

# Luncheon Meeting with Women Engineers and Single Mothers Organisations

SUB-COMMITTEE ON WOMEN ENGINEERS



by Ir. Khamsah binti Rais

IT has always been the intention of the lady engineers to continue their efforts in organising charitable activities especially for the less fortunate groups in the community. This time, the IEM Sub-committee on Women Engineers (WE) decided to focus on single mothers, hence, a luncheon meeting was organised with representatives from several single mothers organisations.

The objective of the meeting was to identify the type of assistance and support that suits their current and future needs that are within the means of the ladies engineer sub-committee.

The meeting was held at Restaurant Puteri, Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur on 5 December 2009. A total of five representatives from the IEM Sub-committee on Women Engineers, namely, Ir. Toh Ai Ching, Ir. June Lau Yuk Ma, Ir. Assoc. Prof. Hayati Abdullah, Ir. Khamsah Rais and Ir. Erni Juwita Abd. Manan, took part in the luncheon meeting. There were eight representatives from different organisations/areas of single mothers groups, with Pn. Faridah Abdul Karim from WIRDA (Women Institute for



Research, Development and Advancement) leading the single mothers' representatives during the meeting.

The meeting took note of the Spring Single Mother Society's comments that the role of being single mothers is not merely limited to supporting their families single-handedly, they also assume the roles of the fathers in their families including educating the children.

Single mothers face all kinds of humiliation and misunderstandings, and need a lot of moral and social support to ease their burden. They also require support to give them strength and encouragement to lessen the burden and to rebuild their confidence.

The meeting also noted that some of the activities that have been organised by single mothers to generate income while spending time with their children include:

- Organise or participate in festivals where they can sell handycraft and spend time with their children.
- Learn new skills such as sewing and baking.
- Learn basic computer skills to improve their knowledge and to educate them to be more independent.

As a way forward, the WE proposed that:

- To get single mothers to participate in Women Engineers gatherings or other suitable IEM activities such as Family Day in order to demonstrate/sell their products to generate income.
- To assist single mothers in their job search.
- To provide moral support to the groups, *i.e.* visit the single mothers society homes/centre.
- To organise suitable activities such as medical check-ups in collaboration with other parties such as MAKNA. ■

