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Abdullah-Puteri

WANITA UMNO WANTS A DIFFERENT SET-UP FOR PUTERI UMNO, SAYS ABDULLAH

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 11 (Bernama) -- Umno Deputy President Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today Wanita Umno accepts the proposal to set up Puteri Umno but wants a different structure from Umno Youth as was earlier suggested.

He said the structure proposed by Wanita Umno was not only to ensure the effective role to be played by Puteri Umno to strengthen the party but also as the body that would bring in young women into Umno.

" There are differing views in terms of structure but to me they are merely to show concern and a reminder that the setting up of Puteri Umno will not create new problems in Umno," he told reporters after a three-hour meeting with the Wanita Umno executive committee members at the party headquarters, here.

Wanita Umno chief Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, who is International Trade and Industry Minister, did not attend the meeting due to a sprained ankle.

Abdullah, who is Deputy Prime Minister, said he did not intend to talk further on Wanita Umno's suggestions on the Puteri Umno set-up as he wanted to brief Prime Minister and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and to bring up the matter for discussion at the supreme council, Umno's highest policy-making body.

He said every Wanita Umno exco member was given an opportunity to express their views on the formation of Puteri Umno and their views were reflective of the feelings at division and branch levels.

He said the age limit factor was among the matters raised in the meeting with some suggesting that it should be 25 while others wanted it to be 30 but they were unanimous that 40 was not suitable.

"They think that 40 years' old for a Wanita is no longer a puteri. Their view is that when a woman is already 40, she should be in the mainstream and lead Wanita Umno for as long as they can," he said.

The Wanita Umno, in its exco meeting in Kuantan on Monday, came up with several counter proposals for the setting up of Puteri Umno including fixing the age limit for membership at 25.

Abdullah said the movement's views on the age limit was because there were many Wanita Umno members who had become leaders at division and branch levels.

At the meeting, Abdullah also discussed Wanita Umno's role in helping the party during elections and information campaigns

He said although the current political climate in the country required changes in the approach and activities, Umno's struggles based on the love for religion, race and country were still relevant and must be continued.

" The agenda for the struggle of the race was not over yet and must be continued. The Wanita Umno has a strong determination to proceed with the struggle," he added.

-- BERNAMA

AFY MS TS