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Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi signing the minutes of last week's cabinet meeting before the start of his last cabinet session in Putrajaya yesterday. — Bernama picture

Abdullah: Support Najib

Strive to meet the people's aspirations, BN leaders urged

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PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday chaired his last cabinet meeting.

His advice to his cabinet colleagues: pursue the national missions and policies put in place to ensure the country's strength in facing challenges of the future.

Ministers, as they were leaving the Prime Minister's Office compound where the weekly meeting took place, said Abdullah stressed that Barisan Nasional leaders must strive to meet the people's aspirations.

At the meeting, which they described as cheery and "at times sombre", Abdullah pledged he would refrain from interfering in the new administration and asked that they give Datuk Seri Najib Razak their undivided support.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said Abdullah hoped his policies and initiatives would continue to be well executed.

This included the commissions that he had set up to ensure a more effective judiciary and to fight graft.

"The prime minister expressed hope that there would be continuity in the policies agreed upon in past cabinet meetings.

"We believe that the policies, decisions and changes made by Pak Lah in his five-year administration, must be implemented.

"He also touched on the economic corridor projects and the feasibility studies done on them.

"The cabinet noted that although there was a transition of power, we are still under the same ruling government. To us, the past policies should be continued, with coming changes being deter-

mined by the incoming prime minister," he said.

Information Minister Datuk Ahmad Shabery Cheek said Abdullah also asked that the new leadership put emphasis on sound human capital development.

"Abdullah shared with us his aspirations for the nation and called on us to be effective leaders under the leadership of Datuk Seri Najib," he said.

International Trade and Industry Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, who by convention will become deputy prime minister in the next administration, said the cabinet expressed its appreciation to Abdullah for his contributions and sacrifices to the party and government.

"The cabinet also lauded him for facilitating a smooth transition."

Education Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said Ab-

dullah also spoke on issues close to his heart, including unity among the people and empowering the people, especially the young, through quality education.

Abdullah, he added, urged the cabinet to give prominence to matters that form the strength of the country's development.

"I am rather disappointed that many do not really know what Pak Lah is all about, like we in the cabinet do.

"To us this man has a huge heart, a leader who is sincere and always puts the interests of the people and the nation before his.

"My hope is that the nation remembers him for these traits in his leadership," Hishammuddin, who is a newly-minted Umno vice-president, said.

Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Khaled Nordin said Abdullah expressed confidence in Najib's leadership.