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Unity

PANEL DRAWING UP NATIONAL UNITY PLAN FOR NEW MILLENNIUM

KUALA LUMPUR, May 26 (Bernama) -- An action plan to further consolidate co-existence between the country's multi-racial and multi-religious population is to be drawn up soon to take on challenges in the new millennium.

National Unity and Social Development Minister Datin Paduka Zaleha Ismail announced this today after chairing the inaugural meeting of the new National National Unity Advisory Panel for the 1998-2000 term which will draft the action plan.

"Although we already have unity-oriented activities and programmes, such an action plan is necessary to reinforce national unity to face the greater challenges ahead," she told a news conference after the meeting at the Prime Minister's Department here.

Zaleha is chairman of the 49-member panel for 1998-2000 appointed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

It comprised state government officials, ministry secretaries generals and social activists representing the various racial groups and she hoped it would forward views and determine the direction towards reinforcing national unity and tackling related issues.

In her speech earlier, Zaleha said preserving national unity was all the more crucial during the current economic problems given that any irresponsible group could take advantage of the situation to create racial tension.

Zaleha said she would see to it that the panel, previously known as the Unity Board advisory panel, would meet twice yearly.

The previous panel last met in 1992.

As like previously, the new panel is tasked with discussing unity-related issues and making recommendations to the government on ways of tackling racial conflicts, among others.

At the meeting, Zaleha on behalf of the prime minister, presented certificates of appointment to the panel members.

-- BERNAMA

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