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Instilling AIDS awareness in target groups

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - More AIDS education and prevention programmes targeted at vulnerable or marginalised groups, such as women, youths, people living with HIV and AIDS patients, sex workers and dadah users are needed.

Malaysian AIDS Foundation president Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir said today more than 22,000 Malaysians had been detected with HIV or AIDS, and the trend showed no signs of receding.

"Many of the existing programmes are not focused enough on specific groups or are not outcome-based.

"It's not enough to pin up posters and have people talking about what they intend to do without following up to see that they actually do it," she said after the launching of Fashion Aid '97 at the Lot 10 shopping complex today.

Fashion Aid '97 patron Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali launched the two-day auction and sales extravaganza aimed at raising funds for AIDS education, prevention and care.

The event, offering new and used designer clothes, fashion accessories and home furnishings, raised 10 per cent of its RM250,000 target within half an hour with an auction of personal items, including those of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Formula One driver Michael Schumacher.

Other items to be auctioned include contributions from Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, South Africa's President Nelson Mandela and actor Mel Gibson.

Among the 48 companies which donated items for the sale and lucky draw was FJ Benjamin Sdn Bhd, which contributed RM30,000 worth of new Gucci, Guess and Fendi designer wear, ties and handbags.

Also slated for the two days are an AIDS awareness exhibition, performances by artistes including Instant Cafe Theatre, Prema Lucas and the Alley Cats, and AIDS quiz hosted by television personality Gary Thanesan.

Fashion Aid '97 is organised by Isetan, Lot 10, Malaysia Tatler, Regatta de Blonde, The Star and the Malaysian AIDS Foundation.

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