

**Call for Present and Past Leaders to Close Rank Is Sincere Advice – Zahid  
Bernama  
Dec 11, 2015**

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 11 (Bernama) -- The call by UMNO delegates for the party's present and past leadership to close rank should be regarded a sincere advice by UMNO members who love the party and want to see it continue to be on the right track.

UMNO vice-president Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said the advice came from the heart of the delegates who looked up on the party leadership for guidance.

He said it was important that the "past leaders love the new leadership and the new leadership to respect the past leaders".

"This combination is important because UMNO members, in general, do not want any problem among leaders, whether those who have served in the government, and the present ones," he told reporters on the fourth day of the UMNO general assembly here today.

Also present was UMNO vice-president Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein, who is also Defence Minister.

"From the debate, some said it by making insinuations, others directly, but to me, they are all sincere," he added.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also Deputy Prime Minister, said today's debate centred on empowering the presidential institution and translating UMNO policies into government policies for the good of the people.

He said the presidential institution should be maintained as the captain of the political ship for a smooth journey to achieve the objective of the party's struggle.

Ahmad Zahid said the delegates also wanted leaders to go to the ground more often to better understand problems facing the people.

Meanwhile, Hishammuddin reminded delegates of their responsibilities to disseminate information obtained at the assembly to the grassroot members when they returned to their respective states.

"The responsibility to close rank is not only on the shoulders of the leaders, but also delegates and divisional leaders. Bring back what is discussed in the assembly to the grassroot members," he added.

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