

THE SUN

DATE: 26/02/2008

Abdullah: We keep our promises

The Sun - 26/2/2008

Abdullah and Najib with BN secretary-general Datuk Seri Radzi Sheikh Ahmad and leaders of other BN component parties at the launch of the BN manifesto.

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KUALA LUMPUR: Barisan Nasional chairman Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday launched the coalition's 24-page manifesto, containing promises he assured the people that the BN will be able to keep.

The manifesto, with the theme *Security, Peace and Prosperity*, was drafted in full cognizance that the BN government is capable of delivering its promises to all Malaysians, unlike the manifestos launched by the opposition parties, he said.

"The Opposition can only make empty promises. From their manifestos, we could see that they are desperate. Their coalition would not be able to convince the people that they are capable of generating development for the country.

"This kind of approach is not liked by the people whereby each party had come up with its own manifesto. But in BN, our leaders managed to reach a consensus and come up with a single manifesto which represents the people," Abdullah said.

He was addressing leaders of the BN component parties and Federal Territory BN members when launching the manifesto at the party headquarters at the Putra World Trade Centre.

Abdullah also unveiled BN's progress report which he said is being done for the first time.

Among others, the report detailed the progress achieved by BN from

2004 to 2007 in the areas of economy, balanced development, education, law and order, public services, reducing corruption and improving governance, religion and unity, and foreign policy.

It also underlined BN's promises which Abdullah said were made based on the confidence that the BN he leads has been tried and tested.

"We understand the needs of the people and have delivered on our promises over the years. We also know how to take this nation forward. We have a vision and mission to make Malaysia glorious," he said.

He expressed hope that BN would again receive the people's mandate in the 12th general election so that it could continue to bring development to the country and give the people what they want.

He said BN has a proven track record and experience and its leaders will continue to serve the people and work together with them in tackling all challenges.

"Rising oil prices and other significant events could also affect our own domestic economic landscape. But, we stand ready to anticipate, pre-empt and take measures to safeguard the well-being of the people, whatever the challenge," he added.

Earlier, at a function in Butterworth, Abdullah said he could not support the argument by some that the government should use Petronas money to subsidise and reduce fuel prices.

He said: "If Petronas is going to keep giving for everything and we

deplete its resources, that will be the end of it."

He said the government had to date spent more than RM43.4 billion in subsidies on essential items including fuel which is even more than what has been allocated for development, including building schools and roads amounting to RM40 billion.

Acknowledging that the rise in oil prices had a domino effect, Abdullah said the government was more concerned about the rise in essential food items. "People need to eat and we also have to look at this aspect," he added.

He said the government had reduced the burden of parents by abolishing school fees, giving out free text books to all students, abolishing examination fees and also giving out free food to poor students.

"Despite the fuel hike, we have also not raised electricity and water tariffs. The government also heavily subsidises medical services, keeping consultation fees at only RM5. The fee covers hospital services and medication.

"If this government is not bothered about the people, we would have increased oil prices long ago and everything would also go up in tandem, including transport costs and rental which would eventually result in rise in price of goods.

"We are also controlling the prices of essential items like rice because the BN government cares for the people," he said.