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Top women in new council

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18 colourful personalities 'will ensure empowerment'

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PUTRAJAYA: Women's rights activists, corporation heads and film stars are among those appointed to the newly-formed 18-member Women's Advisory and Consultative Council.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said its setting up was in line with the National Policy on Women and the Women's Development Action Plan.

"This council will ensure our women empowerment agenda is consistent with the country's direction," he said.

"It will act as an advisor to the Government so we are able to improve our policies, ensuring the dignity of our women is upheld," said Najib at the National Women's Day celebration here.

The council will be chaired by Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Rohani Abdul Karim.

Najib also said the Government had met the target of having women in at least 30% of decision-making positions in the civil service.

"As of June 2015, the percentage



Women to the fore: Najib presenting the letters to Rafiah as UKM's new holder of the Women's Leadership Chair as Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor and Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Rohani Abdul Karim (right) look on.

of women in government decision-making positions is at 33%, which is more than our target. However, the percentage in the private sector is only at 15%," he said.

Najib commended Rohani's ministry for its successful implementation of the "flexi-working hours" that was outlined in Budget 2015.

"This flexible working environment allows women to join the workforce and help them achieve the work-family balance. I hope other ministries will follow suit."

Najib also urged ministries and government agencies to set up their own childcare centres.

At the event, Najib presented let-

ters of appointment to new council members.

National Council of Women's Organisations Malaysia president Tan Sri Dr Sharifah Hapsah Syed Hasan Shahabudin, Malaysia Debt Ventures Bhd chairman Tan Sri Zarinah Anwar and Universiti Malaya pro-chancellor Tan Sri Siti Norma Yaacob were among those appointed.

Also included are women's rights activist Ivy Josiah, Shell Refining Company chief executive officer Datuk Yvonne Chia, Malaysian Global Innovation and Creative Centre chief executive officer Cheryl Yeoh and Kakiseni president Low Ngai Yuen.

Film and theatre personalities Puan Sri Tiara Jacquelina and Daphne Iking have been named, too.

Also announced was the appointment of former Universiti Malaya vice-chancellor Tan Sri Rafiah Salim as the new holder of the Women's Leadership Chair at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Rafiah replaces the first holder, Prof Louise Morley of University of Sussex, Britain.

The Chair began in 2012 to study issues on women's leadership.