

# Curbing possible abuses in run-up to Umno polls

From  
**Ahmad A. Talib**  
in Cartagena,  
Colombia

DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Umno hoped to take short and long-term measures to curb possible abuses and problems during the run-up to party elections next year.

The Prime Minister and Umno president said the recently-formed ad hoc committee which would meet next week would discuss the problems facing the party and hoped that some measures be identified to curb abuses in the party machinery.

"If possible, we'll take some short-term measures," he said.

Dr Mahathir will chair the ad hoc committee meeting in Kuala Lumpur upon his return from the 11th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Colombia.

Dr Mahathir, speaking at a Press conference on Thursday was asked whether the party had come up with measures that could be taken to check abuses and problems within the party, especially in the light of next year's election of office bearers.

He was also asked to comment on the 10-point bonus system used in the party election for the number one and two posts. Under the system, each nomination made by a division for any of the two posts carries 10 votes.

Asked whether the system would be scrapped for future elections, Dr Mahathir said he would be guided by the members' wishes, adding that the decision to implement the system was made by the party's highest decision-making body.

He said: "My view is that this was a decision made by the general assembly. This means that only the assembly has the right to decide on the matter. If the general assembly has to decide on this, then members can submit a resolution on the matter.

"I'm not sure whether there's still time to do it... In any case, I'll be governed by the assembly's decision." The party is scheduled to hold this year's general assembly in November.

Asked whether the bonus system had brought more bad than good, Dr Mahathir said the party believed that its introduction would reduce the possibilities of delegates being influenced by unhealthy elements.

But after the system was introduced, the party found out that there were efforts being made to influence the divisions through unhealthy means, Dr Mahathir said. It looked as though whatever the party did was not right, he said.

Dr Mahathir said that everything depended on the members, adding that in the past party elections were held every year but there were no problems.

He said that in those days, nobody wanted to challenge Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun Abdul Razak Hussein or

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# Daim: Umno members must be disciplined

FROM PAGE ONE

Tun Dr Ismail Abdul Rahman.

"Everything went smoothly. But now, Umno members may be more sophisticated and may be more wealthy. And this could have led to problems.

"As I said, I'll be guided by the general assembly's decision. But the root cause of all these problems is that there is a deterioration in the quality of membership. While we've managed to enlarge the party membership to more than two million, we found out that there is a decline in the quality of members."

Asked what would be on the agenda for the ad hoc committee's first meeting next week, Dr Mahathir said it would look into these problems and try to find ways or approaches on how they could be overcome.

Asked why there was a decline in the quality of members, Dr Mahathir said this had to be seen from the historical perspective.

He said: "When Umno was formed, the Malays were facing external pressures. When this happened, they closed ranks and became united. Now, there is no more external pressure.

"In fact, they think that they have progressed and have begun to fight among themselves. With external pressures, they became united. But with internal pressure, the tendency is to break. I feel that it's too early but some Malays believe that they have progressed enough and therefore need not be united any more and hence can fight among themselves."

Asked what could be done to prevent this from happening, the party president said

members need to bring back the tested, good values and that they must be made to realise that they were not yet fully secure (*selamat*).

He realised that the effort could take a long time, but added that this was the only solution.

Asked whether he subscribed to the view that the keen interest to contest was because the contestants believed that victory would offer them positions, the Prime Minister said that this was certainly so. This meant, he said, that their struggle was not prompted by nationalistic feelings but more by greed.

In Kuala Lumpur, party treasurer and Economic Adviser to the Government Tun Daim Zainuddin said the continued use of money politics in Umno was a result of failure among its members to adhere to the party's constitution.

"What the party is unhappy about is the extent of money politics being practised in the party.

"Despite the amendments to the party's constitution, I see that there is still some failure to control the discipline among Umno members," said Daim, who is former head of the Merbok division.

"Umno's strength is its disciplined members, they listen to the party leaders. The moment you do not listen to the leader, there is bound to be disruption within the organisation."

"This is a trend that should be checked immediately," he told reporters after presenting the inaugural Malaysia's CEO of The Year award by *Business Times* and American Express to Telekom Malaysia executive chairman Tan Sri Dr Rashdan Baba.