

26 JUN 2003

Abdullah-Umno

STOP DOUBTING UMNO VICE-PRESIDENTS' NO-CONTEST PLEDGE, SAYS ABDULLAH

KUALA LUMPUR, June 26 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today urged Umno members to stop questioning the sincerity of the party's three vice-presidents in pledging not to contest the Umno deputy presidency.

The deputy prime minister said all members should appreciate the pledge made by Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and Tan Sri Muhammad Muhd Taib because the three leaders had the party's interests at heart.

"They have made an open pledge before party members, and thousands of people clapped their hands (in response). Surely, they would not go back on the stand that has been announced," he said, referring to the promise made by the three at the Umno General Assembly last week.

"They are good and sincere people. I've no doubt about them on what they've said, what they've pledged.

"I have no doubt about their stand because, to me, they understand the need to announce it and to stick to the stand for the sake of the party, as they themselves have explained," he told reporters after opening the 8th Civil Service Conference at Intan here.

He said this when told that some Umno members were still doubting the three vice-presidents' pledge that they would accept whomever was picked by Abdullah as his deputy when he takes over the reins of the party and the government.

Prime Minister and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has announced that he will retire in October and will be succeeded by Abdullah.

Abdullah advised Umno members to stop doubting one another because "there will be no end to stories about people doubting others".

Asked whether he had decided on who would be his deputy later, Abdullah said: "No, no. When I've made up my mind, I will announce it."

Asked whether he would announce it in early November, he said: "In November I would have just taken over the post."

Asked on talk that Umno would hold a special conference in conjunction with Dr Mahathir's retirement in October, he said this matter had not been discussed yet.

-- BERNAMA

HS AHH YBY