

PM: Civil service must be relevant to the times

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PUTRAJAYA: Civil servants need to be more creative in implementing policies which should also become more people-friendly over time, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said yesterday.

The prime minister said services rendered to the people need to be relevant to the times, especially with daunting challenges facing the country.

He said outdated work procedures and unfriendly systems needed to be reviewed so that they could take the civil service to new heights.

Abdullah said this when speaking to about 1,500 civil servants, including former directors-general of Public Services Department, who turned up for the department's 75th anniversary celebrations at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre.

Former PSD directors-general present included Tan Sri Dr Abdullah Ayub, Tan Sri Mohd Osman Cassim, Tan Sri Alwi Jantan, Tan Sri Samsudin Osman and Tan Sri Jamaluddin Ahmad Damanhuri.

Also present were Malacca Yang di-Pertua Tun Mohd Khalil Yaakob, Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Sidek Hassan and PSD director-general Tan Sri Ismail Adam.

Abdullah said as the country's public sector human resource manager, the PSD's role was that of a catalyst to bring about pertinent changes to overcome challenges.

"When I was appointed a government officer back then, I was truly very happy. To me, the PSD is the most appropriate department to introduce new staff and officers to the culture of the public sector.

"Until today, I just cannot be separated from the service as I still have to chair the various committees that fall under the civil service."

Expressing gratitude for the opportunities that enabled him to undergo training and courses when he was a government officer, Abdullah said the experiences had proven to be an asset for him in discharging his duty as



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (left) escorting Malacca's Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Mohd Khalil Yaakob down the stage after the ceremony. With them are PSD director-general Tan Sri Ismail Adam (left) and the Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Mohd Sidek Hassan.

the prime minister and defence minister.

PSD, the former Malayan Establishment Office (MES), was established in Aug 22, 1934, with the consent of the Rulers.

Its early days of operation were in Singapore with the office moving to Kuala Lumpur as the Federation Establishment Office in 1954 after the formation of the Malayan Union.

It became the Federation Establishment Office of Malaysia in 1967 and was renamed Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam (Public Services Department) on Aug 15, 1968.

Abdullah said that unlike some Non-Aligned Movement nations, Malaysia had no problem ensur-

ing that government officers returned after completing their studies abroad.

"They are facing problems in asking their officers to come back. I told them (foreign counterparts) that the majority of our officers came back after completing their studies and that only a handful did otherwise."

Abdullah said civil servants should be grateful for the opportunities, perks, career prospects and other incentives offered.

"I have no doubts that our civil service will bring about the changes that we require. The national mission must be upheld by each and every government servant. Our fight for the people must continue so that together, we can

achieve developed nation status."

Abdullah also called on senior civil servants to be good examples to junior officers.

"You must always stick to the leadership philosophy, that is leadership by example.

"Of course, it can be quite tough to achieve all the targets set but with commitment and dedication, I am sure we can overcome challenges which may come in whatever form."

He said the government placed high hopes in them to continue providing quality services.

In line with its golden age, the PSD has shown maturity in becoming the impetus for positive and drastic changes in the public service delivery system, he added.