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# Handover in 2010

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## NAJIB TO SUCCEED ABDULLAH IN MID-JUNE

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** June 2010 – that's when Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi will step down as Umno president and prime minister and hand over power to his deputy and chosen successor, Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak.

He said the process of transferring power started yesterday and he would not lead the Barisan Nasional in the next general election. The government's mandate ends in 2013.

The timeline for the transfer of power was discussed at the Umno Supreme Council meeting yesterday afternoon and Abdullah, who turns 69 in November, conveyed his decision to some 900 division leaders during a special briefing at PWTC. His announcement was met with a standing ovation from the grassroots leaders.

Abdullah, who seemed relieved rather than sad, told a packed press conference he would defend his presidency in the party polls in December, as would Najib. He said anyone could challenge him for the post.

Why the timeline for him to step

down? "This is ensure I have enough time to implement all the projects and plans and strengthen the party. Najib would also need some time to prepare himself to face the (next general) election," he said.

"It is important that the process of handing over of power takes some time and to give Najib a chance to attend forums and meetings which I normally attend so that he can start interacting with leaders from other countries as well."

Among Najib's first international assignments would be to address the UN General Assembly in September.

Would judicial reforms and the government's battle against corruption, including the setting up of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, be completed by 2010? "InsyAllah (God-willing), yes."

Was his announcement too early and would he be pressured? "This is an appropriate move. If pressure, (it would be) before December. But there are also many who asked me to complete (my term). There are many views. What matters is my feeling and this is my choice."

Would he change his mind? "No. I have made up my mind."

When it was pointed out that he

looked "expressionless", and asked if he felt sad to surrender power, he said: "I feel a bit of sadness, of course, but I think I feel more than that. I feel more a sense of achievement, I think I have taken an action which has been accepted well. That is what we want."

"I think the leadership transition must be carried out smoothly and well-accepted by the party so that the successor would be able to lead the (whole) party, not part of the party or his people only."

Asked about Opposition Leader Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail's application to table a no-confidence motion against him, Abdullah said: "That's her right to do so."

On a possible challenge for the Umno top post from Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah: "It's up to him what (he wants) to do."

Najib, who was also at the press conference, said he was very touched by Abdullah's willingness to hand over the posts of Umno president and BN chairman to him.

"Today starts an orderly and neat power transition process according to Umno traditions when the prime minister gave the confidence in me to become his successor," he said.

"It is not easy to relinquish a post

but it was made having regard to public opinion. I feel touched and fortunate when the Right Honourable gave the trust to me."

Najib said his relationship with Abdullah was very close throughout and hoped this would continue because Umno needed solid support from past and present leaders and its members, reports Bernama.

"The leadership process can be made in good ways without disregarding traditions or something which gives a negative image to Umno or the voters," he said.

During the power transition period, "the prime minister will determine the role and plan" and he would always regard Abdullah as his boss.

Najib also announced his readiness to defend his deputy president's post in the party elections and hoped for solid support from party members.

"I am asking for a solid support given to the prime minister's nomination as party president and I appeal for the transition plan to be accepted by the party because it is the party's voice that will determine everything," he said.