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Siti Zaharah: Unwise to rock the boat

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PUTRAJAYA, Thurs. - Wanita Umno head Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman said today strengthening the movement to face the general election should be the main concern among members now.

To those unhappy with her leadership, Siti Zaharah has this to say: "Let members assess my performance and decide, and the best forum to do this is at the party election."

She said it was unwise for any dissatisfied group to "rock the boat" now which could split the movement, adding that if anyone wanted to challenge her leadership, they should wait until the general election was over.

"If someone chooses to do that now, it is a selfish act as they are only thinking about themselves but not that of the party," she said after a meeting with a group of Information Department officers from Kedah at the Prime Minister's Department.

Siti Zaharah is also Minister in the Prime Minister's Department.

Asked whether her recent aborted reshuffle in the committee line-up had caused a split and there existed groups aligned to certain leaders in the movement, she said:

"We have to show that we are united and can work together. It is pointless to give a pledge to work together in meetings but doing something else outside."

She said it was important that leaders adhered to the decision that strengthening the movement was the most important thing to do now.

"We should stick to this and do not create issues when there are actually none. If one goes against decisions agreed earlier, they are breaking the code of ethics."

Siti Zaharah said members should place party interests above anything else, thus any differences or dissatisfaction against the leadership should take a back seat until after the general election.

On the aborted reshuffle, she said the matter was considered closed, adding that she would deal in the exco meeting on claims that some exco members were unhappy with her leadership.

"The need to close ranks does not arise as all have agreed to work together. Instead, what should be done now is to ensure that everyone discharges their duties efficiently at all levels," she said.

On the exco meeting on Tuesday, Siti Zaharah said she would use the opportunity, among others, to explain to members on her decision to withdraw the changes.

"I adhere to the advice of Prime Minister and party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad ...(withdrawing the changes) is the most wise step to take."

Asked on criticism that she should not have delayed in calling for the meeting, she said: "There is no delay ... there is no urgency because there is no problem. It is the same group of people who say that it is a problem."

On her meeting with the information officers, Siti Zaharah said they had sought explanation on various matters including the development of Putrajaya.

She said it was important that civil servants like information officers be briefed on the matter so that they could explain the truth to the people.

She added there was a danger that issues like Putrajaya would be

manipulated by the Opposition.

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