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DPM: Good values, happy families vital

IPOH, Fri. - A developed country must not only have modern amenities but must also be a nation of happy families who have good values and respect for each other.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said this was essential as a nation of happy families who worked together as a unit could help a country prosper and boost its developed status to a higher level.

"It is not enough for a country to have skyscrapers, good schools and a fine network of highways; it must also consist of people who have good moral values, and who are honest, hardworking and responsible.

"These are the values which promote a healthy working environment ... the people are happy, they are not suspicious or afraid of each other.

"As a result, they work better and their productivity level increases," he said when launching the national-level "Wholesome Family" celebration at Indera Mulia Stadium here tonight.

The three-day event, which ends on Sunday, is organised by the Yayasan Budi Penyayang and supported by the Women and Family Development, Education, and Youth and Sports Ministries.

It is aimed at fostering closer family ties and promoting universal family values and to help strengthen and enhance interaction.

Abdullah said the structure of a happy family should begin within the family environment where parents played an important role in nurturing their children.

"A happy family begins at home, where parents must inculcate good moral values in their children. They must also display affection towards their young so that when they grow up, they will reciprocate the feeling.

"A child who grows up in a happy environment is one who is responsible and honest. He will respect not only those from his community but also others from different backgrounds and religion."

He said a family was an important unit as "it is the bond which brings the people closer to each other, regardless of status or religion."

"For Malaysia to achieve Vision 2020, there must be muhibbah (harmony) within a community. Muhibbah is what makes the country stand head and shoulders above other developed countries," he said.

Abdullah also called on parents to spend more time with their families, despite being caught up with their careers.

He said children needed the guidance of their parents, especially at a tender age, where they could be moulded into exemplary citizens.

"Spare what little time you have with your families. Take time to love and imbue them with good values so that they in turn will grow up and continue the legacy with their children."

Also present were Women and Family Development Minister Datuk Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali and wife Datin Seri Kamariah Mokri.

Abdullah later visited several booths which displayed various themes to promote a "wholesome family environment" in a home. He also visited the New Straits Times Press booth where The Malay Mail team is holding a special promotion to invite the public to pen their tribute to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad through the paper's "Tribute to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad" project.

The messages will be published in the Malay Mail Classifieds from Oct

31. Closing date is Oct 26.

Abdullah later signed a full page dedication to Dr Mahathir at the booth. Also present were The Malay Mail editor Ahiruddin Atan, New Straits Times Press (M) Bhd senior general manager (circulation) Wee Teck Kee and NSTP advertising manager S.A. Peter.