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Razaleigh-Abdullah

EVERYONE SHOULD COOPERATE WITH AND SUPPORT ABDULLAH, SAYS RAZALEIGH

KUALA LUMPUR, July 22 (Bernama) -- Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah said everyone should cooperate with and support Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi who had won the Umno presidency without contest so that he can carry out the "trust by providing a more effective leadership."

Congratulating Abdullah, Tengku Razaleigh said with the win, "no one can dispute the position" of the Prime Minister as party president.

Abdullah had received almost 100 per cent of the nominations for the party presidency from Umno divisions which had held their delegates meetings, with Tengku Razaleigh, the only challenger for the post, receiving one nomination from his own division, Gua Musang.

Tengku Razaleigh, 67, who declared that he was "out of the running" for the top post, hoped that Abdullah would continue with the country's development programmes and enhance economic growth by encouraging more foreign investors to invest in the country.

The government must implement programmes which could meet the challenges of globalisation, as the policies and programmes such as the New Economic Policy could not continue in the era of globalisation, he said at a media conference at his residence at Langgak Golf, here today.

In addition, the government must also intensify efforts at reducing the income gap between the Malays and non-Malays which was now "very wide and worrying", so was the income gap between the lower- and higher-class Malays.

He said: "Specific action and programmes must be carried out to reduce or eliminate the gap before socio-economic problems crop up in future."

On the support he received for the Umno presidency in the coming party elections compared to the 1987 poll where Tengku Razaleigh received 49 per cent support against Tun Dr Mahathir, the former Finance Minister said: "The environment has changed and the issues are different," and at that time there were so many issues.

He also reiterated that he had offered to contest the post of

party  
president not to "fight with anyone, I was merely registering a point that Umno members and the rakyat must be given the right to choose their leader."

Tengku Razaleigh said: "Now we have decided on our leader by giving him a lot of nominations. We are satisfied he (Abdullah) has been elected to lead us."

Asked whether he was disappointed that he received only one nomination, he said that as a gentleman, "I must accept the result and we have to accept reality and should not be sour grapes".

"Maybe today (I am) not successful, maybe tomorrow (I will be) successful," he said, refuting allegations that he was supporting Abdullah after having failed to get the nominations required to qualify for the contest.

Tengku Razaleigh said he had to wait until almost all the Umno divisions had held their meetings in order not to disappoint his supporters.

Asked on his move in offering himself for the Umno presidency, he said everyone who took part in politics must have a high ambition in achieving a cause, "otherwise it's pointless if we only struggle for others."

"You have to be the player and must be the scorer, just like a football game rather than just being a mere spectator," he said.

He said that he would not offer himself for party elections in future unless "forced by circumstances", adding however that he would continue to be active in politics.

Commenting on the suggestions by several of his contemporaries, including former Umno deputy president Tan Sri Musa Hitam, that he should retire from politics, he said: "I will not retire until I die," because he was still active and healthy.

Asked whether his move to stand in the party elections had tarnished his image as a statesman, he said: "Perhaps...and history will tell."

Asked whether the Gua Musang Umno division which he leads would table a resolution to abolish the rule on the nomination quota at the coming general assembly, he said: "We have no plans as such."

However, he added: "Nothing cannot be changed except the Quran."

All the  
rules can be amended or changed as time dictates."

-- BERNAMA

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