

**PM: I'm sorry for my shortcomings**  
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Outgoing prime minister and Umno president Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has apologised for his weaknesses and imperfections.

"In my years of public service, there have been times that I have erred. I too have not been able to fulfill my promises," he told delegates in his opening address at the Umno 59th general assembly in Kuala Lumpur.

"For all my mistakes and all my shortcomings, it has never been my intent to waver from the responsibilities of serving my people and my country to the best of my abilities.

"Only the Almighty is perfect. I acknowledge here that the weaknesses and imperfections are my own and today, I seek your forgiveness. I have tried to carry out my responsibilities with sincerity and honesty," he added.

The prime minister also expressed his gratitude to God for having placed him in this noble position. "I pray that the Almighty will bless me so that I have peace of mind and soul," he said.

Abdullah also acknowledged the contributions of his colleagues in Umno and Barisan Nasional, friends in the administrations and Malaysians in general.

Abdullah who took over in 2003 is scheduled to hand over the reins to his deputy Najib Abdul Razak after the Umno assembly.

### **'I never betrayed Umno'**

Meanwhile, Abdullah said he was exposed to Umno's struggles during his formative years. "It is therefore inevitable that I would inherit the Umno spirit."

"I have held fast to an unflinching conviction that has prevented me from ever betraying Umno and has led me to steer clear from those who seek to destroy it. I have never denigrated Umno.

"I have never made offensive remarks about Umno. And certainly, I have never deserted Umno, even though there was a time when I was insulted by certain members of Umno," he said.

"Indeed, one's loyalty is truly tested when the party is faced with grave challenges, during a time of difficulty and when one has no position or standing within the party," he added.

Abdullah said it was with a deep sense of love for Umno and a grave sense of responsibility to the party and the Malay race, "I have chosen not to defend my position as president of Umno."

"I have chosen to pave the way for a younger leadership, even though many within the party and the government asked me to defend my post," he added.

### **Support the new leader**

The outgoing premier said that he is passing the reins to younger captain to steer the ship and called on all quarters to support Najib.

"A younger leader who has the maturity and experience to navigate the nation to greater heights.

"I urge everyone to give him the undivided support to enable him to bring us to greater success.

"I pledge to give my undivided support to the new president of Umno - to the new prime minister of Malaysia," he added.

Speaking on his tenure as prime minister, Abdullah said he sought to introduce several mechanisms to strengthen the administration, to make it more transparent, efficient and just, to enhance the public delivery system.

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