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383 individuals pledge support for campaign

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - A total of 383 individuals have pledged their support towards the 10 imperative actions in the "Say Yes for Children" campaign that will make children happier and healthier.

The campaign, which started globally in March, requires the public to show their support either through the Internet or mailed pledges.

According to figures taken from the Unicef website, 11,993,091 individuals of all ages worldwide have said "yes" for the children.

The pledge requires participants to sign up and acknowledge the 10 imperative actions thought to be necessary in order to improve the lives of children.

They are: Leave no child out, put children first, care for every child, fight HIV/AIDS, stop harming and exploiting children, listen to children, educate every child, protect children from war, protect the earth for children, and fight poverty and invest in children.

Participants also have to submit the three most important issues which they feel are most urgent to their respective countries.

People who submit pledges automatically join the Global Movement for Children, a collection of people and organisations dedicated to promoting the rights of the child.

Of the 10 imperative actions, the issue that was deemed the most urgent according to Malaysians, was the call to educate every child, which received 18.5 per cent of total pledges.

Second was the call to care for every child, which polled 14.6 per cent, and third was the call to stop harming and exploiting children, which comprised 13.8 of the total number of pledges.

This compares to the worldwide poll which emphasised the calls to educate every child, putting children first, care for every child and to fight HIV/AIDS.

The pledges will be presented at the United Nations Special Session on Children on Sept 19, and will serve as a rallying call for change in children's issues.

Ten teenagers will be part of the Malaysian delegation to the Special Session, which will be led by National Unity and Social Development Minister Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman.

The national level campaign was launched in Malaysia by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad last Saturday. Among the activities planned are a children's forum, a walkathon for children and talkshows.