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# Najib on wearing two hats

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## 'Should I speak as party president or Prime Minister?'

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**PETALING JAYA:** Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak says he always faces a dilemma of whether he should speak as party president or the Prime Minister at Umno general assemblies.

He said that his audience was Umno members who were Malays, Muslims and bumiputra, so "I naturally have to speak on issues of interest to this demographic group".

"The people have to remember that this is the Umno general assembly. This is not the Budget speech, Ambang Merdeka speech or anything of that sort," he said in a special televised interview last night.

It was in conjunction with the party's 2016 general assembly which begins today.

However, Najib was quick to also point out that this did not mean he would discard his larger role as leader for all Malaysians.

"I also bear in mind that I am the Prime Minister and understand that I should not offend the sensitivities of the non-Malays and non-bumiputra," he said.

Asked what he hoped to achieve at this general assembly - believed to be the last before the 14th general election - Najib said he wanted Umno to be a unified, confident party that also concerned itself with the needs of the *rakyat* and nation.

"We must show that we have a strong motivation to continue fighting as a party that can lead the nation.

"Unity is important because the *rakyat* will only be confident in us when they see a political party that stands united," he added.

On ties between Umno and PAS, the Prime Minister said that while the PAS of today was not like it was in the old days, there were some issues that both still disagreed on.

"PAS today is more committed to issues that involve the needs of the *ummah*, much like Umno.

"We are more comfortable with each other now but we move in our own groups and parties, there are times we disagree and there are times we agree," he said.

On how Umno should adjust itself in line with changes of the times and the aspirations of its members, he said it may need to find better channels to propagate its messages to the people.

He said there was too much misinformation on social media, causing the people to become confused.

"The positive side of Umno does not reach the *rakyat* and this has to be worked on. Umno has to be more inclusive and engage other groups, not just the staunch supporters."

Najib also highlighted that Malaysia's economy was still growing. He said he spoke about this in a phone conversation with US President-elect Donald Trump two days ago.

"He asked about Malaysia's economy and I said it grew 4.3% in the third quarter of 2016.

"Trump then said Malaysia's economy is very good. He said America's economy grew 1% and he wants to achieve 4%," Najib recounted.



**Balancing act:** Najib speaking to reporters during a question and answer session in Putrajaya. — Bernama



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Shahrizat goes with the flow