

Headline	Service comes first		
MediaTitle	New Straits Times		
Date	05 Dec 2013	Language	English
Circulation	95,860	Readership	236,000
Section	Local News	Page No	2,6
ArticleSize	444 cm <sup>2</sup>	Journalist	N/A
PR Value	RM 43,456		



# Service comes first

**COMMITTED:** Delegates leave assembly to rush home to assist in flood-hit states

**A**S the flood situation took a turn for the worse in parts of the country on the same day Umno's annual assembly went full swing, the party displayed its commitment to serving the rakyat.

Key delegates left the assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre for their home states to mobilise assistance.

There was a mini-exodus as Umno leaders, including Indera Mahkota Youth chief Muhammad Faiz Hashim, rushed to Kuantan to help in flood-relief efforts.

The state capital is left almost paralysed as electricity supply and communication lines have been cut off in many areas.

"Everyone must assist the victims. Everything is under control and the authorities are doing their best," said Faiz.

The monsoon floods have displaced some 37,000 people in from

Pahang, Johor, Terengganu and Kelantan.

Pahang saw nearly 22,000 people being evacuated as flood waters inundated several districts.

At a juncture as monumental as yesterday, when the three wings had their assemblies, the decision to cut short their attendance came amid clarion calls by the wing leaders for the movements to shed their traditional roles in the 67-year-old party and fight for the grassroots.

Umno Youth wants to stop being just a pressure group in the party to better handle issues affecting the masses; Wanita insists in being the backbone of Umno while Puteri has transformed into a mature entity.

Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin was firm when he outlined the movement's plans at its assembly, moments after having the audience in stitches with a poem, which poked fun on his tiff with pop

singer Datuk Siti Nurhaliza not too long ago.

"We cannot rely on the old formula and remain as a pressure group. Such an approach is only apt in the past to meet the needs at that time.

"In this context, people are no longer won by rhetoric that does not bring progressive change to their lives.

"The progressive ideals of Umno Youth are not empty or consist of mindless chatter."

Khairy said wing members would no longer keep quiet on matters affecting the grassroots.

He was fiery in his unprecedented criticism against Tenaga Nasional Bhd's recent hike in tariffs and urged the power supplier to be more sensitive to the people's needs.

"As a government-linked company, TNB has to be concerned about the rakyat's (wellbeing) and not be solely motivated by the bottom line."

→ Turn to Page 6

## Desire for change strong among wings

→ From Page 2

Khairy's statement is in tandem with growing public displeasure over the matter, with another rebuke lobbed by Umno supreme council member Datuk Seri Reezal Merican Naina Merican, who felt the power supplier was not doing enough to

explain the hike.

"People are hurt when an announcement on TNB's profits were made without taking into account the sensitivities of the people, who are experiencing the burden of rising cost of living."

Wanita Umno, in tandem with the consensus to change, reiterated that

it no longer wanted to be a mere wing of the party.

Instead, it felt that it was high time for Wanita to be recognised as the party's "backbone", as acknowledged by deputy president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin in his address on Tuesday night.

"We are the mother of Umno,

Headline	Service comes first		
MediaTitle	New Straits Times		
Date	05 Dec 2013	Language	English
Circulation	95,860	Readership	236,000
Section	Local News	Page No	2,6
ArticleSize	444 cm <sup>2</sup>	Journalist	N/A
PR Value	RM 43,456		

while the Youth and Puteri wings are our children.

“We want to be recognised not because we are women, but for our commitment and sacrifices that have led to the party’s stability,” said the wing’s chief, Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, at its assembly yesterday.

Shahrizat said the wing had proved itself to be the party’s pillar of strength in times of need, with the ladies in red being the party’s foremost frontliners.

“We are more than just a wing of the party, but the core and backbone of Umno’s overall strength,” she said to rousing cheers from delegates at

Dewan Merdeka.

The party’s youngest wing, Puteri, used a lighter anecdote in calling for change.

Newly elected Puteri chief Mas Ermieyati Samsudin said the wing should not be seen as “cheerleaders” or “pin-up girls”, as it had matured since its inception 10 years ago.

Mas Ermieyati raised several substantive issues, such as those affecting the safety of women and children, and called on the party leadership to relax a requirement for its members to contest only for posts if they had been a member for at least three years.

The relaxation of rules to contest,

she said, would not deny young members the chance to lead in the movement in tandem with the call for Umno to listen to the voice of the young.

“Puteri had also responded swiftly to instances, such as providing aid for those affected by the Ringlet Dam disaster in Cameron Highlands. This culture of prioritising welfare has long been inculcated in the wing.”

The commitment shown by the party wings to change with time is viewed by delegates as setting the tone for the party to face challenges running up to the general election five years from now.



**Umno Youth delegates** at the wing’s assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.