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Action plan to aid single mums

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> Najib also announces formation of Women's Advisory and Consultative Council

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PUTRAJAYA: A special action plan for single mothers will be launched soon to enhance assistance for single mothers.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak said the Cabinet has already approved the action plan by the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry to boost the quality of lives of single mothers and increase their participation in the health, economic, education, legal and other sectors.

"I hope we can do something and work together with NGOs to assist single mothers, who numbered 235,240 as at 2010," Najib said at the 53rd Women's Day celebration at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre (PICC) yesterday.

In paying tribute to women, Najib cited a famous quote by Eleanor Roosevelt, the legendary first lady of United States: "A woman is like a tea bag - you can't

tell how strong she is until you put her in hot water."

He added in jest: "That's how strong a woman is. But that doesn't mean I have to put my wife in the hot water."

As part of the holistic measures to boost working mothers' participation and contribution in nation building, Najib announced the formation of the Women's Advisory and Consultative Council.

"The council will provide input to the government on how to strengthen women's role and increase their contribution towards (making Malaysia) a developed and high-income nation.

"As I announced in the 11th Malaysia Plan, women's workforce will be increased from 54% last year to 59% in 2020. Also, we want to see an improved index of diversification for women in the corporate sector," said Najib.

Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Rohani Abdul Karim said the council consists of 16 prominent and respectable women personalities from diverse fields and backgrounds in the country.

They include Universiti Malaysia pro-chancellor Tan Sri Siti Norma Yaacob, Malaysia Debt Ventures Berhad chairman Tan Sri



Najib and Rosmah with some members of the Women's Advisory and Consultative Council at PICC yesterday.

Zarinah Anwar, Women's Institute of Management deputy chairman and chief executive officer Datuk Dr Nellie Tan-Wong, National Council of Women's Organisations president Tan Sri Sharifah Hapsah

Syed Hasan Shahabudin, actress and movie producer Puan Seri Tiara Jacqueline, TV host and actress Daphne Iking and women's rights activist Ivy Josiah.

"We will get down to work right

away and tomorrow, I will chair a meeting to meet these esteemed personalities on how we can share their experience and expertise for women's development," said Rohani.