

Fight against child sex crimes



Keeping it fun too: Actress Lisa Surihani (left) smiling as host and comedian Harith Iskander lightens up the mood before she presented her paper. Lisa, Harith together with Daphne Iking and Hunny Madu are the celebrity ambassadors in the campaign against child sex predators. Also present at the event were panel members Dr Waittchalla R.R.V. Suppiah (second from right) and Prof Datuk Noriah Ishak.

Rosmah sounds call to arms in war against paedophiles

KUALA LUMPUR: Permata Programmes patron Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor has made a rousing call to arms for the entire nation to join the war against child sexual crimes.

During her closing speech at the Jenayah Seksual Kanak-Kanak: Hentikan! (Child Sexual Abuse: Stop It!) seminar, Rosmah went off script to deliver an impassioned call for firmer action to be taken.

"As the Prime Minister said, protecting our country's children is a joint responsibility. Every level of society needs to play a part to ensure their safety because they are the hope of the nation," she said.

She said the seminar, organised to discuss solutions to the child sexual crimes epidemic, has renewed the zeal of the nation to protect its children from sex predators.

"The wheels have started turning, and as Confucius said, it does not matter how slowly you go, as long as you don't stop!" she said, before adding, "tapi janganlah terlampau lambat." (but don't be too slow)

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said at the launch of the seminar on Monday that a new Bill on child sexual crimes will be tabled in Parliament this sitting, and Rosmah called on those present to back the Bill.

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"I hope all of you will support the Bill proposed by Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said (head of the child sexual crimes task force). Those who oppose it, there must be something wrong with them," she said.

However, she expressed her disappointment when the Dewan Merdeka at PWTC was only half-full for the second day of the seminar, after it was packed for the first day.

"I know the Prime Minister was here on the first day, but don't be here for the Prime Minister, be here because you believe in what we're fighting for!"

"If you want to combat social ills, expect people to fight for the cause, why can't you stay a bit longer? Let's show the world that we are serious, and we are ready to work together," she said as the crowd responded with thunderous applause.

"Those of you who are still here are the ones who are committed, and we are now fighting for our

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Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor

children's future."

She added that similar seminars should be conducted at state level, and called on the wives of the Members of Parliament and Menteri Besars present to take up the cause.

"This knowledge should not be concentrated at the federal level, but trickled down to every corner of the country to highlight the severity of this social ill, so please, do your duty!"

"I am very serious when it comes to work, so expect a call from me asking whether you have done it," she said.

The seminar marks the beginning of a long-term campaign, which will be spearheaded by the

Permata Programmes and an organising committee consisting of various government ministries and The Star's R-AGE team.

Rosmah praised the committee and Azalina, whom she called a "prime mover" of the campaign, and hopes the partnership continues to move forward based on the results of the seminar's many discussions.

In a press conference afterwards, Rosmah also called for Asean members to work together to fight the predators.

"The convicted child predator, Richard Huckie, was put away because of Britain's strict laws. We need the same kind of laws in Malaysia so perpetrators will be served with the punishment they deserve. I hope this Bill will be passed," she said.

Headed by Permata and an organising committee consisting of various government ministries and the R-AGE team, the seminar aimed to find solutions to child sexual crimes.

The two-day seminar, which ended yesterday, saw over 2,000 participants and various organisations such as Protect and Save the Children and Permata come together to put a stop to child sexual crimes.