

**Women Council Must Play Role To Empower Women – Najib
Bernama
Aug 24, 2015**

PUTRAJAYA, Aug 24 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the setting up of a Women's Advisory and Consultative Council comprising women of diverse backgrounds will play an important role, as a government advisory and consultation body, to empower women.

The Prime Minister said the setting up of the council by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (KPWKM) was in line with the National Women's Policy introduced since 1998 and the Women Development Action Plan.

"The council will ensure the agenda to empower women is in line with the direction of the nation and the aspiration of the government to improve policies to uphold women," he said in his speech at the 2015 National Women's Day celebration here, Monday.

During the ceremony, Najib handed over letter of appointments as members of the council to 18 women from various religious and career backgrounds, and ages.

Among them were Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Rohani Abdul Karim; Council for the Disabled member Senator Bathmawati Krisnan; national arts activist Puan Sri Tiara Jacquelina and Global Malaysia Creativity and Innovation Centre (Magic) chief executive officer Cheryl Yeoh.

Najib also handed over the appointment letter as Women's Leadership Chair at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia to Tan Sri Dr Rafiah Salim.

Rafiah created history when she became the first woman to be appointed as Universiti Malaya Vice-Chancellor and was also the first Malaysian to become assistant secretary-general at the United Nations.

In his speech, Najib also asked all ministries which had yet to implement flexible working arrangements to do so in an effort to lure more women's participation in the work market.

He said to date only KPWKM had implemented the move which he said was a step for woman to balance career and family.

Last month, Rohani said 65 personnel of the ministry took part in the pioneer flexible working arrangements project implemented by it. In another development, the Prime Minister repeated his suggestion that more kindergartens be set up at the work places as it could encourage women to work and help turn out excellent children.

"Those without a kindergarten should set them up as it is crucial to enable women to join the work force and can guide and teach children to be useful human beings.

"It is definitely better if they can use the Permata curriculum," he said.

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