fostered in the furtherance of economic development of the nation. The synergy resulting from this mutually reinforcing relationship is acknowledged to have, in many ways, contributed to our competitive edge.

Significant civil service support for private sector initiatives over the past few years has produced satisfying results, such as the establishment of new markets for local businessmen, facilitation of more rapid response to trade and investment opportunities and increased business resulting in spin-offs such as increased employment opportunities and revenue. Under the Malaysia Incorporated Policy, the civil service assumes a more dominant stance in its role as a facilitator to private sector development. A good example is the establishment of the electronic data interchange. The Malaysia Incorporated Policy has also brought about some fundamental changes to the attitudes of civil servants and the approaches deployed by them. Now, civil servants are required to be more service-orientated and customer-focused as well as more proactive in identifying and resolving the problems faced by the private sector. Efforts are now being intensified to ensure that the necessary attitudinal changes also take place among the lower ranks of the civil service. The successful implementation of Malaysia Incorporated requires the participation of all employees in the departments and agencies of government.

The major focus of our administrative reforms is on improving quality and productivity in government departments and agencies. Conscious of the positive relationship between information technology and quality, computerisation and office automation is being accelerated to expedite service delivery. Within the last two years alone, the value of computers approved by the Government for various departments has exceeded RM 400 million. Priority has been given to those departments which have regular dealings with the trade and business sectors. Emphasis is also being given to the streamlining of rules, regulations

and procedures especially those pertaining to business and investment, and to expedite the issuing of licences and permits and other approvals. Some of the measures implemented include the use of composite application forms, the issue of composite licences, the extension of validity of licences, abolition of outdated and irrelevant licences and the establishment of one-stop payment/service/licensing centres. To date, the Government has established 1,293 one-stop payment centres and 152 one-stop service centres throughout the country, providing a variety of services to the public.

The Government has also launched the Public Services Network, a cooperative enterprise between the PNB, the Post Offices and government agencies wherein a few government agencies offer certain services on-line to businessmen and the general public using the computer and network facilities installed at post offices. The services which are available at the PSN include the renewal of driving licences and road tax, payment of traffic compounds, renewal of business licences and others.

In the spirit of Malaysia Incorporated, the civil service has also produced a book entitled Dealing With The Malaysian Civil Service this year. This book contains valuable information on the profiles of various Government Ministries and departments which have regular and major dealings with the private sector. The information contained include details such as the objectives, organisation structures and functions of the departments, the laws administered by them, the rules, regulations and procedures governing the application for and approval of various permits and licences, and incentives and exemptions available for business ventures. In this book, the time taken for processing and decision-making are also expressly committed by departments and agencies. This illustrates the ethos of accountability and responsiveness in the civil service.

The most current initiative in providing better services to the private sector is the Civil Service Link or CSL which will be launched early next year. The CSL is a one-stop, on-line information centre that will be a repository of a variety of data and information pertaining to the civil service. It is expected to be operational by next year and aims to provide information service to local as well as foreign businessmen and investors. Among the information planned to be stored in the CSL are the types of services provided by the various Government departments for the commerce and industry sector, procedures for obtaining permits and licences, taxation rates and regulations, and the incentives made available by the government. The CSL is expected to be on-line eventually to overseas locations as well. When fully operational, I am sure that the CSL will certainly be able to fulfil a critical need of the business sector.

Among the most significant of the administrative improvement initiatives taken by the civil service recently has been the launching of the Client's Charter in June this year. The Client's Charter, as you are probably aware, is a written commitment on the part of a department about the quality of the service or product that its clients can expect. This commitment or promise will be prominently displayed for the information of the clients. Should there be a shortfall in the promised quality of the service or product, a recovery mechanism is also made available for remedial action. Feedback on the implementation of the client's charter is significant. The civil service with the cooperation of the appropriate Chamber of Commerce will hold an annual joint workshop or seminar to discuss the client's charter in the spirit of Malaysia Incorporated.

There has been very valuable feedback from the private sector on areas of shortfall or weaknesses in government departments. The civil service is appreciative of such constructive criticisms and suggestions on ways to improve the service delivery of departments and agencies. For instance, I am in receipt of the annual Business Assessment Survey carried out by the Malaysian International Chamber of Commerce (MICCI) which provides the specific feedback on the performance of line agencies which affect business operations, such as the speed of approvals. This is well appreciated, since the civil service will be better able to identify specific areas for remedial action when the feedback is specific and implies a general problem, rather than an individual problem.

Sufficient fora for consultations, discussions and collaboration have been established to provide the platform for the private sector to voice its views formally as well as informally to its counterparts in the civil service.

Government Departments which have regular dealings with the private sector have established joint consultative panels.

The Malaysia Incorporated Officials Committee which I chair, is a consultative committee which discusses and identifies concrete programmes for action, between the chambers of commerce, industries associations and business councils and the civil service. Some of the issues which we discuss are rules and regulations and procedures, and the shortfall in the quality of services which the civil service provides to the citizens.

The civil service in Malaysia is thus no longer an isolated institution. The Malaysia Incorporated concept has taken in a number of new dimensions. Selected officers may participate in attachment programmes in companies chosen by the respective chambers of commerce and industry and by multi-national companies. There is participation by civil servants in seminars, workshops, conferences, dialogues and in games and sports organized by the private sector and vice versa. The potential benefits of the attachment programmes is to provide opportunities for civil servants to gain managerial and entrepreneurial experience outside the bureaucracy and to enable their departments to benefit from the knowledge and expertise acquired by the officers. It is important that civil servants should be seen to be above any suspicion of impropriety. A tight code of conduct is required to prevent the erosion of public confidence in the traditional impartiality of the civil service, especially in a world where the public and private sectors increasingly interpenetrate.

The conduct of all civil servants is subject to the laws of the land. The Official Secrets Act 1988 restricts the disclosure of official information. A professional value which all civil servants must hold dearly to is the ethic of secrecy and confidentiality of official information. It is an offence under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1957 for a civil servant corruptly to accept any gift or consideration or an inducement or reward, and there have been many prosecutions under this Act. Since a penumbra of uncertainty has arisen on the proper conduct of public officials, within the framework of Malaysia Incorporated, the civil service will be producing a book entitled Upholding The Integrity of the Public Service, early next month.

At most dinners, you'll find more after-dinner speakers than after-dinner listeners. Many a speaker exhausts his audience before he exhausts his subject. I am also reminded of the three secrets of success in public speaking: be sincere; be brief; be seated. So I would like to end my speech by saying that the Malaysia Incorporated Policy is the umbrella which can create an effective nexus for both the civil service and the private sector to work in tandem towards a common future. The almost confrontational attitude of the civil service in the past towards the private sector and vice versa should be put to an end and that we should cooperate under the Malaysia Incorporated concept.