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MAHATHIR-WOMEN
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KUALA LUMPUR, NOV 15 (BERNAMA) -- THE ROLES OF MEN AND WOMEN IN THE STRUGGLE FOR THE MALAY RACE THROUGH UMNO AND THE PROCESS OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD NOT BE DIFFERENTIATED THROUGH NUMBERS, DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

HE SAID WHAT WAS IMPORTANT WAS THE ABILITY OF BOTH MEN AND WOMEN TO WORK TOGETHER AND PLAY THEIR ROLES IN WHATEVER FORM OF DUTIES ENTRUSTED TO THEM.

IN UMNO, FOR INSTANCE, A LARGE MEMBERSHIP WOULD ADD STRENGTH TO THE PARTY AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MEMBERS COULD LEAD TO ACHIEVEMENT OF THE STRUGGLE FOR THE PARTY, RACE AND COUNTRY, HE SAID WHEN OPENING THE WANITA UMNO 40TH ANNIVERSARY GATHERING HERE.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID IN REALITY, THERE WERE DIFFERENCES IN THE ROLES OF MEN AND WOMEN IN CERTAIN SPECIFIC MATTERS, BUT THESE MINOR DIFFERENCES SHOULD NOT BE DWELT UPON TO THE EXTENT THAT COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO SEXES COULD NOT BE ACHIEVED.

IT HAD BEEN PROVEN, IN THE CABINET AND ELSEWHERE, THAT THE ABILITY OF A PERSON TOOK PRIORITY OVER HIS OR HER SEX. -- MORE
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MAHATHIR-WOMEN 2 KUALA LUMPUR

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID UMNO HAD ALWAYS APPRECIATED WOMEN WHO WERE AT ALL TIMES ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE PARTY STRUGGLE AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS DURING ELECTIONS WERE REMARKABLY EFFECTIVE.

IN THEIR ENDEAVOUR TO GET VOTES, THEY WORKED HARD TO ENSURE VICTORY FOR UMNO AND BARISAN NASIONAL (BN) CANDIDATES, HE ADDED, AMIDST LOUD APPLAUSE FROM SOME 5,000 WANITA UMNO MEMBERS PRESENT AT THE DEWAN MERDEKA OF PUTRA WORLD TRADE CENTRE (PWTC) WHERE THE GATHERING WAS HELD.

HE STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT IT WAS NOT THE INTENTION OF THE MEN IN UMNO TO USE WOMEN MERELY TO FISH FOR VOTES AND THEN FORGET THEIR DEEDS AS SOON AS VICTORY WAS IN HAND.

HE SAID THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS WOULD ALWAYS BE RECOGNISED AND THEIR ABILITIES VALUED THROUGH THE APPROPRIATE DIVISION OF DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AT ALL LEVELS OF THE COUNTRY'S ADMINISTRATION.

IN LIGHTER VEIN, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID HE CAUGHT THE BROAD HINTS IN THE DIALOGUE OF THE STAGE PLAY PRESENTED AT THE GATHERING, WHICH HIGHLIGHTED THEIR DESIRE TO SEE A WOMAN PRIME MINISTER IN THE COUNTRY.

+FORTUNATELY FOR ME I AM ALREADY THE PM, AFTER ME IF YOU WANT TO PRESS THE ISSUE, YOU CAN GO AHEAD WITH IT,+ HE QUIPPED TONGUE-IN-CHEEK. -- MORE
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MAHATHIR-WOMEN 3 KUALA LUMPUR

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR REGARDED THOSE WHO BELIEVED THAT WOMEN SHOULD NOT PLAY MAJOR ROLES IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY AS BEING SHALLOW IN THEIR THINKING.

WOMEN HAD JOINED IN THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND, THEREFORE, THEY SHOULD BE ACCORDED THEIR PROPER PLACE, HE SAID.

HE WANTED WOMEN TO BE TENACIOUS IN THEIR STRUGGLE AND ENSURE THAT UMNO REMAINED STRONG.

PRESENT WERE SEVERAL UMNO VETERANS, INCLUDING TWO FORMER PRIME MINISTERS, TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN AL-HAJ AND TUN HUSSEIN ONN, FORMER HEALTH AND INFORMATION MINISTER DATUK BAHAMAN SHAMSUDDIN, FORMER WANITA LEADERS, INCLUDING THE FIRST WANITA CHIEF (THEN KNOWN AS KAUM IBU) PUAN SRI PUTEH MARIAH IBRAHIM RASHID, TUN HAJAH RAHAH TAN SRI MOHAMED NOAH, TOH PUAN SUHAILAH TAN SRI MOHAMED NOAH, TAN SRI FATIMAH HASHIM AND TAN SRI AISHAH GHANI.

ALSO PRESENT WERE CABINET MINISTERS, MENTERIS BESAR AND CHIEF MINISTERS. -- BERNAMA
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