

Embrace change to strengthen Umno
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Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin urged leaders and members to embrace change to strengthen Umno, the largest party for the Malays.

He said politics should be based on thoughts and ideas as they were no longer limited to survival of the fittest but involve a battle of wits.

"The current political sphere is no longer entirely about the struggle for power, but the competition of minds and battle of ideas.

"Those who challenge our political ideology must be defeated through sharp intellect and superior arguments and not by relying on executive power," he said at Umno Youth general assembly at Dewan Merdeka, Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) today.

Former prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was also present at the assembly attended by 795 delegates.

In his policy address, Khairy stressed that Umno Youth had to accept the young with an open mind as they were more critical.

"We have to practice an inclusive culture that recognises the participation of youths and not top-to-down politics.

"Youths have their own idealism and views. To win them over, we have to involve them in national development."

He said young voters would account for 80 percent or almost 3mil of new voters at the next general election and their votes would increase from 41 percent to 49 percent.

Some 75 percent of young people who qualified to vote plan to exercise that right in the next general election.

Research also showed that 62 percent of the young voters were fence sitters who would cast their votes based on party and candidate.

"We must accept the fact that young voters are able to distinguish between mere rhetoric and genuine service, between elaborate pretensions and sincere efforts."

Adopt moderate brand of politics

He said they did not appreciate politics based on of rhetoric, demonstration, lodging of police reports and urging the arrest of those who did not share their political beliefs.

"Although such politics may still be appropriate in certain context. In all likelihood, it will only drive them further away from us.

"The new era also demands that we shape a youth leadership that is more open and progressive, respected by all levels of society, across race and religion.

"This is consistent with the moderate brand of politics or *siyasa* *wasatiyyah* practised by the Umno president himself.

Khairy said the young hope that Umno would be more open and guide them to avoid making mistakes.

"Youth members are not motivated by positions, power or projects but are the bearers of hope, defenders of the land, catalysts of spirit and courage and loyal knights.

"The New Economic Model does not sideline the Malay agenda. What it does is update the implementation methods to overcome the weaknesses of the New Economic Policy (NEP).

He added the Umno Youth struggle was towards real progress and development and not merely to protect the special rights and privileges of the Malays.

- Bernama

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