

It's Wong Soon Koh vs Peter Chin for SUPP chief
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The Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) triennial delegates conference (TDC) in December will see a contest for the president post between a state cabinet minister and a federal cabinet minister.

NONEnergy, Green Technology and Water Minister and Miri Member of Parliament Peter Chin today confirmed his intention to contest the president post a week after state Local Government and Community Development Minister and Bawang Assan assemblyperson Woon Soon Koh made a similar announcement in Sibü.

At a packed press conference, Chin (right, on bike) who is the party organising secretary, said he made the decision today following "persuasion" by 306 grassroots leaders from 33 party branches at a meeting held at the party headquarters, Kuching, today. SUPP has 43 branches statewide.

"They feel it is inappropriate for me to shy away from responsibility but to accept it to lead the party," he told reporters after the meeting.

Chin said it was very hard for him to reject or deny the wishes of the many grassroots leaders who attended the meeting.

A total of 600 delegates will attend the SUPP TDC from Dec 8 to 11 which is expected to mark a new era for the state's oldest political party. SUPP has been trying to win the votes of urban Chinese after failing to do so in the April state election.

The party has come with a fresh strategy to ensure its survival by lining up more young and dynamic leaders.

On speculation that he will bring party treasurer David Teng to team up for the race, Chin said he had not formed a team yet.

"What's the point of having a team when at the end of the day, it is the duty of the delegates at the TDC to pick the candidates to lead the party."

Teng, who is former Repok assemblyperson, said he was not interested to contest for a top post but would leave it to the delegates to decide the likely candidates for the top posts.

Wong claims support

On Oct 9 in Sibü, Wong who is SUPP Sibü branch chairman, announced that he was willing to contest the party president post after being given commitment and pledges of support from leaders and members of the party's northern, southern and central branches.

NONEesterday, Wong (right) who is party deputy secretary-general, further announced that Senadin SUPP branch chairperson and assistant minister of social development (sports) and of communications Lee Kim Shin would be his running mate.

Wong also claimed that they had the support of Opar assemblyperson Ranum Mina, Engkilili assemblyperson Johnical Rayong, Bengoh assemblyperson Jerip Susil and Sri Aman assemblyperson Francis Harden Hollis.

SUPP president George Chan Hong Nam, who was defeated by DAP candidate Ling Sie Kiong for the Piasau seat in the April state election, had indicated that he would step down at the coming TDC.

SUPP, one of the four Barisan Nasional component parties in Sarawak, fared badly in the last state election where it lost in 13 of the 19 seats it contested, leading to calls for a new leadership to steer the party.

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