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Dompok-Rotation

BN UPHOLDS ROTATION'S PRINCIPLE, SAYS DOMPOK

KOTA KINABALU, March 16 (Bernama) -- The appointment of Datuk Chong Kah Kiat as the next Sabah Chief Minister shows that the Barisan Nasional (BN) has upheld the principle of the rotation system, albeit with a little variation, United Pasok Momogun Kadazandusun Murut Organisation (Upko) president Tan Sri Bernard Dompok said today.

Dompok, who is Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, said he was happy that the rotation issue, which had created much uncertainty, had come to an end.

"As far as the party is concerned, we are looking forward to working with Chong as the next chief minister of the state," he told reporters on arrival at the Kota Kinabalu International Airport, here.

"I think the principle is upheld by the BN with a little variation this time around to take into consideration the practicality and the reality of what has happened in the state election in 1999," he said.

The rotation system, introduced in 1994, was to provide opportunity for leaders of the three main ethnic groups in Sabah -- Muslim bumiputeras, non-bumiputeras and the Chinese -- to serve as chief minister for a term of the two years each.

Dr Mahathir, in announcing Chong's appointment today, said there would be some minor changes to the system and Umno would get to hold the chief ministership for two terms compared with one term for the non-Muslim bumiputera parties and the parties representing the Chinese.

Dompok said the reason for the slight change was that the strongest party brought the state into the election.

Asked whether the Kadazandusun community was shortchanged following the appointment of Chong, Dompok said: "What Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has done is fair to the Kadazandusuns for the type of support the community gave to the BN.

"I felt very sad about the election result in 1999. I was the chief minister then...even when the prime minister had promised to allow me to continue to hold the post should I win, I lost in the election and not only that, our party was almost wiped out," he said.

"Even after the election, the deputy prime minister was toying with the idea of me continuing as chief minister...I couldn't take it, knowing the result of the election which is not conducive.

"If you look at the present composition of the state cabinet, we only won two seats but we got two full ministers and an assistant minister," he said.

As such, Dompok urged the Kadazandusun community to throw their support behind the BN to ensure continued development in the state.

-- BERNAMA

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