

# PM: Do more to eradicate poverty

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysians should do more to help the underprivileged and play their part in eradicating poverty, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said last night.

Expressing his pride in Malaysia's achievements in improving poverty levels throughout the years, he nonetheless called on individuals and non-governmental organisations to redouble their efforts.

Speaking at the "Malam Sejuta Harapan" organised by the Poverty Eradication Foundation (PEF), Abdullah noted that in the United Nation's Millennium Development Report, Malaysia was singled out as the most improved countries in reducing poverty among its people.

"Poverty levels has dropped from 60 per cent when we achieved independence to the present 5.7 per cent. No other country has done this.

"We want to make sure that we can eradicate hardcore poverty by 2010, and organisations like the PEF can help us with our goals."

He praised the foundation for the work it had done over the years.

The country's hardcore poverty rate stood at 1.2 per cent in 2004.

Abdullah and his wife, Datin Seri Jeanne Abdullah, presented the Poverty Eradication Icon Award to Datuk Rahmah Abu Kasim, an adviser to the Rural and Regional Development Ministry.

The charity dinner was to help raise funds for the construction of a community centre for disabled children and their families.

Also present were PEF founder Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib and chairman Datuk Zainal Abidin Sakom.