

Najib praises Rosmah's work at women's conference

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By Ram Anand

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak praised his wife Rosmah Mansor for her charitable works, as he addressed an international audience at the Women Deliver 2013 Conference in Kuala Lumpur.

Najib praised Rosmah's work in early childhood education through the Permata projects that she spearheads and also the NGO's efforts to establish programmes for disabled children.

NONE "I am saying this not out of fear of having to sleep on the couch, but because these are efforts that actually pay huge dividends for the country," Najib said to laughter in the packed hall at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre.

Rosmah had accompanied Najib to the launch of the three-day conference.

Najib also singled out former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad's wife Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali and MCA's Chew Hoong Ling for their contributions in improving Malaysian women's welfare.

He said that the issues that plague women and girls globally should be addressed without any stigma, noting this may "require a change in mindset".

Najib admitted that women are under-represented in Malaysian politics and said the nation ought to address that problem as well.

"We need to find out the reason and how to address this problem," he said.

'Some achievements'

Malaysia was ranked in the bottom quarter in gender equality ranking by the World Economic Forum last year, but Najib said the country can still be proud of some achievements.

"We have one of the lowest maternal mortality rates in the region. (Women also make up) 65 percent of our students in tertiary education," he said.

Last October, Najib had dismissed the need for a women's rights movement in Malaysia because equality has been given "from the start".

He had served as the acting women, family and community development minister last year after Shahrizat Abdul Jalil stepped down on completion of her term as senator.

Rohani Abdul Karim was appointed to the post in Najib's post-election cabinet.

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