

# **RSOG Seminar**

## **“Who does the Civil Service Serve? ”**

with

**Dr. Miles Parker**

**When** : 31 October 2014  
**Where** : Razak School of Government  
**Speakers** : Dr. Miles Parker

### **About The Seminar**

Miles Parker will share ideas, based on his experience as a now-retired career civil servant in the UK and Ireland, around what a culture of service means and the benefits of evaluating the culture and values of the civil service. He will examine the delicate balancing act that civil servants struggle with daily when accommodating the needs of the country and interests of various stakeholders.

His talk will delve into the civil servant – minister relationship and how it integrates with the responsibilities of civil servants to Parliament and to the people, the latter, both as tax payers and as recipients and users of government services. He will also explore the subtleties of the relationship of civil servants with ministers in the context of effective democratic politics and of the changing roles of government in a world of open government and a more empowered civil society.

Finally, he will put all these themes into the context of Civil Service Codes and Values, and consider how these are linked to the principles, ethics and motivations of civil servants today.

### **Summary**

The speaker began the Seminar by posing the question of *who does the Civil Service?* serve as the title suggest. He highlighted the key elements of the Civil Service which include purpose, values, culture and the role of leadership and trust. He added that each country has their own unique cultural diversity and Malaysia is no exception.

Based on his experience, the cultural aspect influence policy making and delivery including management, advice and service delivery. Each country Civil Service has some common problems such as budgeting, cost and people. He stated that culture and values is important as it defines external perception, is a key factor in determining staff morale and the lack of it and contributing factor in creating problems for leadership and service delivery. But change depends on recognising and overcoming assumptions related to culture and values.

The speaker reaffirmed the importance of civil servants to understand their core job function and responsibility. This is important to carry out their job effectively and efficiently. A civil servant has a responsibility to the parliament, Ministers, tax payers, the public and particular customers and users of services. He added that it is important for the civil servants to understand the professional constraint and analyse a workable solution to a particular policy or program. He emphasised the idea that good service will lead to high performance and help Ministers to be more effective.

He gave a brief summary of the role of Government in the United Kingdom Cabinet office.

**Leader**-establishing the vision and direction of change

**Guarantor**- establishing boundaries, standards and frameworks

**Investor**-allocating public resources

**Enabler**-helping others to innovate and develop best practice

**Capacity builder**-investing in education and skills gaps

**Connector**-using convening power to bring stakeholders together to address problems

He then compared the purpose, values and culture in the UK Civil Service and the Malaysian Civil Service. The UK Civil Service code comprise of the following:

- **Integrity**-to fulfil obligations and duties responsibly
- **Honesty**-set out facts and relevant issues truthfully and correct any errors as soon as possible
- **Objectivity**-provide information on the basis of the evidence and accurately present the options and facts
- **Impartiality**-carry out responsibilities that is fair, just equitable

In comparison, the Malaysian Civil Service comprise of the ABCDE code:

- **Amanah** (honesty)

- **Bijaksana** (Wisdom)
- **Cekap** (efficient)
- **Dedikasi** (dedicated)
- **Efektif** (Effective)

He added that for the civil service to achieve transformational reform, there should be a sense of public value, a strong sense of patriotism, sense of pride, commitment, morale and the issue of trust. Two emerging issues that a civil servant has to manage is to gain the trust of the public as the main stakeholders/ recipients of the services and upholding their values and integrity. This relates to the question of *What makes a person proud to be a Civil Servant?* He further elaborated that there are certain factors that will create a sense of pride among the civil servants. This include public service purpose, values, public recognition and a private sense of worth.

In conclusion, the speaker reaffirmed the importance to establish a sense of trustworthiness and take responsibility for our actions, stand up for what is right and praise the good work done by others including subordinates. The core values of trustworthiness include openness, fairness, honesty and courage.

### **Key Lessons Imparted**

- 1) Culture, values, purpose, the role of leadership and trust are key factors that determine the credibility of the Civil Service.
- 2) A civil servant should adopt a trustworthy attitude to gain the confidence and respect of the stakeholders including the public, Ministers, Parliament and taxpayers.
- 3) The core value of trustworthiness include openness, fairness, honesty and courage.

Each country has their own Civil Service code which the civil servants adhere to including Malaysia and the United Kingdom.

### **About the Speaker**

Dr Miles Parker is RSOG's Senior Leadership Programme faculty member and former Deputy Chief Scientific Adviser to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), UK. Until the end of 2012, Miles was DEFRA's Director for Strategic Evidence and Analysis and Deputy Chief Scientific Adviser. He is currently Associate Fellow of the Centre for Science Policy, University of Cambridge.

With an academic background in zoology and marine ecology, his career spans roles within Government Departments in Ireland and the UK. Miles's vast experience in the

Civil Service has seen him tackling areas such as waste disposal at sea, food contamination and food science. Between 1998 and 2001, he was Director for International Science at the Office of Science and Technology and has long-standing connections to MAFF, Defra and Cefas. He was awarded the OBE in the New Year's Honours List 2013.

## **Contact**

To get more information on this event, you can contact us via email at [programmes@rsog.com.my](mailto:programmes@rsog.com.my)