

Headline **UN rep Some rural kids deprived of education**  
Date **21 Nov 2009**  
MediaTitle **New Straits Times**  
Section **Local News**  
Journalist **N/A**  
Frequency **Daily**  
Circ / Read **139,763 / 330,000**

Language **English**  
Page No **9**  
Article Size **294 cm<sup>2</sup>**  
Color **Black/white**  
ADValue **4,071**  
PRValue **12,212**



Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali and Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir (second from left) receiving copies of the State of the World's Children's Special Anniversary Report from Orang Asli children Faezlan Angah, 13 (left), and Emi Eriza Jasut, 16 (right), yesterday.

# UN rep: Some rural kids deprived of education

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Up to four per cent of Malaysian children who should be in school are not, according to Unicef representative to Malaysia Youssouf Oomar.

The United Nations Children's Fund representative said it was believed that most were rural children living in remote areas or undocumented children.

He said this after the launching of the State of the World's Children's Special Anniversary Report and the Education for Every Child forum by Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali and her daughter, social advocate Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir, here yesterday.

Marina pointed out that 14 years

after Malaysia ratified the Convention on the Rights of Children, there were refugee children here who had no access to education.

"It's embarrassing and shameful. It's the right of all children within our borders to have education, regardless of their lack of papers."

She also said children with HIV issues — either HIV positive themselves or with parents or siblings who have HIV — were being discriminated against. School heads sometimes demanded medical clearance before enrolling them.

The current economic crisis had forced many lower income parents to send their children to their grandparents in rural areas, she said.

She said she was concerned over them being separated from their parents and the quality of education they would receive in rural schools.

In her keynote address earlier, Dr Siti Hasmah said many children did not even have access to safe water or nutritious food.

"Many are exposed to danger, harm and fear."

She said nobody should do nothing when the rights of children were violated.

Each child left behind is one child too many, she said, adding that "for every child we leave behind, we leave generations more vulnerable to poverty, exploitation and lost opportunities".