

12 OCT 1997

PROGRAMMES TO RID STIGMAS AGAINST DRUG ADDICTS

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 12 (Bernama) --The Malaysian Aids Council will implement programmes to help rid of the stigma on former drug addicts including HIV carriers.

Its president Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir said today that apart from continuously educating the public about drug addiction, HIV and Aids, there would also be an awareness programme to encourage them to interact with ex-addicts.

She said that because of the stigma placed on them, many ex-addicts refused to come forward to speak about their experience at public awareness programmes.

Marina told reporters this at the second anniversary celebration of the "Bakti Kasih" project organised by the Persatuan Pengasih Malaysia at Chow Kit, here. The programme emphasises on a deeper understanding of HIV and Aids victims and former addicts.

She said ex-addicts were also discriminated against by the private sector by not employing them.

Employment is a part of the rehabilitation programme, she said. "Without a job there will be a vacuum in the rehabilitation process which can spur the ex-addicts to return to their old habit."

Marina awarded medals to six rehabilitated drug addicts at the function.

--BERNAMA

RA HAR SK