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Be happy with appearance, women advised

PETALING JAYA, Sun. - Women have been advised to be more confident and comfortable with their appearance and not be influenced by others on how they should look.

"Always be happy with the way you are. We must never allow ourselves to be coerced or persuaded into conforming to other people's standards of beauty, shapes and sizes," Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir said when launching the "Love your body, love yourself," self-esteem campaign at Sunway Pyramid yesterday.

The project was jointly organised by Body Shop and the Women's Aid Organisation in conjunction with the National Women's Day.

Marina said while it is not wrong to want to improve on one's appearance, the individual should only work towards looking her best and not someone else's best.

"It's sad that some women go for form over substance and they end up spending too much time on the exterior. Personally, I feel we don't need to go to great lengths like lightening our hair colour, skin, or putting on coloured contact lenses. At times, we may end up looking like someone who came from outer space."

Marina said women needed to re-examine themselves and feel more positive about their appearance, have a higher self-esteem and feel more empowered with what they have achieved.

Earlier, Body Shop managing director Mina Cheah-Foong said women needed facts that would help them relax, and not overwrought opinions that make them diet excessively.

"Most of us will never look perfect and the scary thing is the message which prevails that 'you can if you try hard enough'. What I am angry about is that the strategy is so successful, we are even alienated from our own bodies.

"We have been taught to despise bulges, stretch marks and wrinkles, which in actual fact show how we've worked hard, produced fabulous kids, enjoyed good meals, laughed, cried and moved on."

At the event, participants and shoppers were also introduced to a huge poster of Ruby, Body Shop's answer to Barbie. Also present were SungeiWay Group president, Tan Sri Dr Jeffrey Cheah's wife Puan Sri Susan Cheah, executive director of Women's Aid Organisation Ivy Josiah and the New Straits Times features editor Aishah Ali.

(END)