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Umno (Round-up)

DELEGATES WANT EVEN STRONGER STRUGGLE FOR UMNO TO REMAIN RELEVANT

KUALA LUMPUR, June 20 (Bernama) -- Delegates to the 54th Umno General Assembly here today talked about strengthening Umno's struggle to ensure the party would remain relevant as the protector of the Malays.

They also expressed confidence in the leadership of Datuk Seri Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi, who takes over from Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in October as the country's prime minister and party president.

Continuing his debate on the presidential address on the second day of the annual gathering, Johor Umno Chief Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman called for a serious effort to attract the young and the well-to-do to join the party to sustain the party's struggle for the Malays.

Abdul Ghani, who is also Johor Menteri Besar, said these groups should be approached and invited to work together with Umno in pursuing the party's struggle.

Umno, he said, was now faced with having a generation of young and well-to-do Malays who did not uphold the struggle for the betterment of their race.

While expressing his full support to Abdullah, he said a landslide victory for Umno and the Barisan Nasional (BN) in the next general election would provide a strong mandate to the new leadership.

Federal Territory Umno Chief Datuk Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor meanwhile expressed confidence in Abdullah's leadership in steering the country towards greater development.

Pahang Umno Chief Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob, who is also Pahang Menteri Besar, said the country had recorded many achievements under the leadership of Dr Mahathir over the past 22 years.

He too had no reservations about Abdullah's ability to lead the country.

Perak Umno Chief Datuk Seri Mohd Tajol Rosli Ghazali, who is also Perak Menteri Besar, expressed his full support to Abdullah as Dr Mahathir's successor.

A representative of the Umno Clubs overseas, Jumiyati Ismail, the last speaker to debate the presidential address, said the increase in the number of Umno clubs to 44 in six countries showed that Umno was gaining acceptance among young Malaysians within and outside the country.

Jumiyati said Umno club members would remain loyal to Umno and would give their full support to Abdullah's leadership.

Prior to adjournment of the meeting yesterday, eight state delegates comprising Umno chiefs and deputy chiefs also touched on the same subjects.

Today's sitting also focussed on the country's economic development with various suggestions from the delegates while debating the motion on economy.

A Kelantan delegate Datuk Awang Adek Hussin suggested the setting up of a special institution to attract Islamic investors in a big way in line with efforts to turn Malaysia into a wellknown Islamic financial centre in the world.

An Umno Youth delegate Zambery Abdul Kader meanwhile proposed the setting up of an educational institute on alternative economy, managed by those with a master's degree in economy, to formulate the best economic formula for a given situation in global and national investment.

He also suggested that greater attention be given to enhance the participation of the Malays in small and medium industries (SMIs).

A Kedah delegate, Dr Ku Abdul Rahman Ku Ismail said a new strategy was needed to create a community of self-reliant Bumiputeras while also ensuring that the Malays would not lag behind in the information and communication technology (ICT).

Perlis delegate Sabri Ahmad meanwhile noted the success of the government's efforts to eradicate rural poverty.

He said that in 1970, the poverty rate was 69 per cent compared to 12 per cent at present as a result of Umno's struggle.

Ten delegates managed to speak on the motion of economy before today's meeting was adjourned.

-- BERNAMA

AM ROS ABG