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Mahathir-Puteri  
PM REMINDS PUTERI UMNO MEMBERS TO STRIKE A BALANCE

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 1 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reminded Puteri Umno members to strike a balance between their role in pursuing the struggles of the party and their responsibility as mothers and to their families.

The prime minister said that Puteri Umno members who represent the younger generation should not only be active in politics but should also promote a new culture to ensure that the future generation was more progressive.

He said that members of the movement now had a greater role and responsibility in managing their homes due to the prevailing situation where the men, especially among the Malays, fail to excel unlike the women.

"We cannot rely too much on the men nowadays and we depend on the women. As Puteri Umno (members), their responsibility is greater than the men in the character development of the children so that they are inclined towards progress and achievement," he said when opening the inaugural Puteri Umno Assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here.

The movement was declared as a new entity of Umno on June 20.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said that the women in the country should inculcate in their children noble values and the spirit of achievement especially in terms of being prepared to strive for personal achievements besides upholding a high degree of discipline.

"While we want the Puteri (members) to be active in politics, responsibility at home in bringing up their children to become Malays capable of achievement must not be neglected," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who repeated many times that such responsibility should not be neglected, expressed confidence that the women in the country were capable of shouldering this burden in the interest of the race.

He said that Malaysia's aspiration to become a developed nation by 2020 could not be easily achieved but this was also not something impossible.

The people especially the Malays, he said, had the capability and capacity for achievement and progress but the obstacle was the characteristics of the Malays especially the men who were not prepared to enhance their capabilities.

Dr Mahathir also expressed his disappointment over the attitude of the Malays who have capabilities but fail to fully utilise them to attain progress.

Emphasising the importance of the movement, he said that the new entity of Umno was set up to enable the younger generation especially the younger women to be active in politics and to be free to express their views and opinion.

He said that even though Wanita Umno was already in existence to represent the women, the fact that the younger women felt awkward and uncomfortable in the presence of their seniors must be accepted.

"Puteri Umno provides an opportunity for the younger generation to join Umno and they will not feel awkward and uncomfortable among their peers. They'll feel free," he said, expressing the hope that the movement would become a vital wing of the party to pursue the party's struggles.

He said that the movement was now a big threat to the opposition to the extent that there were directives issued that their every action must be monitored.

Relating the significance of Umno when it was set up 56 years ago, the

Umno president said that many Malays no longer feel indebted to the party which struggled for the race and independence of the nation and instead felt that there was no longer a need for political power, thinking that they had achieved everything.

"That's the reality now that sometimes it's difficult to remind them of the significance of Umno. Under such circumstances, it's difficult to gain their support but we believe that with the support of the younger generation, they will better understand the importance of pursuing the struggles of the race," he said.

Dr Mahathir also reminded Puteri Umno members that they would also become older and join the generation of Umno leaders who face political challenges and obstacles.

As a democratic party, he said, Umno members could contest for posts but such contests must be conducted with decorum and in accordance with procedures.

"We do not condone crimes or abuses of power but a person is innocent until proven guilty. As far as I'm concerned, until the guilt of a person has been proven, it is not wrong for him to take part in politics and he's entitled to secure positions," he said.

Dr Mahathir also reminded Puteri Umno members to pursue their political activities through Umno on reaching 35 so that their political participation would be more meaningful.

"By moving on to the Wanita movement, Puteri's participation will be more meaningful and they can provide guidance to Puteri (members). The party's struggles can be further pursued," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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