

Penyampai : TAN SRI DATO SERI AHMAD SARJI BIN ABDUL HAMID
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1. It is indeed a great pleasure for me to be here this evening to participate in the memorable occasion of your Appreciation Dinner & Turnover Ceremonies. I wish to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) for appointing me to sit on the Board of Governors. It is a great honour to be on the Board of Governors of a renowned institution of higher learning such as the AIM, a leading management institution of international standing in Asia and the only non-US school in the top-five 'Best MBA Schools'. Given this opportunity, I hope I can contribute to the best of my ability to this prestigious organisation. It is also my hope that my involvement with AIM will be of benefit to the Malaysian Public Service.

2. The Asian Institute of Management, as the name connotes, is committed towards making a difference in sustaining the growth of Asian societies by developing professional, entrepreneurial, and socially responsible leaders and managers, all of them united with the common aim of achieving excellence in their organisations. In this context, I wish to mention here that the quest for excellence in service delivery has been the driving force that has moved the Malaysian Public Service to introduce a range of administrative reform programmes.

3. Being directly involved in various administrative reform programmes, I foresee the pressing need to establish effective collaborations and exchange of ideas between the public service and management institutions such as AIM. This is particularly so in areas related to public management. Institutions such as AIM serve as an excellent source of new ideas and broader perspectives, which need to be taken into account by civil servants seeking to update themselves on government policies and programmes. In the course of their everyday work, practitioners are often too preoccupied with immediate priorities to be fully aware of new developments and ideas in a wide range of relevant disciplines. Hence, working closely with management institutions can provide valuable insight for these practitioners to further enhance their effectiveness.

4. On the other, the management institutions can also benefit immensely from the closer collaboration with the public service. The practitioners from the public service can provide a practical perspective to give a greater sense of relevance to the courses and programmes of the management institutions.

5. The role of AIM has become even more significant in view of the booming economies of Asia and the ever increasing pace of globalisation .

The current strength of AIM lies in its practitioner- oriented programmes designed to develop exemplary global managers whose skills, knowledge, and attitudes are relevant to Asian conditions, values and sensibilities. These programmes that hinge on participatory modes of learning expose the students to actual business situations in Asia and all over the world. The graduates who emerge from these programmes are equipped with fresh insights on universal management issues, Asian business practices, and on establishing effective business networks. This orientation provides a strong foundation for Asian managers to take on the challenge of succeeding in the fiercely competitive environment.

6. Asia with its diverse cultures and workforce is a challenge to any manager to prove his worth.

Unlike his Western counterpart, the Asian manager places more emphasis on the softer side of management, that is, the human side where building relationships, compromise, and seeking consensus, are important and given due consideration in the quest to meet organisational goals. Building relationship and seeking consensus create an environment of harmony and cooperation in the organisation. The success of the Japanese is precisely because they have the wisdom to pick and choose the better practices of the West and blend them with their own culture and values, but without losing their own sense of identity.

7. The increasingly multi-cultural and multi- ethnic organisations in the booming economies of Asia call upon institutions like AIM to develop managers who are able to communicate with sensitivity and mindfulness. The managers need to know the art of cross-cultural or inter-cultural communication in order to ensure that conflicts and tensions are not created in the organisation.

8. It is inevitable that to remain effective and efficient, an organisation has to continuously respond proactively to the changing needs of the environment. Reactive and incremental changes are no longer adequate to meet these environmental demands.

This pre-requisite is imperative not only to the private but also to the public organisations. We, in the public service have embarked on conscious efforts to effect continuous improvements in the quality of service delivery. These efforts have led to a paradigm shift that is premised on a set of shared values, encompassing a comprehensive approach to making incremental and lasting changes in the structural and behavioural dimensions.

9. Our relentless efforts have led the Malaysian Public Service to a higher level of performance.

However, we believe that there is much more room for further improvement. In this respect, the Malaysian Public Service is now taking a bold step by seeking to adopt the internationally accepted ISO 9000 series of standards. It is our view that the successful implementation of these standards will provide a comprehensive framework for continuously improving the quality of our management system.

10. The administrative reform efforts undertaken so far in developing a customer-oriented public service have already laid the groundwork for the public service to adopt these standards. These reform efforts encompass initiatives such as the preparation of Quality Manuals, Manual of Work Procedures, Desk File, Clients' Charter, Service Recovery System, Checklists, Quality Control Circles, Feedback System and the System of Recognition and Rewards. We are confident that these reform initiatives have placed the Malaysian Public Service in the position to successfully implement the ISO 9000.

11. In initiating and leading the various administrative reform programmes in my capacity as the Chief Secretary to the Government, I have learned a great many lessons. I wish to share these lessons with my esteemed colleagues in the AIM Board of Governors and together work for the greater glory of AIM.

12. In conclusion, once again, I wish to express my sincere thanks to AIM for this honourable position in the Board of Governors.