

30 DEC 2000

Abdullah-Unity

UMNO PREPARED TO START EFFORTS TO UNITE THE MALAYS

MUAR, Dec 30 (Bernama) -- Umno will initiate as soon as possible efforts to invite the Malay opposition parties to sit down and discuss the issue of re-uniting the Malays.

Umno deputy president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today Umno had no problem starting the effort because Malay unity was very important.

The deputy prime minister said this when asked to comment on PAS president Datuk Fadzil Noor's statement in the newspapers today that PAS was prepared to work with Umno to discuss the issue of Malay unity if Umno would take the first step to invite the Malay opposition parties to do so.

"If that's what PAS wants, we have no problem. God willing, we will start as soon as possible," Abdullah told reporters at Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman's open house in Sungai Mati, near here.

He described Fadzil's statement as a good development to find a solution to the issue.

"I believe that prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad also has no problem because he was the one to start talking on this matter," he said.

Asked about Parti Keadilan Nasional (Keadilan) deputy president Dr Chandran Muzaffar's statement that Umno should explain the form of unity to be implemented, Abdullah said there was no need to discuss it in the press.

"Say whatever has to be said...but the topic should be on matters related to the unity of the ummah and the Malay community," he said.

Present at the open house were Health Minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng, Deputy Human Resources Minister Dr Abdul Latiff Ahmad and state executive councillors.

-- BERNAMA

MKO JK