

22 MAY 2003

Rafidah-Package

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF STIMULUS PACKAGE, CALL TO WOMEN

KUALA LUMPUR, May 22 (Bernama) -- International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz today urged women entrepreneurs, particularly from small and medium industries (SMIs), to take advantage of offers in the New Economic Stimulus Package announced yesterday.

"For SMIs there are several big funds already established from which women entrepreneurs can gain access to undertake small-scale economic activities such as in trade and business," she told reporters after unveiling the Galeri Jatiwanita shop logo here.

She said this when asked about the benefits of the package, announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, for women in the country.

Yesterday, Dr Mahathir announced a RM7.3 billion package to expand the national economy following the global economic slowdown.

The package allocated about RM600 million to the SMIs through the Ministry of Entrepreneur Development.

Rafidah said SMIs had to avail themselves of the various opportunities provided through financial institutions and agencies.

She said through the Harapan programme, a government initiated project to help the people own houses, women and especially mothers and single mothers would be able to own houses at an affordable price.

Rafidah urged women entrepreneurs facing problems in gaining access to the fund or loan to channel complaints to her or Wanita Umno.

"These facilities are supposed to facilitate. So, unless it facilitates the stimulus will not happen. If the money is still there and nobody can get at it, it (stimulus) will not happen," she said.

Rafidah said Wanita Umno, at today's meeting decided to raise three main issues, to be discussed in the Umno General Assembly next month and not touch on issues related to the Puteri Umno.

"We will only touch on current national issues. We do not want to interfere with the affairs of others (Puteri Umno) as it's a domestic one. I will be talking only about national issues," she said.

She said among the issues to be highlighted included the Sekolah Agama Rakyat (SAR) and religious education; religious ignorance and deviation; educational performance; and unity through religion.

Meanwhile, the Wanita Umno through its Economic Bureau would organise a Galeri Jatiwanita exhibition in conjunction with the Umno General Assembly from June 16-20.

The exhibition would be held in recognition of the successes of Malay women in national development through involvement in various sectors such as socio-politics, science, medicine, professional, education, agriculture and the media.

-- BERNAMA

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