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# 'We serve rakyat always, not just before polls'

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**KEPALA BATAS:** Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi told Umno the general election was not just an exercise to renew the government's mandate and that electoral promises were not made merely to win votes.

"Umno and Barisan Nasional have always kept their word and fulfilled the promises they made," the prime minister and Umno president said yesterday.

"That is why we have been able to continue ruling the country," he said, adding that the BN-led government would continue to work to ensure the nation's continued progress.

Abdullah said the process of serving the people was ongoing and not done only in the run-up to the general election to secure votes.

Citing the Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER) as an example, he said it was formulated to help people, especially in the rural areas, to improve their socio-economic status.

Abdullah said the next 15 years would be crucial as the government went all out to implement the various components under the Ninth Malaysia Plan (9MP) and those thereafter.

"I have full confidence the people will continue to support us and return the mandate to us in the coming elections," he said when opening the Kepala Batas Umno division delegates conference here.

Abdullah, who is the division chief, reminded party members to remain united at all times and that only by doing so would the people continue to have confidence in the party.

"Unlike us, the opposition can only talk and dream of being in



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi in stitches as he is helped into a Puteri Umno vest by Kepala Batas Puteri Umno chief Azlina Mehtab Mohd Ishaq after launching the wing's election machinery. With them is Kepala Batas Umno deputy chief Datuk Roslan Saidin (centre). — Bernama picture

power," he said, adding that he was duty-bound to lead the people on the right path.

Earlier, Abdullah paid tribute to Umno veterans in the division who had tirelessly contributed to the party.

Abdullah later launched the Kepala Batas Putera and Puteri Umno election machinery.

The Kepala Batas Umno division urged the government to retain the New Economic Policy (NEP).

In its resolution yesterday, the division also wanted the government to stop the debate on the relevance of the NEP.

Kepala Batas Umno division secretary Datuk Abu Bakar Ya-

haya said the delegates also approved a resolution urging the government to contain the escalating price of consumer goods.

He said the division also called on the government to make it tougher for employment agents to bring in migrant workers.

In his winding-up speech, Abdullah said the resolutions would be forwarded to Umno's resolution selection committee.

Praising delegates for improving the quality of debate, he advised party members and leaders to focus on carrying out their duty.

He said they must not allow talk about the general election to affect their performance.

"We must execute our duties

and at the same time always be prepared for the (general) election.

"Treat it as though it is going to be held tomorrow," he said.

Later, when opening Kolej Kemahiran Tinggi Mara Balik Pulau, Abdullah said Malaysia wanted to be the outsourcing hub for high-tech and highly-skilled workers in Southeast Asia.

He said a big pool of such workers would attract foreign investors into the country and towards this end, more colleges and institutions offering technical courses would be built.

Another eight Kolej Kemahiran Tinggi Mara will be built under the Ninth Malaysia Plan.