

Don't deviate from objectives, NGOs told

BY SA'ODAH ELIAS

PUTRAJAYA: Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been told to act positively and not deviate from their original objectives.

They should help the Government in tackling the increasingly complex social problems faced by the country and also use their aid funds effectively and in accordance with regulations.

In making the call, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the NGOs should complement government programmes in tackling

social problems like rape, incest, distribution of pornographic VCDs, vandalism and domestic violence.

The Government had implemented many programmes to overcome such problems, but till today these problems continue unabated, Dr Mahathir said at the start of the 2004 Budget Dialogue at the Finance Ministry yesterday.

Commending efforts by the NGOs in helping the less fortunate, he said:

"It is their effort in addressing problems affecting society that I find most important."

Dr Mahathir, who is also Finance Minister, said the Government was very grateful that NGOs were helping society on a voluntary basis.

He called on the private sector to also play a more active role in community-related programmes and the welfare of their employees.

He welcomed the move by private companies to set up sports and welfare associations, as well as family clubs in their respective organisations, adding that this reflected the management's concern for the welfare of employees.

"Still, we expect private organisations to contribute from the aspect of money, sponsorships and volunteers for social and community work," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that for this year, nearly 50%, or more than RM16bil of the development expenditure, had been channelled towards social projects covering schools, hospitals, clinics, rural roads and housing for the people.

This, he said, proved that social development programmes continued to be the main agenda in every government development programme.