

Rosmah Shares Malaysia's Experience In Overcoming Child Marriage

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From Mokhtar Hussain

NEW YORK, Sept 30 (Bernama) -- Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor shared Malaysia's experience in overcoming the problem of child marriage during a Ford Foundation breakfast meeting on Tuesday (Wednesday in Malaysia).

The prime minister's wife said child marriages were rare in Malaysia, thanks to the existence of a good education system and low poverty rate.

"Enrolment of boys and girls in primary education was 99 per cent...about 70 per cent of girls are now enrolled in universities," she told the Breakfast Panel on Girls not Bride at Ford Foundation here.

The breakfast meeting was also attended by Princess Mabel Van Oranjestad of Netherlands and spouses of leaders from Panama and Zambia.

Low poverty rate at 0.6 per cent and eradication of poverty among women especially single mothers had also contributed to the country's success in overcoming the problem, said Rosmah.

The Malaysian legal framework, Rosmah said, circumvented and offer further effective measures to protect the children from being forced into child marriage.

She said the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development set up a Task Force on Protection of Children last year, seeking among others, to raise the marriageable age for girls from 16 to 18 in the Syariah Law, consistent with the Child Act.

The task force also looked into providing reproductive healthcare education to teenagers aged 13 onwards, establish schools for young unmarried girls, widen parenting skills and to instill moral values among the youth through social media.

Rosmah said child marriages in Malaysia happened only in certain circumstances such as legalising out of wedlock pregnancies and preventing social misconduct such as free sex, drug abuse and gangsterism, and runaway incidents.

The Ford Foundation was established by automobile entrepreneurs Henry Ford, and Edsel Ford in 1936, to empower among others, the economy, education, human rights, and democracy.

Rosmah is accompanying Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak who is on a working visit as well as attending the United Nations General Assembly, here.

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