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Osu-Sabah

OSU EXPLAINS DECISION TO RETURN TO SABAH

By: Ahmad Zukiman Zain

KUALA LUMPUR, June 4 (Bernama) -- Datuk Osu Sukam, who resigns as Land and Cooperative Development Minister on Monday to take over the post of Sabah Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister, said today he is returning to state politics to further strengthen the Barisan Nasional (BN) for the next state election.

"This is what the party leadership wants after taking into account what has happened and an important duty in the interests of the party and Sabah," he said in an interview with Bernama at his office at Wisma Tanah, here.

He said he would make full use of his 12 years' experience at the federal level, including four as a Cabinet minister, which had matured him, especially in viewing each issue from the national angle and not from the state or narrow angle.

"This is an invaluable experience and I will use it for the interests of not only Umno but also BN and the people of Sabah,

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim announced today that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had agreed to Osu taking over the posts in the state Cabinet vacated by Datuk Ghapur Salleh last Thursday.

Ghapur had declined re-appointment to the new state Cabinet under Tan Sri Bernard Dompok who took over as chief minister from Datuk Yong Teck Lee under the rotation concept introduced by the BN.

Osu said his experience as a Cabinet minister under Dr Mahathir's leadership was valuable and an honour, "especially to people from Sabah or Sarawak", and had honed his administrative skills and matured his thinking.

"Where previously, before to coming to KL, I had thought only of what was good for Sabah, now I am more matured in looking at the needs of a multiracial society," he said.

"We must not be narrow-minded in thinking only in what is good for ourselves, our community or race...the interests of others must also be considered," he said.

"This is the Malaysian success which I feel I can use when serving in Sabah," said Osu who was Land and Cooperative Development Minister since 1994. He was previously Deputy Housing and Local Government Minister and Deputy Works Minister.

Osu, who is also Sabah Umno liaison chairman, said Umno's entry into Sabah had changed the thinking of the people of Sabah.

"Before Umno, we only thought of what was good for us, the political parties only fought for the good of their communities and Sabah because parties in Sabah are ethnic-based," he said.

"When Umno came in, it changed this parochial and ethnic sentiment to national sentiment, taking into account not only racial interests but also national interests," he said.

This must be taken into account to ensure the wellbeing of the people, national development and political stability, he said.

What was most encouraging was the acceptance of BN by the multiracial people of Sabah as the only political power capable of bringing stability and economic development, he said.

"Everywhere, the people have accepted that for Sabah to develop, the ruling party must have the united support of the federal government and only the BN is in such an enviable position," he said.

He admitted that the BN would meet strong opposition from the other parties in the state election but was confident of the maturity of the Sabah people in making a wise choice for their future.

"To create political stability, the multiracial society must understand the importance of cooperation, mutual respect and consideration for the needs and interest of others.

"The wealth of the soil of a state will not promise a bright future if the state is not well-administered," Osu said.

He added that in view of the current economic slowdown, the state economy was not as strong as before and needed help from the federal government.

On the date for the state election, he said his personal opinion was that it might be held end of this year.

-- BERNAMA

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