

90-day maternity leave to be proposed to cabinet
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The proposal to extend the 90-day maternity leave to the private sector would be brought to the cabinet in January, said Women, Family and Community Development Minister, Shahrizat Abdul Jalil.

She said the cabinet paper on the proposal would be tabled to obtain approval for the Human Resources Ministry to amend the Employment Act 1955, to enable women in the private sector to enjoy the same benefit as their counterparts in the public sector.

"We want to extend the (90-day maternity leave) policy to the private sector. We don't want women in the private sector to be excluded as many have come forward to ask us about the matter.

"We are preparing the proposal paper and after two weeks in the month of January, it will be presented to the cabinet. Then the Human Resources Ministry can bring it to Parliament," she said after the opening of the Women's Summit 2010 by Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin in Kuala Lumpur today.

Shahrizat said her ministry would also be tabling another cabinet paper on increasing the number of women on the board of directors of public-listed companies, including government-linked companies.

"Why shouldn't more women be sitting on the board of companies when so many of them are qualified and capable?" she said.

Shahrizat said the cabinet paper would also include the strategic plan of action to see the percentage of women sitting on companies' board of directors within the next five years.

"We understand the market situation and the strategy will take all this into account."

She also said that 10 years after the ministry was established, the women's agenda had been viewed more seriously, whereby it had become a critical agenda in government, politics, the economy and other aspects of national development.

- Bernama