Abdullah: Taking over as PM is a challenge

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today described his taking over as Prime Minister in October next year as a challenge to him.

"I am faced with the challenge of ensuring the nation's political and economic stability.

"I have also to ensure the country's security," he said when addressing 800 participants at the Seventh National Civil Service conference at the National Institute of Public Administration (Intan).

"I remember when I was the Foreign Minister, (Datuk Seri) Dr Mahathir (Mohamad) told me that when a leader retires, he must ensure that the Government is stable."

"Dr Mahathir also told me that if a leader retires when the country was in a state of chaos, then he was not a good leader."

He said Dr Mahathir has made sure of the country's stability in all areas — politically, economically and socially as well as in security — before he made the announcement to retire in October next year.

"He is also making sure that there is a smooth transition of power from him to his successor before he retires," said Abdullah, adding that he would ensure continuity in all that has been planned for the nation's growth, development and stability.

Abdullah, who was touched by Dr Mahathir's announcement of him (Abdullah) being his successor, said the nation's success was also in the hands of the administrators of the country who must be efficient and dynamic.

"I hope that all parties, especially the public administrators, would continue to preserve the peace and stability in the country to ensure that Malaysia continues to progress."

Abdullah said Malaysia would not be really developed without political stability.

He also said the commitment of the enforcement agencies, especially the police, was important to ensure continued peace.