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AIDS: Vernacular Press can contribute

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Vernacular newspapers should play an active role in disseminating HIV/AIDS information to the public.

Malaysian Aids Foundation chairman Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir said in the past the contributions made by the vernacular Press in HIV/AIDS education had been satisfactory, but hoped it would increase in future.

She was speaking at a press conference today to invite entries for the Red Ribbon Media Awards (RRMA) 2000.

This biennial event, which started in 1996, acknowledges and honours the media's role in HIV/AIDS education. Awards are presented to members of the media for their outstanding work related to HIV/AIDS in Malaysia.

Marina expressed the hope that more journalists from vernacular newspapers would submit entries this year.

"This will be a good way for them to show the public their level of contribution towards generating AIDS awareness."

Marina said the mass media should disseminate accurate information on the disease as there had been cases of "not entirely true" information being published.

She said accurate reporting was essential as her foundation was always mindful of people reading newspapers. "It is not proper to raise the hopes of people living with AIDS with false information."

There will be a special mention award named after Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, wife of the Prime Minister.

For further information on the awards, contact Yante Ismail of the Malaysian Aids Council at 03-40451033 or fax 03-40426133.

(END)