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SAPP-Rotation

SARAWAK FORMULA THE IDEAL ALTERNATIVE TO SABAH ROTATION SYSTEM, SAYS
YONG

KOTA KINABALU, May 4 (Bernama) -- The Sabah Progressive Party (Sapp) today proposed that the Sabah Barisan Nasional (BN) adopt the Sarawak model of power-sharing as an alternative to the rotation system for the chief minister's post.

Sapp president Datuk Yong Teck Lee said that although the rotation system was good, it could not remain in the long term and in the event the system was scrapped, the neighbouring state's model could come as an ideal alternative.

"Therefore it is Sapp's proposal that Sarawak's power-sharing model be adopted as a basis for discussion by the Sabah BN," he said when opening the party's Youth and Wanita convention, here.

Yong, who himself was appointed Sabah chief minister in 1996 under the two-year rotation system, said: "The Sarawak government is also a coalition of BN parties with the chief minister's post held by a leader from one of the components.

"However, the major coalition parties are all given relevant positions and therefore play significant roles in the state government."

He said the strength of the Sarawak model was power-sharing and this had led to Sarawak's political stability and steady development.

Yong, who is the Gaya MP, said that in Sarawak the political and civil service appointments showed that the coalition partners and their views were respected in that "we don't see Sarawak parties arguing because of the appointment to an important civil service position."

He said that he had spoken at the party's congress last year of the need for the Sabah BN to discuss and reach a consensus on the rotation issue before the current rotation cycle ended but it had not done so.

Yong said the proposal to adopt the Sarawak model was among several views on the rotation system presented by the party to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in February.

The system was introduced when the BN took over the state government in March 1994 to enable leaders from the Muslim bumiputeras, Chinese and non-Muslim bumiputeras to be appointed chief minister on a rotational basis for a two-year term.

Dr Mahathir, who is the BN chairman, made slight modifications to the system last year when Datuk Chong Kah Kiat, representing the Chinese community, was appointed to the post.

Under the new format, the post is still rotated every two years but will alternate between the leaders of Umno and the other two communities.

For example, when the current Chinese term is over in March next year, the post will go to Umno, then to the non-Muslim bumiputeras and back to Umno.

-- BERNAMA

JS JK