

Sabah settles for 2:1:1 formula

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KOTA KINABALU A new formula is on the cards for continuing the two year rotation of the Sabah chief ministership among the Muslim bumiputra Chinese and Kadazandusun communities

The formula as described by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at his meeting with Barisan Nasional leaders yesterday and explained by state leaders goes like this

LDP president Datuk Chong Kah Kiat will serve as the Chinese representative for two years starting from the day he is sworn in

When Chong's term expires Umno as the Muslim representative will get its turn

After that a Kadazandusun will be made the chief minister to represent the non Muslim bumiputras

Upon the end of the Kadazandusun term the post will revert to a Muslim representative from Umno

The alternate cycle will continue with a Chinese representative serving for two years followed by a Muslim and later a non Muslim bumiputra

The leaders said this would mean a 2:1:1 ratio with a Muslim representative becoming chief minister after every two years when the term of either a Chinese or a Kadazandusun ends

They said this was how they saw Dr Mahathir's new arrangement compared to the old formula of each of the

three communities taking turns one after the other to serve their respective two year terms

The leaders said Dr Mahathir had also informed them that the arrangement would not be rigid and there was no plan to make the new arrangement permanent

There was some initial confusion among the Barisan leaders on the new formula as some felt that the 2:1:1 ratio represented the number of years each community would

be given a chance to pick a chief minister

When Barisan came into power in March 1994 and keeping to Dr Mahathir's election promise of the rotation system the first chief minister was Tun Sakaran Dandai of Umno

He was later appointed Yang Di Pertua Negeri and his two year term was completed by Datuk Salleh Said Keruak until May 1996

SAPP president Datuk Yong Teck Lee became the Chinese

representative for two years till May 1998 Upko president Tan Sri Bernard Dompok replaced him as the Kadazandusun representative

Dompok however lost his Moyog state seat in the March 1999 elections after serving 10 months as chief minister — 14 months short of fulfilling the two year term

Datuk Osu Sukam took over as the Muslim representative after Barisan won 31 of the 48 state seats in the elections with Umno securing 24 seats