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Yong-Election

SAPP WANTS STATE BN TO PRESENT A NEW POWER SHARING FORMULA

KOTA KINABALU, Sept 7 (Bernama) -- The Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP) has called on the Sabah Barisan Nasional (BN) to present to the people a new power-sharing formula in the next state election, which must be held by April 2004.

SAPP president Datuk Yong Teck Lee said there was a need to give serious attention to this matter as the state government braced for the election.

"I had proposed the idea of the Sarawak Formula (in which all component parties play a meaningful role in government) as a basis for discussion," he said in his policy speech at the party's 10th congress at Menara Tun Mustapha, near here today.

Apart from the issue of rotating the Chief Minister's post, SAPP also highlighted the need for curbing gaming and stressed the importance of education, he said.

These were some of the key issues which needed attention, he added.

At the same time, Yong called for "serious thought" to the proposal to hold state election simultaneously with Parliamentary elections, saying "the party's inclination on this is tilting towards concurrent elections".

Addressing some 1,500 people comprising SAPP delegates, observers and guests, Yong expressed concern over the state government's change in gaming policy in 2001 resulting in the increase of gaming outlets and slot machines.

"This proliferation of online gaming outlets disguised as cyber cafes is also a cause for worry," he said.

In this respect, Yong who was Chief Minister from 1996-1997, proposed that state government adopt a four-pronged approach to social ills, including gaming.

These included broader actions by the police, the anti-corruption agency and other law enforcement agencies against gaming.

"There is also a need to legislate more stringent laws and regulations as well as giving emphasis on education and counselling and of course, we need to analyse the social and economic impact of gaming on the state," he said.

Saying that education should be the foundation of all long-term plans, he stressed the use of English in the teaching of mathematics and science in schools.

On current issues, Yong expressed concern that the voters in the coming state election might "punish" BN candidates in and around the Kota Kinabalu area because of the frustration over the implementation of a new parking policy in the city.

"SAPP is hopeful that the state government will continue to monitor and review this matter in order to find a sustainable formula in the common interest of the public," he said.

Yong paid a glowing tribute to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who retires this October to make way for his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, saying the Prime Minister's depth, farsightedness and leadership had resulted in countries in the world holding Malaysia in high esteem and regarding it as a model to emulate.

He said SAPP had full confidence and trust in Abdullah in leading the country.

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