

11 SEP 1997

Foundation

FOUNDATON REPRESENTATIVE LAUDS UTUSAN FUND

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 11 (Bernama) -- Sarang Bangun Foundation Representative in Malaysia Ali Mamat today welcomed the initiative by Utusan Melayu (M) Berhad to launch a fund raising drive for the foundation to help widows and orphans of the Moros in Mindanao, Southern Philippines.

He said the fund raising campaign launched today proved once again the sincerity and love of Malaysians for universal human values.

The foundation with its headquarters in Zamboanga City was set up to provide education and vocational training to about 50,000 orphans and 10,000 widows of the Moro freedom fighters who perished in the nearly 30-year armed conflict between the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and government forces.

The conflict which was a struggle for self-government by the Moros ended when the leader of the MNLF Prof Nur Misuari signed a peace accord with President Fidel Ramos in Manila on September 2 last year.

According to Ali, the efforts of the foundation's founder Haji Edward Iblah Lim to rehabilitate those people should receive the support of all Malaysians who are evidently better off than them.

Apart from doing voluntary work, Edward is also the Investment Board Chairman of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) which is headed by Misuari.

In conjunction with the fund raising drive, Editor-in-Chief of the Kumpulan Akhbar Utusan Datuk Johan Jaafar said the move by Utusan was in response to the call by delegates to the just concluded Umno General Assembly to help those people.

More than RM23,000 was collected from the delegates and among the donors were Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The donations would be used to erect a new wing to the foundation's school in Zamboangan City and to build or renovate more vocational training workshops for the widows of the MNLF freedom fighters in Mindanao, covering 14 provinces including the four ARMM provinces.

Edward is expected to be here this week to express his gratitude to donors and everyone who had taken the initiative in the fund raising. --

BERNAMA

AM HAR AAM