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Abdullah - Leaders

LEADERS ARE MADE, SAYS PM

By Mohd Rizal Razalli

PUTRAJAYA, May 10 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi says, one of the things that he learned over the years before he became Malaysia's fifth Premier is that, leaders are not necessarily born, but are made.

"On my own path towards becoming Prime Minister (PM), I have learned many things along the way. One thing that I have learned over the years is that leaders are not necessarily born, but are made," he said.

"Self-study, education, training and experience are important factors that build up towards a strong image and personality of a PM," he said when launching the Perdana Leadership Foundation, the country's leading leadership learning centre, here today.

Abdullah said he was particularly blessed to have had the opportunity to serve directly under all four of his predecessors.

"I have humbly learned the qualities of good leadership, particularly the values of amanah (trust), accountability, justice, integrity, patience, and courage in the face of adversity."

"The wisdom and experience that I had gained under their expert guidance and mentorship, has been a powerful source of inspiration and a resource to help me through my duties and responsibilities as PM," he said.

Malaysians he said, are fortunate that the respective visions and policies of the country's successive PMs had met the needs of their time and shaped the overriding priorities of the country.

Abdullah said past PMs have also demonstrated through their visions, strategies and how "extraordinary challenges" -- challenges that are unique to Malaysia, often without precedent -- should be overcome and addressed.

"Begin with (Malaysia's first PM) Tunku Abdul Rahman who may have walked the path of India in seeking peaceful disengagement from our colonial masters (the British and Dutch), but Malaysia was unique in forming a multi-racial government," he said.

Second PM, Tun Abdul Razak Hussein he said, had created the national operations room to monitor development across the country, while his rural development plan won many accolades and had been duplicated in other developing countries.

This was followed by Tun Hussein Onn who introduced the National Unit Trust or Amanah Saham Nasional which was still in force today, successfully promoting savings among Malaysians of all income levels and races, he added.

He said, the fourth Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad then gave the nation, among others, its first national car, a world-class airport and the world's tallest twin towers, among others, and set a course for Malaysians to become a fully-developed nation by the year 2020.

On the Perdana Leadership Foundation, which was operational since October 2003, Abdullah expressed the hope that the country's intellectual heritage, would not only be preserved, but researched, developed and presented to the Malaysian public to encourage further thought and debate.

He believes the foundation has made a solid start towards this end by working together with existing institutions to collect, digitise and archive materials important to the nation and to have these resources made available to the public via the internet.

"Perhaps there are still more to do before the foundation can realise its goal of becoming the premiere research and learning institution on

Malaysian leadership," he said.

He also encouraged more Malaysians to come forward to pledge their support for the foundation, noting that he also encouraged international institutions to form resource-sharing collaborations with the body.

Abdullah also reiterated the government's endorsement of the foundation's vision, objectives and programmes and extended the government's full support to the foundation's programmes and activities.

"I believe the foundation's cause is a worthy one and that it seeks to serve as an important link between the country's past and the country's future," he said.

The foundation, led by Dr Mahathir as its honorary chairman, is run by members of the board of trustees, which is chaired by Arab-Malaysian Banking Group chairman Tan Sri Azman Hashim.

-- BERNAMA

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