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Plan of action on social ills ready by June

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - A national plan of action incorporating proposals by State Governments and political parties on ways to combat social ills among youths in the country will be ready by June.

National Unity and Social Development Minister Datin Paduka Zaleha Ismail said her ministry had compiled data on the extent of problems involving youths and would like to have the plan of action ready "as soon as possible."

Zaleha did not, however, furnish details of the findings conducted by the ministry.

"The ministry's secretary-general (Datuk Dr Zainul Ariff Hussain) has briefed the State Governments and political parties on the extent of problems involving youths based on our findings.

"He will also be briefing the Conference of Rulers tomorrow," she told reporters after closing the first Asian Conference on Parkinson's Disease at Nikko Hotel today.

So far, only the Penang, Malacca and Perak State Governments have not yet been briefed. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will be briefing Barisan Nasional leaders on March 11.

Zaleha said: "Once all parties are briefed, they will formulate their own plan of action which the ministry will compile and incorporate into the national plan of action."

The Cabinet Committee on Social Ills, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, had agreed that the task of combating moral decadence among youths should be shouldered by a secretariat placed under the National Unity and Social Development Ministry.

The committee, comprising Zaleha, Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, Health Minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng, Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik and Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, first met on March 26.

Zaleha said: "We have already started to receive proposals on the kind of programmes that should be carried out to help redress the current social problems concerning our youths."

She added that the ministry was currently carrying out several programmes with the co-operation of non-governmental organisations to help combat social ills.

"The National Family Planning and Development Board will also conduct a parenting course targeted at parents with young children.

She said training for the ministry's officers would start on March 22.

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