

Role of women and youth vital

The Star - 28/8/2007

Muslim world must not sideline them, says DPM

BY ZULKIFLI ABD RAHMAN
zulrahman@thestar.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: The Muslim world must discard bias against women and youth who have not been given the opportunity to contribute to society, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said.

He added Muslims must acknowledge that women and youth have the greatest potential to contribute constructively to the advancement of the Muslim world.

Unfortunately, said the Deputy Prime Minister, some societies in the Muslim world give scant attention to women and youth, (which is) a worrying trend that has already proved detrimental to the development of Muslim societies all over the world.

"We witness a serious lack of representation of women in certain Muslim societies, giving rise to gender marginalisation.

"The youths are deprived of their right to assume leadership

responsibilities, and the right to voice out innovative opinions," he added.

Najib was giving his keynote address during the joint opening of the women and young leaders forums of the Third World Islamic Economic Forum (WIEF) here yesterday.

The Deputy Prime Minister said women were, by nature, inherently well organised, while the youth, whom he said possessed innovative thought processes, had always been the determining factor behind the success of civilisations.

He recognised the WIEF for giving more space to women and youth in creating their own niche in the development of the Muslim world by introducing the WIEF Businesswomen Network (WBN) and Young Leaders networks.

WIEF was formed in 2005 to enhance business and economic collaborations among Muslim countries as well as between Muslims and non-Muslims.