

SUPP needs multi-skilled team of politicians

By JACK WONG **STAR 20 DEC 2002**

KUCHING: The Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) has to develop a strong team of politicians who are knowledgeable and efficient, said its president, Tan Sri Dr George Chan Hong Nam.

He said they must also have diverse skills such as the ability to garner support, manage relations with the state and its administration, and interact and negotiate with allies and rival forces.

"They must learn to solve problems and face the considerable stress that comes along with the job.

"Solving problems in politics often requires teamwork and a tolerance towards different views.

"An effective political leader is one who has self-confidence, not be intimidated by pressure and who thrives on challenges while being comfortable in an environment of constant change and ambiguity," he said at the opening of the party's 19th triennial general assembly here yesterday.

The assembly was opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Dr Chan, who is also Deputy Chief Minister, paid a glowing tribute to Dr Mahathir whom he described as "the most visionary and courageous leader of our times."

He said Dr Mahathir's tireless efforts in championing causes of the Third World nations not only added great stature to his credibility as an international statesman but also won greater recognition by other countries for Malaysia.

"We can today stand tall and feel proud as Malaysians especially when we are overseas," he said.

He said the state had reduced the poverty rate to 6.7% two years ago from 48.7% in 1980 and unemployment rate to 3.8% from 10% during the same period.

"The general living standard has improved in terms of GDP per capita from RM2,800 in 1980 to RM8,402 in 2000," he added.

Dr Chan said the state government had proposed to set up a RM100mil higher education fund.