

Shahrizat, Disabled People Dialogue At Bernama Forum
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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 4 (Bernama) -- The national news agency, Bernama, Sunday gathered more than 200 disabled people for a forum with Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil.

The special forum, in conjunction with the national-level Disabled People's Day celebrations, was telecast live over Bernama TV from Wisma Bernama here.

Shahrizat, who was one of the panelists at the forum, entitled 'Charisma of Disabled People: Propelling Potential', said the government's continuous fight for the welfare of the disabled community had resulted in improved well-being of the disabled.

"The government has been assisting disabled people to be self-reliant and thereby, bettering the standard of living of this community," she said at the forum.

She said the government had allocated RM24 million for 11 institutions to provide services to disabled persons, and another RM56 million towards the Community Rehabilitation programme involving 18,943 disabled people nationwide.

Meanwhile, Malaysian Confederation of the Differently-Abled president Datuk Mah Hassan Omar said, although the nation had become more developed, some members of the community still looked down on the disabled.

"Disabled people should be given similar opportunities as others because we are legitimate citizens.

"I am sad that to date, not many disabled people can play the role they should as self-reliant people contributing towards national productivity," he said.

Mah Hassan, who is also a lawyer, said many were still unaware of the importance and role of disabled people and as such, they were marginalised.

Also attending the forum were Disabled People Welfare Council member Anthony Arokia and Malaysian Federation for the Hearing-Impaired president Mohamad Sazali Sha'ari.

Sign Language Interpreters Association president Wan Zuraidah Abu was the sign language interpreter in the forum.

Earlier, Shahrizat presented a RM450,000 contribution to 15 welfare voluntary organisations for the Disabled People's Day celebrations at state-level.

Also present were Bernama general manager Datuk Hasnul Hassan and Bernama editor-in-chief Datuk Yong Soo Heong.

Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=631773>