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Old leaders should give way to capable younger ones, say MPs

BOTH Opposition and BN MPs yesterday generally agreed that veteran politicians who have been in the posts for too long and could no longer contribute effectively to their party's cause or their constituents should make way for younger candidates.

Veteran politician Tan Sri Dr Sulaiman Daud (BN-Petrajaya) said if a party's younger candidate could win in a constituency and was capable, then the veteran should give way.

Kerk Kim Hock (DAP-Kota Melaka) said the young succeeding the old was a "natural cycle" in any party and he believed that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad made the comment only to remind veterans reluctant to relinquish their powers.

Dr Mahathir has called on veteran BN politicians to make way for new faces in the next general election.

Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tun Dr Mohamed Zahir Ismail said he did not know if any MPs in the House were too old to perform their duties.

"We have to bear in mind that there are many factors that influence the staying power of an MP, including his winning potential, his capabilities, his popularity, as well as the availability of younger candidates to succeed him," he said.

He said it was not advisable for a veteran to give way to a younger but less capable candidate who could not contribute to his party.