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Budget-Women/BM

WOMEN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT MINISTRY GETS BIG ALLOCATION

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 20 (Bernama) -- The Women and Family Development Ministry is allocated RM99.1 million for next year, a 68 percent jump over this year's figure.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, tabling the 2003 Budget in Parliament today, said the bigger allocation was in line with the government's recognition of the role of women in national economic and social development.

The prime minister also proposed that the paternity leave for male civil servants be increased from three to seven days.

"In addition, to enable civil servants to take care of family matters during the demise of their immediate family, they will be given three days of unrecorded leave," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the finance minister, said that under the family development programme of the National Population and Family Development Board, 10 "Kasih Keluarga" complexes would be built next year.

In an effort to reduce the financial burden on transfer of property among family members, Dr Mahathir proposed that the instruments of transfer between husband and wife, parents and children on the basis of love and affection be exempted from 50 percent of the stamp duty.

"Currently, many of us complain on payments of stamp duties on transfer of properties of loved ones," he said.

Noting that there are about 130,000 single mothers in the country, accounting for 1.2 percent of the female population, Dr Mahathir said the government would implement welfare programmes for them.

"Priority will be given to single mothers with a monthly income of less than RM600 to own low-cost houses so as to enable them to be located within the same vicinity.

"This will facilitate the provision of facilities such as childcare, education and health," he said.

Dr Mahathir also proposed that expenses incurred by a company in sponsoring Family Day be allowed tax deductions.

-- BERNAMA

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