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## PM keen on talks with PAS for Malay unity

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has reiterated that he was ever willing to hold a *muzakarah* (discussion) with PAS leaders to strengthen Malay solidarity.

"I fervently wish to see the discussions become a reality," he said at a meeting with Malay non-governmental organisations last night.

Abdullah, who is Umno president, said Malay unity was important as it was the foundation for solidarity among Malaysians, reported *Bernama*.

He said Malays were facing various new challenges now, adding that united Malaysian Muslims could help foster better unity among the world's Muslims.

Reactions from PAS leaders to Abdullah's position on a *muzakarah* has been mixed.

PAS spiritual leader Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat said he was open to the idea of "small discussions" between PAS and Umno members but not party-to-party meetings, while PAS president Datuk Seri Hadi Awang in an interview with the party's newspaper *Harakah Daily* welcomed the move saying that PAS members had been in talks with individuals from Umno.

At another function earlier in the day, Abdullah said gardening could be a relaxing hobby, adding that people could cultivate their own "edible gardens" by growing vegetables and herbs.

Speaking at the launch of the nine-day Malaysian International Landscape and Garden Festival (Laman 2008) at Perdana Lake Gardens yesterday, he said, by consuming home-grown vegetables,

people would spend less.

Themed *Rhythm of Nature*, Laman 2008 is organised by the Housing and Local Government Ministry's National Landscape Department and hosted by City Hall.

Abdullah said edible plants such as lemon grass, *bunga kantan* (torch ginger), chilli and ladies' fingers would also beautify the surroundings.

The event also showcased for the first time an edible garden inspired by the Prime Minister's wife Datin Seri Jeanne Abdullah.

Other attractions are the Garden of Four Seasons and theme gardens.

Abdullah also urged everyone to protect the environment.

He said Laman 2008 was the biggest landscape festival in the region and should be seen as a major tourist event.