

Rural women most marginalised, says DPM
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Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said today women in the rural areas were among the most marginalised of people in the country.

He said that to boost development in these pockets of poverty, the government had put in place various skills-building schemes to raise the income-generating power of the local women.

"Taking a long-term perspective, we are focusing on education to create the necessary impetus to uplift rural Malaysia.

"Improving the level of education across the board is one of six National Key Result Areas (NKRAs) in the Government Transformation Programme," he said in his keynote address at the Women's Summit 2010 in Kuala Lumpur.

He said the government's target was to create 4,000 women entrepreneurs from such low-income communities by the year 2012.

At the same time, the government would like to see more skilled women contribute towards a globally competitive economy in the country which envisaged a forward-looking, vibrant and high-income Malaysia, he said.

"The government has no desire to see Malaysian women fall into a category where they occupied low-productivity, lowly paid and vulnerable jobs with no social protection, basic rights or voice at work.

"(This is) as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Global Employment Trends for Women in March 2008 had pointed out. Our aim is to increase women's participation in the workforce to 55 per cent by 2015."

He also said that taking into account the importance of striking a good work-life balance, the government was making relevant changes with plans to introduce part-time work regulations under the Employment Act 1955.

According to him, the government also recognised that with only about 46 per cent of women in Malaysia contributing to the economy today, there was much scope for improvement.

- Bernama.