

Penyampai : TAN SRI DATO SERI AHMAD SARJI BIN ABDUL HAMID  
Tajuk : THE LAUNCHING OF THE MIM PUBLICATION 'UNDERSTANDING THE MALAYSIAN WORKFORCE',  
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I would like to thank the Malaysia Institute of Management for inviting me this afternoon to officiate the launching of the book 'Understanding the Malaysian Workforce'. The Malaysian Institute of Management should be congratulated for its efforts in publishing this book which attempts to suggest guidelines to handle our multi-ethnic and multi-religious workforce. Latest labour statistics show that more than 6.7 million are being employed.

Malaysia has a relatively young labour force; about 35% are in the 20-29 age group. Labour shortages faced by industries have arisen from several causes, namely from the rapid expansion of industry, changes in technology, and movement of skills within and outside the industry. The rapid expansion of the manufacturing sector and the large inflow of foreign investments in recent years have accentuated the problem of skills shortages. Changes in technology have contributed to shortages in skills as a result of the adoption of new technologies by industries.

In areas where particular skills are in short supply, workers move in search of better working conditions and wages. To meet the demands for skilled labour in the years ahead, the Government has often urged the private sector to complement the efforts of the Government by establishing more training centres and facilities to ensure a steady supply of skilled manpower for the nation. As an example, trade associations are encouraged to set up training centres to cater for their own specific needs for skilled manpower.

The Malaysian workforce must always be concerned with national interest, and to understand that wage adjustment must be related to productivity increases. Poor productivity is not always the fault of the worker. His efforts can be lost through scheduling programs, unclear assignments, improper staffing, and poor discipline.

Productivity lost cannot be regained. It is like a hotel.

If a room is not rented for the night, you can't make that money up. We can't inventory idle hours. If people are not working, the billing opportunity is lost.

Successful stories of nations leaping into developed country status has as the anchor, the presence of a strong work culture. A positive attitude towards work, a sense of commitment, dedication and industry and a work culture based on shared values and beliefs that transcend every work place has been the cornerstone of successful enterprises. Our workforce must be imbued with the values of quality consciousness, productivity, timeliness and the constant pursuit for learning and innovation. The endless quest for excellence is essential to ensure our continued competitiveness in the global context.

At the same time, the managerial workforce must be bound by professionalism in work which forms the very foundation of an excellent work culture. In any profession there must be an established set of ethical values and behaviour that is accepted by all of its members.

Efficiency, expertise, integrity and accountability are the pervasive ethos subscribed by all professional bodies.

Professionalism is also an internalized duty to do well. It is a kind of performance ethic by which professionals simply are called to do their best.

The basic soundness and strength of Malaysian investment environment are the result of the conducive and harmonious labour- management relationship. We pride ourselves that, on the whole, that industrial relations in Malaysia have been cordial and peaceful with no major industrial disputes. This has contributed to Malaysia's competitive edge and we want to maintain this harmonious environment.

Consultation and conciliation between employers and employees must continuously be encouraged and nurtured.

This book is an important complement to a book entitled *Dealing with the Malaysian Civil Service* which was launched recently. As you are aware, one of the important factors which contributes to the competitiveness of Malaysia is the civil service. In the context of Malaysia incorporated, there need to be a good nexus between the private sector and the civil service. A proper and correct relationship is desirable between the executives of both sectors. In order to bridge the information gap with regard to the proper conduct and discipline of civil servants, which are enshrined in the various Acts of Parliament, the general orders and various other circulars issued from time to time, a book entitled *Upholding the Integrity of the Civil Service* is now being prepared. It is hoped that with the release of this book, the interaction between the civil service and the private sector will be conducted in a proper and correct manner, that the integrity of the civil service will be maintained at all times. One of the most valuable assets of the nation is a well disciplined, and a civil service with high integrity. The civil service welcomes the inputs of the MIM, in terms of ideas and suggestions, which will lead to the efficiency of the civil service.

I must congratulate Yang Amat Berbahagia Raja Tun Mohar bin Raja Badiozaman and the Malaysian Institute of Management for the publication of the book *Understanding the Malaysian Workforce*. This book will greatly contribute to the understanding of the dynamics of our multi-cultural workforce. On this note, it is with the greatest pleasure, that I launch *Understanding the Malaysian Workforce*.