

11 NOV 2003
Konrad-Abdullah
WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES CONGRATULATES ABDULLAH

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 11 (Bernama) -- The World Council of Churches has congratulated Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi as the country's fifth Prime Minister.

Its general secretary, Dr Konrad Raiser in a statement, e-mailed here today, said that Abdullah had been part of the political leadership of Malaysia and served as Foreign Affairs Minister for many years.

"Therefore, I am sure that with your impeccable credentials you will stand in good stead to lead the country on the road towards realising Malaysia's goal of a developed nation under the Vision 2020 plan," he said.

Konrad said the World Council of Churches had been following the developments in Malaysia in all these years and had maintained close relationships with the churches and the Council of Churches in Malaysia, the national coordinating body of Protestant and Orthodox Churches in Malaysia.

"In fact, I have had the opportunity to meet with your predecessor, (Tun) Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad during my last official visit to Malaysia in November 2000, which was an encouraging experience," he said.

He noted that Malaysia had come a long way since its independence in 1957 to achieve the present status of an industrialising economy under the leadership of Dr Mahathir.

"While admiring Malaysia's efforts, I do hope that Malaysia will continue to be vigilant in maintaining the ideal of a pluralistic and inclusive society, irrespective of the ethnic and religious identity of all its citizens."

Konrad said that as fears grew in several other Asian countries about the increasing trend of radical religious groups undermining peace and stability, it was heartening to note that Malaysia had taken a strong stand against such tendencies precipitating in the country.

"I am confident that your strong roots in religious scholarship will help to nurture an atmosphere of religious harmony and tolerance in Malaysia in the years to come.

"Once again, I would like to congratulate you and wish you every success. I pray for God's richest blessings on you and your nation," he said.

-- BERNAMA
SSA SSA ABG