

18 JUN 2002

Abdullah-Umno

YOUNGER GENERATION MUST LEARN TO BE GOOD AND LOYAL FOLLOWERS

KUALA LUMPUR, June 18 (Bernama) -- Umno deputy president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the younger generation in Umno must learn and strive to be party members who are loyal to their leaders in preparation to become leaders who are committed to the party and its struggles.

"He who does not know how to follow will not know how to lead," he said.

A network of good relationships among party leaders and members was an important ingredient for the party's success, he said when opening the general assembly of Umno Youth and Wanita movements and the Puteri Umno Convention simultaneously at Putra World Trade Centre, here tonight.

"Among the Pemuda (Youth movement), there should not be a Hishammuddin camp and a non-Hishammuddin camp. In Wanita, there should not be a Rafidah camp and a non-Rafidah camp. In Puteri, there should not be an Azlina camp and a non-Azlina camp," he said.

The Deputy Prime Minister said all members and leaders were under the leadership of one president and their loyalty and services were for Umno under the leadership of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Party leaders, he said, must first be united in efforts to strengthen Umno and members would be more united if there were leadership by example.

He said if conflicts were allowed to fester, it would eventually take a long time and waste a lot of effort in finding an amicable solution.

Abdullah said supporters would be less inclined to work against others if their leader did not provide encouragement to do so.

He said it was not unknown in Umno that the party presented a facade of strength, while internally it was wrecked by strife and divisions.

Internal conflicts were the result of those who sought power above all else and in such a situation, the influence of kingmakers and powerbrokers were enhanced.

"The quest for political power suddenly becomes personally profitable for these people. Leaders are treated like commodities, priced commercially to bargain with and to sell," he said.

The Umno deputy president said if political corruption reared its ugly head and with it the loss of reason, the party's interests would be marginalised and the community's struggles would be destroyed.

He said party leaders and members must be cognizant that there was no use in gaining power and position within the party if Umno lost political power in the general election.

"Our focus must be on strengthening the party and uniting our members. Our common enemy should be the opposition," he said.

On religion, Abdullah said Muslims in Malaysia ought to be thankful because they were able to fulfil their religious obligations and pursue their worldly aims without having to seek refuge in another country.

He said worldly success and spiritual preparations could be undertaken peacefully and comfortably in this country.

"These are the blessings of Allah for which we must be thankful. These are the fruits of our leaders' efforts for which we should be grateful," he said.

He said it would be meaningless for a country to be known as an Islamic country just because the majority of its people were Muslims.

What was more important was that the Muslims in that country were able to acquire knowledge and skills, to prosper and succeed, to administer and

govern the country well, and to hold steadfast to the teachings of the religion by bringing continued success and development for the ummah.

-- BERNAMA

JM ZS RON AO