

Shahrizat wants Wanita to 'spread its leadership wings'
Malaysianmirror.com
20 October 2010

KUALA LUMPUR - Wanita Umno chief Shahrizat Abdul Jalil has called on members of the movement to fight for a greater role in the government and at the same time, lay the foundation and "highways" for women to progress further.

Saying she wanted to see members of the movement becoming menteri besar, chief ministers, state Umno liaison chiefs and other senior posts, Shahrizat pledged to pursue the matter and make it a legacy of her leadership in the movement.

"This will be my legacy for Wanita Umno as a whole in this modern and progressive era," she said.

Speaking amid a rousing applause at the Wanita Umno assembly at Dewan Tun Hussein Onn, Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC), here, Shahrizat said she believed that women could go far under the leadership of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak provided that women themselves were ready, and provided that the BN won the coming general election.

She told the delegates that she believed that women would achieve much progress under the leadership of Najib, whom she described as a visionary leader.

"I've been an Umno member for 30 years and I know that there are many among Wanita Umno members who are talented and have the potentials, if only they are given the chance," she said, adding that if Umno did not want to be seen as being outmoded, it should take a look at the political gender issue seriously.

"I'm holding on to the principles that an accurate measure of a civilisation is how well-entrenched the role of women in the nation-building process.

"I'm determined to fight with you so that there will be a shift in women empowerment, especially in Wanita Umno, in the country's leadership arena," she said.

She also pledged to ensure a wider women participation in four critical sectors namely parliament, state assemblies, state executive councils and local authorities apart from seeking senior party posts either at the central leadership or at the state or divisional level, as well as in public and private sectors.

Shahrizat also called on members to help the movement "spread its leadership wings" to reach a wider section of the target group, particularly among voters.

She also called on members to remain true to the value system, saying "when we are keeping quiet, let it not be because we have no idea of what to say, and when we talk, let the words be sensible so that people will listen, and when we act, let the action be beneficial to all."

Shahrizat also called on Wanita Umno to prove their worth at the two upcoming by-elections -- for the Galas state seat in Kelantan and Batu Sapi parliamentary seat in Sabah.

On Article 153 of the Federal Constitution which touches on the rights of the Malay and Bumiputera, Shahrizat said Wanita Umno would not compromise any attempts to infringe the provision.

"At the same time, Wanita Umno will safeguard the legitimate interests of other communities as well as defending the special position of the Malay Rulers, and the special privileges of the Malay and natives of Sabah and Sarawak," she said.

"Let us not succumb to the thrill of cheap chauvinism; let there be no one infringing the constitution and the principle of consensus practised in Umno and Barisan Nasional." — Bernama

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