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Bismillahir rahmanir rahim

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh

Good Evening

Y. Bhg. Tan Sri Ismail Adam
Director-General of Service,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank INTAN and the Harvard Club of Malaysia for organising this Advanced Management Development Programme. This programme is a reflection of the Malaysian Government's commitment towards enhancing human capital development, and specifically that of the Malaysian public sector.

2. This programme, an initiative of the National Implementation Task Force, chaired by YAB Perdana Menteri Dato' Seri Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi, aims to enhance the quality of the Malaysian civil service by providing a world class learning experience to a cross-section of senior and middle management of the public sector.

3. The Government has, over the years, sent a number of top civil servants to Harvard to attend a similar programme. Because of the cost constraints the numbers sent to Harvard were limited. However, the Prime Minister himself decided that more should benefit from such a programme and thus INTAN was tasked to collaborate with the Harvard Club of Malaysia to bring some of the best minds from the Harvard's Business and Kennedy Schools to Malaysia to share their experience and expertise with the Malaysian civil servants. This programme will provide public sector participants the opportunity to challenge themselves and enhance their competencies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. For Malaysia to ride the crest of global economic development, the country needs a civil service that is not only efficient but also effective. The role of the public sector is not only to lead in policy development, but it must also be facilitators in economic development, and manage the implementation of the strategic and development plans the Government has put in place. It is for this reason that there is this focus on capacity building for senior and middle level public sector officials. This is to ensure that a high level of competency is maintained at all times in the public sector.

5. I want to congratulate participants here today for being selected to attend this Advanced Management Development Programme. You were chosen not only because of your performance, but also and more importantly, for the potential you have. The Government is investing in you because you have the potential to make a difference!

6. This Advanced Management Development Programme was selected because it is designed to enhance our thinking, managing and problem solving capabilities. It provides a challenging, interactive and experiential learning environment. The programme will also involve working through case-studies and engaging in much sharing, as well as peer and group coaching. I know that towards the end of your programme you will be required to develop your own action plans for implementation of the ideas

obtained from this programme as well as for your own continued learning and growing.

7. I don't intend to lecture much on the do's and don'ts in this programme. My advice to all is that we take advantage of this opportunity to interact with the professors who have been invited to work with us: Professors Quinn Mills, Robert Behn, Stephen Bradley, Rafael Di Tell, Herman Dutch Leonard, James Sebenius and Nabil N El-Hage. Keep them occupied with the questions and run ideas pass them and ask for feedback. In essence, this is a programme where we get only as much as we put in. It will be a test of our learning spirit.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. You are here because BUSINESS IS NOT AS USUAL in the public sector. Given the kind of competition Malaysia is up against, especially from emerging economies, the public sector must get out of its comfort zone; get out of its box. It is time to review the way it has been operating. It is time to ask whether what has been or is being done is relevant or necessary in this competitive landscape. This is the kind of healthy curiosity that I want to see across the Malaysian civil service. Unless we dare to ask "Why" and challenging the status quo there can be no motivation for improvements and change in the way we work.

9. The Malaysian civil service must be the best. And it can only be the best if it is constantly in a learning mode. The Government is a partner in this because this is an investment worth making. Use this opportunity for a retreat in order to renew and refresh and to advance; an avenue to get and share new ideas and develop new insights; AND CHANGE!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

10. I would like to express my appreciation to Tan Sri Lin See Yan, Dato' Abdullah Mat Zaid and Mr CK Fong of the Harvard Club of Malaysia and Charles River Centre for lending their support to INTAN in putting in place this programme.

11. To the Professors from Harvard, I bid you welcome to Malaysia. I am sure you will enjoy the cool air in this place. Not sure though, if you will have the time to enjoy the golf course here.

12. I wish all participants and professors from Harvard a fruitful learning experience.

13. On that note, with Bismillahir rahmanir rahim, I declare open the Advanced Management Development Programme.

Thank you.