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Mahathir-Women

SET UP BODY TO MANAGE JEWELLERY CONTRIBUTIONS, WOMEN TOLD

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 23 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today urged women's organisations to set up a body to handle the sale and investment of jewellery contributed by those wanting to help the government tackle the economic turmoil faced by the country.

The prime minister said that since the government's call to the womenfolk to sell their jewellery and keep the proceeds in banks or invest in unit trusts, many had expressed their willingness to do so but did not know how to go about it.

"I cannot instruct on that (to sell the jewellery) but the women's organisations can discuss among themselves and find ways and set up a specific body to handle the matter.

"We need trust. If we are to give our things, surely we want to know who we are giving them to," he told reporters after a "Dialogue with the Prime Minister" organised by the Charity and Welfare Body of Wives of Ministers and Deputy Ministers (Bakti) at the National Institute of Public Administration Intan), here.

Dr Mahathir, when making the call to the women recently, had said that the money obtained from the sale of the jewellery which they put in the local banks could be used as loans to traders while the money invested in unit trusts could be used to support the purchase of shares on the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange (KLSE).

During the dialogue session, several representatives of women's organisations had expressed their willingness to help the government tackle the economic problems but did not know how to go about it.

Replying to one of the representatives, Dr Mahathir said that if the womenfolk in the country wanted to sell their jewellery it must be sold overseas.

"If everyone wants to sell, the local traders may not be able to buy up all. So it is better to sell overseas and bring back the foreign exchanging for keeping in our country," he said.

He said such sale should be held in an organised manner because it would be difficult to achieve on an individual basis.

Meanwhile, his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, who is Bakti president, believed that individual Bakti members were prepared to sacrifice their jewellery to help the government tackle the economic problems.

She said, however, that Bakti would not force its members to do so as it must be done on a voluntary basis.

"There are 75 Bakti members and each will have her own opinion on the matter. Hence, we must have a meeting first to discuss it," she told reporters after the dialogue.

She also said that there were many women who wanted to help the government tackle the current economic problems but did not know how to.

Asked whether Bakti would take the initiative to conduct the campaign among the women she said: "Not necessarily. There are many other women's organisations.

-- BERNAMA

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