

# Women sore over PM's suggestion

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — The National Council of Women's Organisations

(NCWO) has not taken too kindly to the Prime Minister's suggestion that career women at certain levels and in certain sectors give up their jobs and concentrate on being good mothers when they had more children and their husbands were earning enough to support the entire family.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, at the opening of a national-level conference of women's organisations at the National Institute of Public Administration (Intan) yesterday, said that women played a vital role as mothers and educators in the home.

Giving priority to family development, he added, was one of the strategies of achieving the Government's target of a national population of 70 million in 115 years' time.

Responding to the

day: "Many women are terribly upset about this."

Women, she stressed, were an integral part of the nation's manpower resources.

"There are many women in the legal, medical and educational fields who are rendering a high standard of dedicated service."

As such there should be no question of them quitting to become full-time housewives and mothers."

However, she added that the NCWO would like to see the Government make appropriate amendments to existing laws and regulations to enable women in both the public and private sectors to

take time off for a year or more to attend to their infants at a time they were most needed at home.

"After that they should be able to re-enter their employment without any loss of service and benefits ... there are women who would very much like to take time off to be with their children," added Mrs Gurusamy.

The NCWO also suggested that the Government improve the country's infrastructure as far as child-care is concerned.

For example, they said, the Government, as well as the private sector, should set up professionally-run child-care centres in and around places of work.

Mrs Gurusamy consented that in the final analysis it is up to the individual to decide whether it's best to pursue a career or stay at home to mother their children on a full-time basis.

In Penang, the Indian Cultural and Arts Society (Picas) today supported Dr Mahathir's call to women to concentrate more on family development.

Picas spokesman, Mrs Janaga Sundram, said the family unit was the basic social unit and, therefore, of extreme importance.

"The love, warmth and guidance given by the mother plays an important role in the development of the child.

Prime Minister's suggestion, the secretary-general of NCWO, Mrs John Gurusamy, said to