

directed at all members, says Dr M

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said his proposal that extremely rich Umno members should not be allowed to contest party posts was not directed at anyone in particular.

The Umno president said it was meant to underscore the seriousness of money politics and other unethical activities plaguing the party.

"It was a general statement directed at all Umno members," he told reporters at the Parliament lobby after tabling the 8th Plan.

Dr Mahathir said if the proposal was accepted by the supreme council, a mechanism would be worked out to ensure that the directive would not discriminate against members who were "rich but sincere".

"We will come out with ways to rationalise this so that those who are really sincere in wanting to serve the party will not be prevented from contesting simply because they are rich," he added.

Asked how Umno would regulate this proposal if it was adopted by the party, Dr Mahathir said those vying for party posts would have to be asked to declare their assets, "just like the ministers."

The DAP, meanwhile, urged the Government to show its seriousness in wanting to root out corruption in politics by developing a new political culture with zero tolerance for it.

DAP chairman Lim Kit Siang said this could be achieved through legislation requiring political office holders to make periodic public declaration of their assets.

He also suggested that the Anti-Corruption Agency be elevated to answer only to Parliament.

"The DAP and the opposition front are prepared to give Dr Mahathir full support if he is prepared to declare an all-out war against corruption," he said in a statement yesterday.