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A celebrated person

DO you know what's special about May 5, 2010? It's the FIFA World Cup. And the host this year is South Africa. But enough of sports. Let's move on to Geography. If you check the world map, you will find a small piece of land called Botswana (actually 50 times bigger than Malaysia) which is next to South Africa and Zimbabwe.

(By the way, Looking For Rain God by Bessie Head is set in Botswana.)

But my article is neither about football nor Botswana, but on Sumaiyah Marope, Miss Botswana 2009! I was lucky enough to meet her during her visit to Rumah Hope in Petaling Jaya.

She was encouraged by her uncle to take part in the Miss Botswana competition last year.

Although she did not make it as Miss Universe, her responsibilities are still heavy. She is fully focused on representing Botswana but this is no burden. She is proud to do it for her country.

Her causes as Miss Botswana are HIV and Childline. HIV is a major problem in her country. She plays her role by giving talks on this issue. She has even brought people to do HIV check-ups. In order to convince them, she did it herself first! She

said the Botswana government makes HIV education compulsory in primary schools to trigger awareness. She added that we should not turn our back on those with HIV as they are just as 'normal' as we are, perhaps less fortunate than us.

Her reason for choosing Childline is based on her opinion that, "Children are so small and fragile. They are unable to voice out and are not protected".

"Many people choose to focus on other causes but I prefer to bring justice and clear the wounds of this small group. Children are threatened by sexual harassment, child labour, neglect and structural abuse."

Sumaiyah is currently continuing her tertiary education in Business Management at Limkokwing University, in Gabbone.

During our interview, I asked Sumaiyah a "burning question". Does she always have to wear a sash and the tiara? She said it is just the protocol for official duties as Miss Botswana and "the tiara is as light as a feather" and she almost cannot feel it on her head.

Sumaiyah thinks Malaysia is awesome. She is fascinated that when she wakes up at 7am, the sun is still hiding behind the horizon. She

likes everything about Malaysia — from the food to the landscape.

Unfortunately, every good thing comes to an end. Come June, she will hand over her Miss Botswana title to a new winner.

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By Sutan Nair, 17,
Kuala Lumpur

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