MALE civil servants can now enjoy longer paternity leave to assist their wives and children in household chores.

In line with the “family first” values, the Government has increased the paternity leave from three to seven days.

In addition, civil servants who have to take care of family matters during the demise of an immediate family member will be given three days of unrecorded leave.

As the role of women increases and gets more significant in national economic and social development, the Ministry of Women and Family Development has been allocated RM99.1mil for next year, an increase of 68% over this year.

As women are the backbone of family development, the Family First Programme: Bring Your Heart Home, was launched to enable government agencies, the private sector and NGOs to collaborate and foster awareness on the importance of giving priority to one’s family.

Under the family development programme of the National Population and Family Development Board, 10 Kasih Keluarga complexes will be built in 2003.

The Government has granted various reliefs and rebates to individual taxpayers not only to meet their personal expenses but also that of their dependents such as relief for education and medical insurance, books and medical expenses for parents.

To foster family values, expenses incurred by a company in sponsoring Family Day are allowed as tax deductions.

To reduce the financial burden on transfer of property among family members, instruments of transfer between husband and wife, parents and children on the basis of love and affection will be exempted from 50% of the stamp duty.

The Government will implement programmes, especially for the welfare of single mothers, currently estimated at nearly 130,000 or 1.2% of the female population.

Priority will be given to single mothers with a monthly income of less than RM600 to own low-cost houses so as to enable them to be located within the same vicinity.