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I still need you, says Shahrizat

"I NEED your help," says Women and Family Development Minister Datuk Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, to outgoing members of the National Advisory Council for the Integration of Women and Development.

"I know what I want for the Ministry, but I can't be making the decision alone," she says, announcing her plan to retain the members whose term ends this month.

The 24-member council, comprising women in different fields, had its last meeting recently and with the setting up of the Ministry it was not known whether Naciwid will continue to exist or its members' term extended.

Set up in 1976 after the First World Conference on Women in Mexico, Naciwid's role was to advise the Government, NGOs and the private sector in including women in all aspects of development.

Members serve a three-year term and they meet once a month, sometimes more when they go on field trips.

The last batch was Naciwid's seventh and its chairperson was Datuk Nik Safiah Karim.

At a farewell and appreciation dinner hosted by HAWA last week, Shahrizat said she still needs strength from Naciwid members especially those who trailblazed the women's movement with Nik Safiah.

She plans to set up a technical working group made up of women in various fields of expertise. This group and Naciwid will help her fine-tune a module for the Ministry to start working on.

The Minister has met with all these women and they will be offered a choice of either joining the technical working group or Naciwid.

"I believe the Ministry will succeed because the Government is concerned with the needs of women.

"I have looked at the laws affecting women and their implementation; I pay more attention to advocacy and research and will look at various initiatives that the government will take to address issues.

"But the first thing to do is to desegregate women in all fields - to get the real picture, where attention is needed most. For instance, we keep saying there is a huge number of single mothers in the country, but we do not have the real figure as different agencies or departments give you different numbers. We are groping in the dark.

"We will look into these male-female breakdowns, Ministry by Ministry once and for all.

"I will not let you down. I know people are watching me. I am not daunted or intimidated. I've made a somewhat rusty start, but I am not turning back."

Shahrizat thanked Naciwid members for their contributions. They are:

Datuk Nik Safiah Karim (chairperson)

Puan Sri Datuk Dr Fatimah Hamid Don (deputy chairperson)

Datuk Dr Sharifah Hapsah Syed Hassan Shahabudin

Puan Sri Teh Zahariah Jahidin

Rahaiah Baهران

Datin Paduka Sharifah Mordiah Tuanku Fauzi

Halimah Sadique

Datin Seri Shamsiah Mohd Yassin

Datin Prof Dr Jamilah Ariffin

Senator To' Puan Wan Asiah Wan Ahmad

Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir  
Senator Datuk Nor Azah Awin  
Prof Dr Rokiah Talib  
Dr Azizan Baharuddin  
Dauk Fauziah Datuk Ismail  
Datuk Rita Jaafar  
Datin Rusmiati Harun  
Datuk Mohaiyani Shamsudin  
Ramani Gurusamy  
Rasamani Kandiah  
Aishah Ali  
Asma Abdullah  
Airmy Johari  
Rita Sim