



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

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS STATEMENT

KUALA LUMPUR (1 DECEMBER 2021) - The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) underscores that the Parliament has a critical role in the promotion and protection of human rights. As such, SUHAKAM expresses support for Members of Parliament in raising matters that affect the rights of the people of Malaysia as well as on those that impact the effective delivery of SUHAKAM's statutory functions.

In connection to the issue raised by Member of Parliament concerning SUHAKAM's budget allocation during the Parliament sitting on 22 November 2021, SUHAKAM reiterates its call for the government to ensure that SUHAKAM receives adequate funding and afforded the necessary powers, to enable it to safely, independently and effectively promote and protect human rights in Malaysia. SUHAKAM had recently undergone the reaccreditation process by the Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA) of the Global Alliance of the National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), in which the SCA reminded that adequate funding should, to a reasonable degree, ensure gradual and progressive realisation of the improvement of the institution's operations and the fulfilment of its mandate. In addition, it also stated that where NHRIs has been designated with additional responsibilities by the State, additional financial resources should be provided to enable it to assume the responsibilities of discharging these functions. Aside from the fact that SUHAKAM currently must address a wider range and increasingly complex human rights issues in the country, based on subsection 5(2) of the SUHAKAM Act 1999 (Act 597), the government appointed a dedicated Children's Commissioner since April 2019 as part of the reforms undertaken by the government in protecting the rights of children. Therefore, the Government should consequently provide SUHAKAM with all the necessary support.

With respect to enhancing its independence, SUHAKAM is working closely with the Legal Affairs Division (BHEUU) of the Prime Minister's Department towards amending the SUHAKAM Act 1999, among others, changes sought on SUHAKAM's capacity as an independent NHRI as well as SUHAKAM's Annual Report where the Section 21 of its enabling Act does not specifically mention that the Annual Report has to be debated in Parliament. SUHAKAM is of the view that it is crucial for Members of Parliament to critically discuss human right issues of public interest in Malaysia and propose possible solutions to these issues, especially since Putrajaya had pledged to prioritise human rights in its application and, subsequently, its election as a member to the Human Rights Council (HRC) under the auspices of the United Nations for the 2022-2024 term.

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Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)

1 December 2021

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"Human Rights For All"

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