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`Projects should be disabled-friendly'

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KLANG, Tues. - All State Governments and local councils approving project applications have been urged to ensure that the plans that are submitted also incorporate disabled-friendly facilities.

The call was made by National Unity and Social Development Minister Datin Paduka Zaleha Ismail after receiving complaints of the lack of disabled-friendly facilities in government departments and buildings such as shopping complexes, hotels, condominiums and flats.

"To ensure all future buildings have such facilities, State Governments and local councils must co-operate by approving only plans which have incorporated them," she added.

By doing so, Zaleha said the Government would be honouring the proclamation signed in conjunction with the United Nations Decade of the Disabled Persons in the Asia-Pacific region 1993-2002.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad signed the proclamation on May 16, 1994. The 10-year campaign was endorsed at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Conference in Beijing in 1992.

Zaleha attributed the slow provision of disabled-friendly facilities to a reluctance to foot additional costs.

"What they forget is that they too have a social responsibility to ensure that facilities are provided for the disabled in public places and buildings, government departments and service-oriented places and buildings."

The Minister was speaking to reporters after handing over a "Maclaren" buggy, a "TCL" bath chair and a set of "tumble form", worth about RM12,500, donated by BP Malaysia Sdn Bhd's Commercial and Logistics department staff to Muhammad Nadzmi Ahmad Nazri, six, the son of one of its employees.

The contribution was handed over at the boy's home in Taman Klang today. Muhammad Nadzmi was born with a brain abnormality.

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