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Welfare groups heartened by RM265m allocation

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Welfare organisations today described the proposal to allocate RM265 million to continue the agenda for a caring society through rehabilitation and shelter programmes as "heartening".

Part of the allocation will be used for the construction and upgrading of welfare homes and activity centres to promote unity and the Social Institute of Malaysia.

A total of RM4.51 billion is allocated for health and medical services, including the employment of another 3,900 medical personnel and upgrading of Government hospitals and clinics especially for treatment of diseases like cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and provision of new services.

A sum of RM37 million is allocated to the Ministry of Youth and Sports for various programmes, including the Rakan Muda programme that has been revamped.

This was because the Government is concerned with youth development and social ills among youth.

Simultaneously, Program Kepimpinan Perdana is being introduced to develop future leaders while recreational active lifestyle and economic programmes for youths will be continued.

Cheshire Home honorary secretary Khatijah Suleiman said the RM265 million allocation to continue the agenda for a caring society would finance the major needs of welfare organisations such as more rehabilitation facilities and homes for senior citizens.

She said the most important thing was for welfare organisations to continue receiving the same amount or more of financial aid from the Government as donations from the public were scarce due to the current economic crisis.

"We hope that aid for welfare facilities will be maintained and that no organisation is deprived of financial assistance," she said.

Rumah Bakti principal Lamang Donggoh thanked and congratulated Prime Minister and First Finance Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his ministry for seeing to the needs of welfare organisation.

"The RM265 million allocation is truly good news for us as we desperately need the Government's assistance especially when donations from the public have dropped almost 50 per cent this year due to the current economic situation."

He said welfare of the poor was something which could not be compromised and vowed to utilise any financial aid to its fullest.

Rumah Bakti houses 138 schoolgoing orphans and receives up to 25 per cent of its expenditure from the Government.

Ozanam House president Elizabeth Vaz said the allocation was much needed to enable welfare homes to continue helping the needy.

"With the strains of the economic downturn, it is a relief to know that the Government has not forgotten to assist welfare organisations and is continuing its effort towards a caring society," she said.

Ozanam House is home to neglected, abused, abandoned and homeless children and gets financial assistance from the Government in the form of a grant once every six months.

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