



**SERVICE RECOGNITION:** Najib presenting a special award to National Council of Women's Organisation founder Tan Sri Kamsiah Ibrahim at Putrajaya yesterday. Behind them are Najib's wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, and Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil.

# Cabinet okays move to review gender bias laws and policies

By MAZWIN NIK ANIS  
and SIM LEOI LEOI  
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

**PUTRAJAYA:** Gender bias will be a thing of the past for Malaysian women as the Government is set to review laws and policies that do not treat women equally.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the Cabinet had recently approved a proposal by the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry to review such laws.

"This is a feat for Malaysian women. Even though there are not many laws with a gender bias inadvertently, over the years we have lived with it," he told reporters here yesterday.

"We don't realise that some (laws) discriminate against women. Let us review the laws thoroughly and make the necessary changes."

Najib was representing Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi at the launch of the National Women's Day celebrations here.

He said three committees would be set up to look into the review, adding

that a committee to be chaired by the Attorney-General's Chambers would look into gender bias laws in the Constitution, while the Home Affairs Ministry would review immigration laws and regulations.

The Human Resources Ministry would be responsible for checking on gender bias against women workers.

An announcement would be made once the committees had completed the reviews and made their recommendations.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister, in his speech, called for more efforts to eliminate prejudice and discrimination at work; and for all organisations to practice policies that were sensitive to gender issues.

Abdullah, whose speech was read out by Najib, also said that gender equality could not exist through the formulation of laws, regulations and policies alone. The attitude and mentality of the community towards the role of women needed to also change.

He said only through changes in mentality and perception alongside strong support of the community, could

women experience "true equality".

During the function, 10 women were presented with a special award by Najib in recognition of their contributions.

They included social and educational activist F.R. Bhupalan, who founded the first union of women teachers in the country in 1960; Malaysia's first female Cabinet minister Tun Fatimah Hashim, whose daughter turned up to receive the award on her behalf; Malaysian Red Crescent Society's first secretary-general Datuk Ruby Lee; and Girl Guide movement pioneer Datuk Hendon Din.

Bhupalan said the next front for women to fight for was to end of all forms of bigotry.

"We must be committed to end racism and all forms of religious bias and antagonism," she said.

The celebrations also saw the launching of Malaysia's first women's radio station by Najib.

The WFM-Wanita FM, owned by Radio Wanita Bhd, broadcasts 60% of its programmes in Malay, and the rest is in English.



For more pictures, see [thestar.com.my](http://thestar.com.my)