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Movement `voicing sentiments of public'

ACTING Umno Youth head Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein said the movement was only voicing the sentiments of the public when it tabled the emergency resolution at yesterday's extraordinary general meeting.

He said the movement, through its various campaigns against foreign interference in the internal affairs of the country, had been a channel for Malaysians to voice their concerns and sentiments.

"Today marked the most important part of our campaign as the whole party has recognised the youth wing's effort," he told reporters after the conclusion of the one-day meeting at the Putra World Trade Centre.

He said the meeting had emphasised the need for members to go back to the basics of the party struggle and strengthen unity and stability.

Hishammuddin said party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had summed up this need in his winding-up speech at the end of the meeting.

"What I gather from his speech is that we must get back to basics.

"We have been through so much in the last few months and to get into a hall where we realise that we are just one family with a single struggle is very touching, especially for a young leader like me.

"It takes this sort of realisation to get us together and look at the bigger picture which is the unity and stability of the party."

However, he hoped that suggestions made during the meeting were not mere rhetoric but would be translated into something more "sincere" as the threat to the country's independence was real.

Asked if the amendments passed at the meeting were due to the weakening of democracy in the party, Hishammuddin said this was not so.

"I think it is a process that the country is going through from being an agrarian state to an industrial and developed nation. We have our Vision 2020 and we will go through several phases.

"Not that democracy has eroded in the past but times change and the party must evolve with the changing times," he said, adding that the party was still relevant today.

"Those calling for reformasi have no wind to sail on because we have been changing and moving with the times.

On the issue of contest of deputy president which was not raised in the meeting, Hishammuddin said that the well-being of the party was the paramount issue.

"Talk of a deputy (president) is meaningless if we cannot deal with the issue of unity and relevancy of the party," he said.

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