

Taking care of prime minister her top priority

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■ From Zaharah Othman in London

BEING the prime minister's wife has changed her life tremendously, but Datin Seri Jeanne Abdullah says she is clear about her priority, and that is to take care of him.

Speaking publicly about her new role for the first time since their marriage just over a week ago, she described Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi as a kind and considerate man.

"My life has indeed changed tremendously but my priority will always be to remain by Datuk Seri's side and take care of him," she said on Sunday at a small gathering here.

Jeanne, who is accompanying the prime minister and his entourage to Russia, was on a stopover in London before flying off to Moscow yesterday.

During the brief sojourn, she had an informal gathering with wives of Malaysian diplomats and expatriates living in London. About 40 people turned up at the two-hour meeting hosted by Datin Munah Razak, the wife of Malaysia's High Commissioner in the United Kingdom.

Jeanne said for the past 15 years, she had been with her daughters, Nadiyah, 29 and Nadene 27, and now her life had changed tremendously.

Bodyguards and private sec-

retaries hovered in the background while she enjoyed the afternoon tea in a separate engagement from the prime minister's.

This hectic 10-day trip away from her daughters, her first engagement abroad as the prime minister's wife, weighs heavily on her mind although she knows her place now is by her husband's side.

"I miss my girls. We are very close and being away from them is hard," said Jeanne during this exclusive interview. "When it was decided that I was to marry Datuk Seri, I called them aside and talked to them. I asked them for their support.

"I have always taken care of the prime minister and now the role has somewhat changed. But there is no pressure at all. I will take things slowly. But my priority is to take care of the prime minister."

In a tribute to her husband, Jeanne said the prime minister had always been a kind and considerate man.

"It was totally unexpected and so I will try to take things as they come," she said and laughingly avoided answering questions about how the prime minister proposed.

"He certainly didn't go down on his knees, but let that be something between the two of us."



(From left) Datin Seri Jeanne Abdullah, counsellor (political) of the Malaysian High Commission Nadzirah Othman and Datin Munah Razak taking a walk in the gardens of the high commissioner's residence in London.