

**Government's Ambitious Plan To Empower Rural Poor
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KUCHING, April 8 (Bernama) -- Sarawak Welfare, Women and Family Development Minister Datuk Fatimah Abdullah is confident that the pragmatic Barisan Nasional (BN) manifesto launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak on Saturday will convince Malaysians, especially women voters to return the mandate to the BN in the 13th general election.

Fatimah, who is also Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) deputy women chief, said today the BN government had proven that they could deliver their promises as proven by the prime minister's report book in terms of its targeted key performance index (KPI) being achieved so far.

"The BN pledges are very convincing for them that when Najib (as national BN chairman) promises something, he will definitely fulfil them," she told reporters after receiving a courtesy call from visiting British Professor of Comparative and International Education, Professor Dr Michael Crossley at her office at Petra Jaya here.

In welcoming the BN's pledge to strengthen women's participation in national decision-making, she said, it was a good thing as the percentage of women in Sarawak at that level was still low compared to those in the peninsula at present while more incentives for work-from-home initiatives, especially for single mothers, would ease their financial burden.

Even though Sarawak had made some progress in the educational field, where female students accounted for 60 percent of the total student population in certain universities, she said, it would provide an important base to create better career paths as well as increase women participation in the work force in the next five years.

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