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WORLD MUSLIM LEADERSHIP FORUM

DPM urges Muslim women to develop full potential

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LONDON: Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail urged Muslim women to come forward, develop their skills and realise their full potential, use their talent and entrepreneurial abilities if they were to see genuine long-term improvement in their societies.

Dr Wan Azizah, who was delivering the keynote address at the 4th World Muslim Leadership Forum at Lambeth Palace in south London yesterday, said: "We could never obtain social justice on the basis of skewed and unjust interpretations".

"Human dignity, wellbeing and upliftment of our people irrespective of gender, race, class or ethnicity in peaceful, tolerant and inclusive societies are of utmost importance," she said, emphasising that all of these must include men.

"Men must change their attitude and be more supportive of women. Muslim men need to dismantle the chauvinistic mentality inherent in some cultures."

Dr Wan Azizah cited the Prophet Muhammad, who used to work for a woman, took his wife Aisyah to the battlefield and accepted another wife's (Ummu Salamah) counsel during the Hudaibiah agreement.

She is on a three-day official visit to the United Kingdom. This is her first visit to the UK in her official capacity.

Her keynote address was entitled "The Role of Women and Girls in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030".

"Sustainable development is necessary not only for survival or securing our economic endeavours, but also as an extension of the qualities of *rahmah* (God's mercy) that is ordained upon us," she said, adding that this was part of ibadah (worship).

Pursuing the SDGs, she said, had to begin with having the right leader, driven by a sense of personal responsibility to that purpose.

However, she argued that the SDGs were inadequate as they focused on the social, economic and physical aspects of development.

"We are hindered by many constraints. The practice of Islam among Muslims continues to be shaped by local traditions and customs. Intolerance and narrow-mindedness still hamper our intellectual growth."

She said many verses of the Quran emphasised the role of men and women in enjoining good and forbidding evil.

"Islam has long recognised the property rights of women. Protecting the faith, self-intellect, progeny and wealth cannot be done by men alone."

Present were Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Marzuki Yahya and officials from the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry, Malaysian charge d'affaires Mohd Suhaimi Jaafar and heads of department of the Malaysian high commission here.

By Zaharah Othman

WORLD MUSLIM LEADERSHIP FORUM

"Thus We have appointed you a middle nation."
Qur'an 2:143

...so aim to follow the good... the good... for which...

...who believe and do not... their belief with injustice... se will have security, and... are [rightly] guided.

Islam is not about 'we're better than you'. Islam is about 'let me show you something that is better for you'.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail at the 4th World Muslim Leadership Forum at Lambeth Palace in south London yesterday. BERNAMA PIC