

UN report can be used as yardstick to bring Malaysians out of poverty: Zuraida

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PUTRAJAYA: The United Nations report on the rate of poverty in Malaysia, although being questioned, can still be used as a yardstick to help the Ministry of Housing and Local Government in formulating new programmes to bring the poor out of poverty.

Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin said the report should be viewed positively because if the UN's claim that Malaysia's poverty rate was higher, the ministry must double up its efforts to ensure that a more solid and effective approach is taken to help the poor.

"However, if the rate was indeed lower, it will be good as we don't have to allocate a lot of money for this group," she told a press conference, here today.

The UN special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Philip Alston, was reported as saying that the official figure on poverty in the country was vastly inaccurate and did not reflect the realities on the ground. He claimed that the actual rate of poverty in Malaysia was 15%.

Economic Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali, however, said Malaysia stands by its absolute poverty rate of 0.4% in 2016 as it was derived from internationally-accepted standards based on the Canberra Group Handbook on Household Income Statistics, Second Edition (2011), which is published by the UN.

Last Friday, Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the government will study the claim made by Alston to find out whether it was true or not.

In another development, Zuraida, who is PKR vice-president, said several non-entertained requests were the reason she and several other PKR leaders did not attend party meetings, including the Central Leadership Council meeting last Sunday.

"At this stage, it is enough for me to say that there are several of our requests that have yet to be fulfilled by the party president (Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim).

"It is to meet with the president ... to reconcile and straighten up several matters ... a meeting between the president and the elected Central Leadership Council members," she said, adding that several letters sent to the party president's office regarding the matter were also not replied to.

Earlier, Zuraida officiated the pre-launch of Kayuhan Wanita 2019 programme, which saw Malaysian songstress Datuk Seri Siti Nurhaliza Taruddin being appointed as the Celebrity Icon.

The minister said the programme, which is the first under the National Community Policy, will be held on Oct 26 in Putrajaya and is expected to attract the participation of approximately 3,000 cycling enthusiasts to complete a distance of 20km. - *Bernama*