

**Najib : close ranks after elections**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**Nov 21, 2008**

The incoming Umno president Najib Abdul Razak has urged the Wanita wing to close ranks and stay united after the election for the wing's top post in March.

He said that the contest between incumbent Rafidah Aziz and her present deputy Shahrizat Abdul Jalil should not affect unity within the women's wing.

"Wanita Umno must be professional about it and close ranks as soon as possible after the elections, and this is important," Najib told reporters in a news conference in Peru last night.

The deputy prime minister is here to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) leaders meeting.

Najib will take over the party leadership in March following the present president Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's decision to step down.

According to a Bernama report, Najib was quoted as saying that the election process for the Wanita leadership post must reflect the maturity of democracy in the party.

"We must campaign in a way that ensures a healthy and clean campaign," he said.

**'Bring her on'**

Yesterday, Shahrizat decided that she would adhere to calls made by her supporters to go for the number one post in the movement.

Incumbent Wanita Umno chief Rafidah has said that she welcomed the challenge, adding that she would then stay on for a full term if she wins.

Previously Rafidah and Shahrizat had agreed on a transition plan by which Rafidah would retain her position in March and then hand over to Shahrizat - if she remained as the deputy - to be the acting head in June.

With Shahrizat's decision to go for broke, the transition plan is now in tatters.

Najib also said that said Wanita Umno, as the backbone of Umno, must continue with its work and duties to ensure that it remained strong.

**Respect her decision**

Meanwhile, Umno vice-president Muhyiddin Yassin said Shahrizat's decision should be respected because it was based on the support of the Wanita Umno members.

The member, he said, should be given a chance to decide who was more qualified to hold the post.

What was important was that there should be nothing that could cause friction and disunity, he said in Peru where he is with Najib attending the Apec ministers meeting.

International Trade and Industry Minister Muhyiddin said elections, including those at the highest level which involved more than one candidate, were a normal process but the candidates must maintain the esprit de corps.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.  
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/93511>