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Health Ministry and NGO help reduce HIV/AIDS cases

KUALA TERENGGANU: The Health Ministry and non-governmental organisations (NGO) have played major roles in significantly reducing HIV/AIDS cases in the past 10 years.

The Prime Minister's wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor said Malaysia was lucky to have proactive NGOs, such as the Malaysian AIDS Council and AIDS Foundation, which greatly helped to curb the epidemic, assisted sufferers and educated the public through awareness campaigns.

"I laud these highly courageous, compassionate, caring and patient volunteers for their tireless efforts," she said at the opening of the national level 2013 World AIDS Day celebrations at the Gong Badak Stadium here Monday.

Also present at the event were the Terengganu Menteri Besar's wife Toh Puan Seri Norliza Mahmud, Deputy Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Helmi Yahya,

Health Ministry secretary-general Datuk Farida Mohd Ali, state Health director Datuk Dr Anwa Sulaiman and Malaysian AIDS Council president Datuk Raj Karim.

She said the accumulated number of HIV cases from 1986 to 2011 was 95,000 with almost 15,000 AIDS deaths.

She said although 90 percent of the number comprised men, the figure has plunged since 2003 with women representing 21 percent of new cases in 2011 compared to five percent 10 years ago.

"In this context, the Health Ministry has implemented various initiatives to reduce the rate of infection including prevention programmes such as 'Prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission'," she said.

Rosmah also congratulated the Health Ministry for receiving the 2013 United Nation Malaysia Award recently for showing a reduction in the incurable disease. - Bernama