

18 JAN 2001

Rafidah-Women

WOMEN'S AFFAIRS MINISTRY CAN BOOST DEVELOPMENT, SAYS RAFIDAH

KUALA KANGSAR, Jan 18 (Bernama) -- The newly created Women's Affairs Ministry should not be viewed in isolation as it can contribute to national development, Wanita Umno chief Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz said today.

"No one should misunderstand the rationale for setting up a ministry to handle only women's affairs," she told reporters after presenting aid to students and schools in the Kuala Kangsar parliamentary constituency here.

Rafidah said society should appreciate the role of women as they were the core of family, community and national development.

"To train a woman we are feeding a family, to educate a woman helps her to bring up a good family," she said.

She said the new ministry had to draw up plans and strategies to develop women and help overcome social problems as well as review regulations which may impede women's progress in all fields.

She expressed confidence that Women's Affairs Minister Datuk Shahrizat Abdul Jalil would be able to discharge her duties well given her experience in handling women's issues.

Rafidah said Wanita Umno had been asking for such a ministry since the time of second prime minister the late Tun Abdul Razak.

The movement's efforts led to the creation of a national women's council (Naciwid) during the time of the late Tun Hussein Onn, said Rafidah who is International Trade and Industry Minister.

After Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad became Prime Minister, the Women's Affairs Unit (Hawa) was set up in the Prime Minister's Department and it was later upgraded to a department and now this new ministry, she said.

"Women have come full circle," Rafidah said.

At the ceremony, 25 primary and secondary school students received schooling aid of RM300 each while 22 schools and the district students' centre of excellence received a computer each courtesy of Western Digital and Tan Chong Motor.

-- BERNAMA

HK YBY