

Puteri Umno to be accorded equal status

Party to amend constitution on June 20

Nst 1 1 MAY 2002

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Umno will hold a special general assembly on June 20 to amend its constitution that will accord the Puteri Umno chief the status of party vice-president.

Party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the movement's heads in the divisions and branches would also be accorded similar status as that enjoyed by Umno Youth and Wanita chiefs.

The Prime Minister said the supreme council felt that there was a need to accord Puteri Umno equal status as it was a wing in the party.

"The council has agreed to endorse the proposed amendments to formalise Puteri Umno's structure. These include amendments enabling its chief to sit in the supreme council as vice-president.

"There is no reason why we cannot give them the same treatment like in Wanita and Pemuda," he said at a Press conference after chairing a three-hour council meet-

ing at Menara Dato' Onn here.

Under the party's constitution, the Youth and Wanita chiefs are vice-presidents by virtue of their posts.

The Umno general assembly will be held over three days from June 20 with the Youth, Wanita and Puteri holding their meetings a day earlier.

Dr Mahathir said after the amendments on Puteri Umno had been passed, elections for its office-bearers at all levels would be held. This is expected to take place before the end of the year.

On the recent *Syarahan Perdana* on Palestine which saw Umno and Pas united on a similar cause, Dr Mahathir said Umno welcomed the co-operation between both parties.

However, he said, it did not mean that they shared similar views in all matters.

"There are differences in some matters and as long as this continues, it is difficult for us to be united. Umno is prepared from the beginning to unite the Malays.

"In fact, it was Umno which united the Malays against the Malayan Union and with that, the British

were defeated.

"Umno was also the party which worked hard for the country's independence."

This fact, Dr Mahathir said, must be recognised by all parties.

"If there are efforts to unite the Malays, we welcome them but there must be a strong basis for it. On the Palestinian issue, there is no problem for us to co-operate with Pas and with any parties opposing the atrocities against the Palestinians."

On whether the success of the *Syarahan Perdana* could be used as a platform towards achieving Malay unity, Dr Mahathir said: "Yes, we can work out if they are willing to work out."

"There are areas probably where we should not fight with each other like on education and the need for the people to master knowledge.

"Unless Pas were to say that knowledge is not important and that it is all right to be stupid... that we cannot agree at all but if they say that knowledge is important and mastering English is important, we can co-operate with them."