

Puteri Umno will not replace Wanita: PM

SUN 17.10.2000

By **Husna Yusop**
husna@thesundaily.com

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon: The formation of Puteri Umno is not meant to replace the Wanita Umno wing or a sign that the party is not satisfied with the Wanita's contribution.

Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Puteri Umno is aimed at attracting the younger generation into the party, which is also a part Umno Youth has to play.

"Some people have claimed in the press that we are calling them *makcik-makcik* (aunties). Certainly, we are not supposed to say as such, maybe they have misunderstood it as saying they are no longer useful," he said.

"But actually, we appreciate Wanita's role very much. Although they may be slightly older, they are very active and have been contributing a lot to Umno's struggle."

Speaking to reporters after chairing the Supreme Council meeting at the party headquarters here, Mahathir said Umno Youth also has been directed to do the same.

In fact, he said, there was a suggestion that the constitution be amended to allow those as young as 16 years, instead of 18, to join the party.

He said Umno has decided

to hold its special meeting to amend the party constitution on Nov 18 and will finalise details of the amendments in the next Supreme Council meeting.

As of now, the party has yet to decide on the status of Puteri Umno and the age limit for its members, he said. This will also be decided in the next meeting.

"It does not mean that this is a new body to replace Wanita Umno. This is not our

intention. We want them to complement each other and we will ensure they work together," he said.

"It is the same with the Youth and Wanita now, where the party secretary-general will sit as secretary during their meetings.

"We want to have this kind of relationship so that there will be no gap between them."

Apart from Puteri Umno, Mahathir said, one of the amendments proposed that

the Supreme Council election be held at division level instead of during the annual general assembly.

This is being studied carefully, including the problems, constraints and its effectiveness in curbing money politics, he said.

It was also suggested that the Supreme Council election be held only once after every general election so that members will not be too enthusiastic to compete for posts.