

**Honesty has been my leadership principle, says Taib Mahmud – Bernama  
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Outgoing Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud (pic) said yesterday that honesty in serving the people had been one of his leadership principles throughout his political career.

He said all politicians should subscribe to this principle in order to unite the people that they lead rather than to confuse them.

"I say what I say and maybe as diplomatic as I can, but I still say it. This (stating the truth) probably is (done) more frank in a smaller group who can understand me better than in a bigger crowd," he said in an interview with Bernama at his residence in Kuching.

In the interview, he said he faced a hard time in the early days of his 50-year political career when there was lesser racial understanding as the people could not comprehend his ideas.

"After I had served long enough, I think the people understood me much better and I used the words 'politics of development', something that the people can understand and aspire to (achieve)," he said.

Taib, who turns 78 in May, said his political career which started in 1963 had led him to mix with a lot of people, and he enjoyed every moment of it.

"There had been no dull moments in my life for a long time. I'm happy because every time I mix with the people, I learn something... I gain something," he said.

He said he had no immediate plan to share his experiences by writing a book as he needed some time to adjust to his new role as the Sarawak Yang di-Pertua Negeri.

Taib, who retires as chief minister today and will be succeeded by Tan Sri Adenan Satem, is scheduled to take his oath as the new Yang di-Pertua Negeri of Sarawak on Saturday.

"It's not the time for me to write anything first. I want to look at the situation from outside a chief minister's eyes," he said.

Upon his retirement, Taib told Bernama he would need to readjust his life after having been a leader who had been confined solely to politics over the years.

He said he hoped that his next role would enable him to travel around Sarawak to talk and mingle with people from all walks of life in a non-political atmosphere.

"(After stepping down as the chief minister) I want to be a real Sarawakian and feel like a free Sarawakian personality (rather) than just being (known as) a Sarawak politician," he said.

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