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PM: We'll consider women's ministry

Abdul Razak Ahmad

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The Government will give serious consideration to the call for the establishment of a women's affairs ministry, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight.

The Prime Minister said due consideration would also be given to the proposed increase in the allocation for women's activities in the next Budget and efforts to ensure that women's rights were not abused.

He was addressing 15,000 women delegates at the Women's Day 2000 celebrations.

"This is my promise as the Prime Minister," Dr Mahathir said to loud applause from the guests, delegates and city folk at the Kuala Lumpur City Centre Esplanade.

Dr Mahathir said the requests, which came from several women's groups from within the Government and non-governmental organisations, were moderate and not extreme.

"They were also made in an appropriate manner, not by resorting to violence."

Therefore, Dr Mahathir said, the Government appreciated the contributions by the NGOs which acted responsibly for the betterment of women.

He said the Government did not rule out the presence of some small groups out to draw the Government's attention to certain matters they perceived as unfair.

"We must realise the reality that in a society such as ours, we must be careful of the sensitivities of others."

Dr Mahathir said if the groups which made demands understood and acknowledged the sensitivities of others, the country would remain peaceful and this would facilitate development.

This would also allow the Government to look into requests for the people's benefit.

Also present were Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Datin Seri Endon Mahmood, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Shahrizat Abdul Jalil and Deputy Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Dr Ng Yen Yen.

Several Ministers including Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak; Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir and Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein were also present.

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