

07 FEB 2003

Mawan-SPDP

SPDP WILL RISE ABOVE PETTY POLITICS TO MEET PEOPLE'S ASPIRATIONS

KUCHING, Feb 7 (Bernama) -- The Sarawak Progressive Democratic Party (SPDP) will strive to rise above petty politics to deliver and fulfil the people's aspirations through the "politics of development," its president Datuk William Mawan said today.

He said the party, which subscribes to consensus and consultation, had a role to play and responsibilities to shoulder to effect a meaningful transformation of the people's mindset, especially those in the rural areas.

"The task before us as leaders and members of the SPDP is both colossal and challenging but I believe we are able to fulfil these aspirations if we remain united as a party," he said at the opening of the party's inaugural triennial general meeting by Chief Minister and Sarawak Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud.

Also present at the meeting, attended by about 2,500 delegates, were BN secretary-general Tan Sri Mohamed Rahmat and BN component party leaders.

He said although the SPDP had a strong Dayak base, it was essentially a multi-racial party that would continue to support Taib's leadership and commitment to transform Sarawak into a modern and industrialised state.

In strengthening the party's links both at state and federal levels, Mawan said it needs to place increasing emphasis on greater interaction between its party leaders and the people.

He said there was also a need for the people at the grassroots level to be involved in the process of development through the opportunities abound in both the urban and rural areas to improve their socio-economic well-being.

"We cannot afford to remain in the sidelines and be a passive recipient of change, we cannot afford to wait until change overtakes us. We have to move and act together on the same note with our brothers and sisters from the other BN component parties," he said.

He said as SPDP prepares itself and its leadership to forge into 2020, it must be mindful of two important factors, namely participatory democracy and competitiveness to shape its future agenda.

However, he said, members must not allow democracy to be perceived merely as an opportunity to express views freely at the expense of party interests and to vie for positions of power.

They must also be willing and ready to equip and upgrade themselves with the right knowledge and skills, he said.

In the context of a globalised world and IT era, science and technology-based subjects and proficiency in English language must be given priority, he said.

In recapping SPDP's history, he said, it was set up out of necessity to maintain party unity and ensure political stability within the framework of the Sarawak BN.

He said the unfortunate deregistration of the Sarawak National Party (SNAP), one of the oldest parties in Sarawak, in November last year following months of unresolved internal party problems came as an unexpected news to most SNAP leaders.

"Against this changing backdrop and driven by the determination of well-meaning former SNAP leaders to seek an alternative platform within the BN that SPDP was born," he said.

He expressed gratitude to Prime Minister and BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr

Mahathir Mohamad and other central BN leaders for giving former SNAP members the opportunity to rehabilitate the party through SPDP.

They were also given the option to "temporarily park" in any of the state BN parties during the interim period pending the registration of SPDP.

-- BERNAMA

CJ TS