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UNDP

UNDP TO FOCUS ON ICT RELATED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN MALAYSIA

PUTRAJAYA, Jan 4 (Bernama) -- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) says it will focus on information and communication technology-related development programmes in Malaysia in the next five years.

Maxine E. Olson, UNDP's resident coordinator for operations here, said the agency felt that much could be done in the field of ICT especially in terms of improving the quality of life.

"We will operate what we call 'bridging the digital divide' -- making ICT probably available to all within Malaysia," she said.

The Malaysian government, she said, had given high priority to ICT and since much had been done, UNDP felt that it should emphasise on ICT which involved individuals and their quality of life.

Olson, who was appointed to the post in the middle of last year, was speaking to reporters after presenting her credentials to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

During the meeting, she discussed briefly with Dr Mahathir about UNDP's plans in this country over the next five years.

"We will also focus and discuss issues on environment, gender, HIV and Aids, with the government and its agencies," she said.

Olson said UNDP had been in Malaysia since 1957 and had technical cooperation programmes with the government since then.

She said the issues that UNDP worked on in this country changed over time as the needs and priorities changed.

"Malaysia is one of the great examples of success in terms of poverty eradication. This is an example from which many countries could learn as well," she said.

Olson, 53, who has a PhD in agricultural geography, is also currently the deputy to the officer-in-charge at UNDP's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific.

Her responsibilities included overseeing the work of the regional bureau for the 25 Asian and Pacific Country offices and putting into place the initial elements of a new oversight framework based on the concepts of results-based management and ex-post assessment in a decentralised accountability structure.

Olson was also the deputy director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) from 1995 to 1998 during when she guided development of management information system for integrating managerial and financial aspects of the programme.

Olson is fluent in English, French and Portuguese.

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