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Marina-Aids

ISLAMIC OFFICIALS TO OBSERVE EDUCATION PROGRAMME ON AIDS IN UGANDA

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 29 (Bernama) -- A nine-member delegation which includes seven Islamic officials will be in Kampala tomorrow until Nov 7 to observe a project called "Education on Aids through Imams" being implemented in Uganda, Malaysian Aids Council president Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir said today.

The council's executive director, Nik Fahmee Nik Hussin, is leading the delegation comprising representatives of the council, Islamic Development Department Malaysia (Jakim), Persatuan Pengasih, a non-governmental organisation providing guidance to rehabilitated addicts, imams and muftis.

Among them are Perlis Mufti Datuk Mat Jahya Husin, National Mosque Imam Pirdaus Ismail, Federal Territory Mosque Imam Mohamed Mohamed Zain and Senior Clinical Assistant (Religious Affairs) of Persatuan Pengasih Mohamed Najib Mohamed Harun.

Marina told a media conference that the main objective of the visit was to expose the country's Islamic officials on efforts to deal with HIV/Aids in the Islamic context in Uganda.

The project, organised by the Islamic Medical Association Uganda (IMAU), has been recognised as the best project to deal with HIV/Aids by the United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/Aids (UNAIDS).

"The benefits to be derived by the country's Islamic officials from such a programme is immense," Marina said.

The visit is fully sponsored by the Al Bukhari Foundation and arranged by the council.

Marina said that the visit was a follow-up to a colloquium on Islam and HIV/Aids organised by the council in May 1999 when IMAU chairman Dr Magid Kagimu Salonga and his colleague, Neema Hakyonjo, shared their experience in planning a programme on providing education on Aids through imams.

She said that preventive measures taken by the Muslim community in dealing with HIV/Aids as well as the support and treatment provided by the community in Uganda were very encouraging.

According to Marina, besides observing the IMAU programme and other projects implemented in Uganda, the delegation would have the opportunity to attend a four-day discussion among world Islamic leaders on HIV/Aids to be held in Kampala from Nov 1.

The IMAU has mobilised Muslims in Uganda to join forces to overcome Aids through the education programme on Aids through imams which started in two districts in 1992 and expanded to 10 districts in five years.

The project involves 850 mosques and some 6,800 volunteers have been trained.

-- BERNAMA

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