

30 JUL 1997

Marina-AIDS

HAVE COMPREHENSIVE IN-HOUSE AIDS PROGRAMMES, MARINA TELLS FIRMS

SHAH ALAM, July 30 (Bernama) -- Malaysian AIDS Foundation President Datuk Paduka Marina Mahathir today called on local firms to set up a comprehensive in-house AIDS programmes to educate their staff.

She said several multinational corporations had already introduced such programmes, and the foundation was also holding talks with eight local companies willing to have such in-house programmes with the cooperation of the Malaysian AIDS Association.

Marina said this was necessary to clear misconceptions about AIDS, educate management and staff on the precautions to be taken and assure them that it was alright to continue dealing with those infected with HIV.

"Working with these people is not dangerous except in certain cases like in hospitals or medical laboratories," she told a news conference after opening a dialogue session on AIDS at the workplace held at the Institut Teknologi Mara here.

She said employers should not handle cases of HIV infected person by sacking them but should instead find other alternatives like transferring them to other departments which posed less risks.

Marina promised to help AIDS victims who had been discriminated at work to seek redress, although the laws on such matters had yet to be tried in Malaysia.

She said even though AIDS awareness campaigns had succeeded in raising public awareness about the dangers of the killer disease, more needed to be done for education and understanding of the disease.

Many still thought they could never be infected while many others were still fearful of accepting AIDS patients into the mainstream of society, she said. -- BERNAMA

AZH LL AAM