Building Trust in Government

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Recently, Razak School of Government (RSOG), Unirazak, celebrated its second anniversary on Saturday, Nov 27, with an open day at its city campus in CapSquare, Kuala Lumpur.

In commemoration, there was a talk on leadership by its Adjunct Professor Tan Sri Ismail Adam, who was the former Director General of Public Service, Public Service Department, Malaysia.

The day was filled with various activities done by students to commemorate the event. Booths were set up to cater for interested candidates for the coming intake in January 2011. Aspirants gained valuable information and consultation from experienced staff about unique courses that is offered at RSOG.

Established in November 2008, RSOG aims to provide specialised and unique academic programmes designed to meet the demands of the public sector in terms of knowledgeable human capital to manage public service in a challenging and competitive global environment.

The unique courses offered at RSOG are to generate knowledge and develop international minded, articulate and ethical civil servants and leaders in the public sector. The courses offered are: Bachelor of Arts (Government and Public Policy) (Hons); Bachelor of Arts (Leadership) (Hons); Bachelor of Economics (Hons), specialisations in International Trade and National Economic Management.

These programmes provide students with skills for defining and solving problems and manage change in an organisation. They are taught by exceptional academics and senior public servants who have wide experience working in the public sector.

Razak School of Government Deputy Dean, Professor Dr. Nik Rosnah Wan Abdullah; An expert in public policy and regulatory reform said: “In respond to demands for changes unleashed by the forces of globalisation, governments around the world have instituted a variety of measures aimed at reforming the public sector, “These measures include re-defining the role and sharpening the focus of government, enhancing their service delivery, incorporating private business ethos and techniques in decision-making processes, applying ICT in public management processes, and reviewing their financial management systems to promote transparency and accountability and institutional capacity-building.

Despite the progress made, many countries, including Malaysia, are still confronted with a major challenge – that is, how to stem the increasing decline in public trust and reconnect the citizen with the government. Declining voter turn-outs at general and small by-elections, growing appeal of populist and extremist ideologies, and increasingly negative perception of public sector agencies – these are some of the evidence of declining public trust, happening out there.

Nik further explained, when governments are expected to do more, the pressure is on the public servants. Nonetheless, some governments managed to transform its economic, political, and government systems dramatically within a short period of time, as seen from examples of what used to be the “Asian miracles” of Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, which introduced reforms such as market orientation, privatisation and deregulation,

“These have mixed implications on trust on government. On one hand, these reforms have enabled governments to be more efficient, innovative and better able to deal with globalisation, hence, they should have positive implications for trust as they counter unresponsiveness in the public sector.

“On the other hand, such pro-market orientation can increase corrupt practices and exacerbate inequality as well as erode the sense of connectedness between government and citizens, and hence, undermining trust.”

Nik added that there are many procedural, institutional and cultural factors that contribute to maintaining an ethical and accountable behavior on the part of employees and government officials. No single approach – be it institutional, procedural or cultural - represents one best way. Procedural, institutional and cultural factors, when taken together, play an important role in the institutionalisation of accountable, ethical and transparent government and hence building trust in government.

RSOG is actively involved in organising public lectures and short courses relating to public administration, leadership and economics and national and international conferences, seminars and workshops on current issues pertinent to public policy and national development.

For more information, log on to www.unirazak.edu.my.

- Razak School of Government (RSOG) of Universiti Tun Abdul Razak or better known as Unirazak, endeavours to provide specialised academic programme designed to meet the demands of the public sector in terms of knowledgeable human capital capable of managing the public service in the global world.

- Its mission is to be the leading centre of excellence in public policy and managerial leadership, with the objectives: a. To promote the development and growth of ‘managers leaders’ in the public sector.

- To be the leading centre of excellence in public policy and managerial leadership through quality teaching, research and executive development programmes.

c. To promote the development and growth of new and innovative public policies and managerial knowledge and practices.

d. To provide quality education and training on public policy and management in the knowledge-based economy.

e. To promote international collaborations and alliances with strategic partners.

- RSOG provides a new platform for the government to engage the private sector in the supply of trained public sector personnel for national needs, aimed at exposing civil servants to new management techniques developed by corporate bodies and institutions.

- RSOG’s contribution is in the form of making available a continuous supply of knowledgeable graduates who can build a career in the public service and in international institutions of governance. At the same time, it hopes to generate a pool of academicians who advanced their knowledge in the
public sector, thereby promoting a greater understanding of the dynamics of government and its significance in human, national and world development.