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`Riding For Life' expedition in aid of HIV/AIDS cause

THE Malaysian AIDS Foundation has launched a fundraising programme billed "Riding For Life", as part of the foundation's "In The Name of Love" campaign recently.

Foundation chairman Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir said the "Riding For Life" cycling expedition was jointly organised with the co-operation of the Malaysian AIDS Council and Action for AIDS Singapore.

Sponsored by Standard Chartered Bank Malaysia, the cycling expedition will be held from June 1 to 8.

Marina said the ride would cover some 900 kilometres through the peninsula and Singapore over eight days with overnight stops in various towns, including Kuala Lumpur, Temerloh, Kuantan, Batu Pahat and Johor Baru.

"We are holding this event not only as a means to raise funds for HIV/AIDS work but also to extend educational efforts on the topic beyond the Klang Valley."

Marina was speaking at a Press conference to announce the programme at Taman Tasik Titiwangsa in Kuala Lumpur recently.

"Those keen to help raise funds for HIV/AIDS work are encouraged to join the programme.

"We hope the expedition will bring together people from Singapore and the country in support of the HIV/AIDS issue," she said, adding that the organisers hoped to get 100 participants.

Participants are required to raise funds in two ways - raise money to pay for the expenses incurred for the ride, and obtain pledges from donors to support the programme.

Malaysian cyclists are required to raise RM2,000 while Singaporean riders will be asked to collect S\$2,000 (about RM4,000) in pledges.

Marina said the organisers would waive trip expenses for cyclists who raised RM5,000 or S\$5,000 and above.

Standard Chartered Bank Malaysia chief executive officer John Kivits said the bank would provide a matching donation (ringgit for ringgit) up to the sum of RM100,000 for funds raised by the Malaysian riders and donors.

"We hope our donation will help start a fund that can be used for the benefit of those affected by HIV/AIDS.

"At present, our employees are raising funds in aid of the bank's long-term commitment towards the cause of HIV/AIDS.

"The collection will be matched by the bank ringgit for ringgit," said Kivits.

"I must say that I am proud of our employees' dedication and commitment towards such a worthy cause.

"We certainly look forward to working closely with the Malaysian AIDS Foundation and Malaysian AIDS Council in the coming months," he added.

During the Press conference, local cycling organisation PCC Cycling Club, also held a briefing on the route to be covered during the ride as well as road safety regulations to be adhered to by participants.

Anyone keen to participate in the cycling expedition can call 03-40451033 or check out the website, www.mac.org.my/LOVE/RFL.