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## Ensuring welfare of the disabled

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - The National Unity and Social Development Ministry today set up 12 technical committees to plan, implement and coordinate activities and programmes for the disabled.

The committees, comprising officials from the public and private sectors, non-governmental organisations and representatives of the disabled, have to come up with plans of action by next March.

The committees were established during the first meeting of the National Advisory and Consultative Council for Disabled Persons chaired by National Unity and Social Development Minister Datin Paduka Zaleha Ismail at her ministry today.

The concept is based on the Multi-sectoral Collaborative Action extolled by the Proclamation on the Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities in the Asia Pacific region which was signed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on May 16, 1994.

The proclamation was signed by Malaysia in conjunction with the United Nations Decade of the Disabled Persons in the Asia Pacific region 1993-2002.

The 10-year campaign was endorsed at the Economic and Social Commission for the Asia and the Pacific conference in Beijing in 1992.

Speaking to reporters after today's meeting, Zaleha said multi-sectoral support would ensure programmes and activities were implemented effectively and in a co-ordinated manner.

The committees comprise Technical Committees on Legislation, Information, Public Awareness, Accessibility and Communication, Education, Training and Employment, Prevention of Causes of Disabilities, Community-based Rehabilitation, Assistive Devices, Self-Help Organisations, Regional Co-operation and National Co-ordination.

Among others, the committee on legislation will be reviewing and studying existing laws and code of practices to remove all discriminatory elements.

The other committees will be responsible for co-ordinating and disseminating information about the disabled people; creating awareness; ensuring public transport and buildings are user-friendly; and ensuring disabled people get proper education and training and equal employment opportunities.

Meanwhile, various activities have been lined up for the International Day of Disabled Persons on Dec 3.

Zaleha will launch the national-level celebration at the Komplek Budaya Kraf, Jalan Conlay.

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