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Panel to discuss IPPF charter on sex, reproduction

KLANG, Thurs. - The International Planned Parenthood Federation will hold a panel discussion on the IPPF Charter on Sexual and Reproductive Rights soon.

The objective would be to come up with recommendations to further advance sexual and reproductive rights in the region, its regional director, V.T. Palan said today.

The panel discussion has been scheduled for July 25 at the Nikko Hotel in Jalan Ampang, Kuala Lumpur.

About 100 participants from varied backgrounds including women's rights and health advocates, lawyers and academics are expected at the one-day meeting.

Palan said the charter represented IPPF's response to the challenge of defining sexual and reproductive rights in human rights terms.

The two key objectives of the charter, he added were:

- * to raise awareness of the extent to which sexual and reproductive rights have already been recognised as human rights by the international community in internationally adopted UN and other declarations, conventions and covenants; and,

- * to make clear the connection between human rights language and key issues relevant to sexual and reproductive rights - to make the link between for example, the right to privacy, and the right to confidentiality when seeking sexual and reproductive health care services.

Twelve rights have been identified in the charter. They include the Right to Life; to Liberty and Security of Person; to Equality, and to be Free from all Forms of Discrimination; to Information and Education; to choose whether or not to marry and to found and plan a family.

The panelists include Dr Vanessa Griffen, co-ordinator of the Gender and Development programme at the Asian and Pacific Development Centre; Dr Kartono Mohamad, president of the Indonesian Planned Parenthood Association and Dr Rashidah Shuib of the School of Medical Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Kelantan campus.

Palan said the Minister for National Unity and Social Development, Datin Paduka Zaleha Ismail, would open the panel discussion in which director-general of the National Population and Family Development Board Dr Raj Karim and president of Malaysian AIDS Council, Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir, would be special speakers.

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