

NEW STRAITS TIMES

DATE: 05/04/2008

Khairy in no rush to helm Umno Youth

NST- 5/4/2008

REMBAU: Umno Youth deputy leader Khairy Jamaluddin yesterday said he would not rush into making a bid for the youth chief's post to be vacated by Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein at the party elections in December.

The Rembau Member of Parliament instead said he would get the views of members from the branch and division levels first.

"As the deputy chief, I represent the Umno Youth institution and I cannot make any personal, hasty decisions.

"I believe my personal interests are not important as what needs to be given priority is our institution which we must take care of. As a representative of this institution, I must listen to the views of the grassroots," he said here.

After leading Umno Youth for 10 years, Hishammuddin, 47, who is the education minister, announced on Thursday that he would not be defending the post and that it was time to make way for someone else.

Khairy said he respected anyone's decision to contest the post and was confident that through the democratic process, the best leader would be chosen to lead Umno Youth.

"I hope whoever is offering himself for the post will be able to ensure the unity of the movement and continuously place this as his top priority," he said.

Asked if a contest for the top position would divide the party, Khairy said he was confident that all the members were mature and hoped no one would take the op-



Umno Youth deputy chief Khairy Jamaluddin says he will seek views of the grassroots before he decides to go for the top post

portunity to try and create disunity.

He said a contest should not in any way weaken the party, but instead further strengthen it to face future challenges.

Khairy said he respected Hishammuddin's decision not to seek re-election and pledged to continue supporting him in any other post he chose to contest in the party elections.

"However, I feel that Hishammuddin's decision is actually a loss to the Youth as he has led the movement for 10 years and made it a strong and united institution.

"I believe his accomplishments will go down in the party's and Umno Youth's history."