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Local volunteers corps to be launched July 22

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THE Yayasan Salam Malaysia, to be launched on July 22, will help the country to harness the spirit of volunteerism, particularly among the younger generation.

Acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the foundation, which has been likened to the US Peace Corps, will be chaired by the United Nations General Assembly president Tan Sri Razali Ismail.

"It will also be managed by a board of directors and supported by a special task force to streamline voluntary work in the country," he said when briefing non-governmental organisations at the Prime Minister's Department in Kuala Lumpur on the programme's launching.

President of Yayasan Amal Usiamas Datuk Abdullah Malim Baginda, former Deputy AGP Tan Sri Samsuri Arshad, former women activist Marina Yusof and Member of Parliament for Santubong Rohani Karim are among those who have been proposed to sit on the board.

The task force, whose members will be those in the younger generation category, is expected to be led by the Centre of Peace Initiative chairman Anuar Tahir.

Anwar said the growing importance of instilling the spirit of volunteerism among youth has somewhat prompted the Government to set up the Yayasan Salam.

"We must instill the spirit of volunteerism among our youth.

"It has been the main reason behind the setting up of the Yayasan, which will also eliminate overlapping activities of the many voluntary bodies in the country," he added.

Anwar said he wants the Yayasan Salam to promote efforts to extend voluntary services to remote areas in the country, as well as in the developing countries such as Cambodia, the Philippines and African nations.

The Yayasan Salam was initially scheduled to be launched next month.

It was, however, moved to a later date so that better preparations can be made.

"We hope the extra one-and-a-half month will assist in making the Yayasan a more organised foundation, and a more effective entity.

"We want to streamline the activities of existing voluntary bodies so that there is no overlapping," he added.

Anwar also said that the Government feels that there is a need to establish Yayasan Salam because Malaysia now has the capability to assist other developing countries.

"If the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has succeeded in placing Malaysia on the international scene, the Yayasan will help Malaysians contribute their voluntary services to the world," he added.

Yayasan Salam is designed along the lines of the US Peace Corps established in 1961 to help countries in their development, by providing skilled workers in the fields of education, agriculture, health, trade, technology and community development.

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