



**MEDIA STATEMENT
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF MALAYSIA (SUHAKAM)**

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PRESS STATEMENT

KUALA LUMPUR (21 MARCH 2021) - The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) commemorates the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination observed annually on 21 March. This year's theme is "Youth Standing Up against Racism", recognising the increasing role of youth in society and in charting the future of the nation.

The use of online technologies has grown exponentially following the COVID-19 pandemic and practice of new norms, as a main mode of communication and dissemination of information amongst all levels of community. Unfortunately, social media was misused, by some quarters, for public shaming and blaming with verbal attacks, racist and xenophobic statements published targeting particular ethnicities and nationalities. Majority of social media users are youths, and without proper guidance, will risk exacerbating racist and intolerant attitudes.

SUHAKAM urges the Government to step up its efforts to implement policies and measures to counter hate speech and intolerance, and to provide open platforms for youths and various groups in society to discuss and address the issue of racial discrimination in Malaysia. This could be in the form of intercultural dialogues with a view to promoting mutual tolerance and respect for human dignity in a multi-ethnic and multicultural Malaysia.

SUHAKAM emphasizes the importance of fostering a culture of tolerance, equality and non-discrimination among youths, where the potential lies to develop a just, peaceful and sustainable society in the future. SUHAKAM reiterates its call to the Government to accede to the ICERD as it will serve as a catalyst for more concerted effort to promote and protect human rights for all regardless of race, colour, descent, nationality or ethnic origin.

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Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)

21 March 2021

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