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| Headline | Move to upgrade social service | | |
| MediaTitle | The Sun | | |
| Date | 29 Mar 2012 | Color | Black/white |
| Section | National | Circulation | 270,506 |
| Page No | 9 | Readership | 171,000 |
| Language | English | ArticleSize | 108 cm² |
| Journalist | N/A | AdValue | RM 1,191 |
| Frequency | Daily | PR Value | RM 3,573 |

# Move to upgrade social service

**PUTRAJAYA:** A Social Workers Council is to be set up to upgrade the quality of social service in the country.

This is one of the proposals under the pending Social Workers Act, Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil said.

The Act would help improve the quality of service delivered by social workers, she added.

"Anyone can be a charity worker and volunteer for social services but not all can become a skilled social worker.

"With the improvement of the service quality by social workers, we will be able to guarantee the needs, safety and well-being of the target groups," she said at the opening of the discussion on Social Worker Act draft at her ministry here yesterday.

The memorandum to shape and regulate social workers competency through a Social Workers Act was submitted to the cabinet in April 2010.

Shahrizat told reporters later that she hoped the draft of the bill would be finalised soon. "We have made great strides in economic development, but not very much in terms of social development.

"The Act will not just recognise social work as a full time profession, but will also provide a long-term career path for all those interested in social and charitable work," she added.

Shahrizat said that the Act would also provide create good partnership among the government agencies and the social workers.

Malaysian Social Workers Association (MSWA) president Teoh Ai Hua, who played a role in drafting the Act, said that the social workers in Malaysia were "short in recognition".

There are six major universities in Malaysia offering a degree course in Social Works, Teoh said.

The universities are Universiti Sains Malaysia, which was the first to offer since 1975, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Universiti Malaya and Universiti Kebangsaan.

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