



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

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PRESS STATEMENT

KUALA LUMPUR (29 NOVEMBER 2023) - The first reading of the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia Amendment Bill 2023 (SUHAKAM Bill 2023) on 27 November 2023 marked a significant milestone and today, the second reading will determine the future of human rights in Malaysia and simultaneously reflect the Government's commitment and aspiration towards the protection of human rights in the country.

SUHAKAM wishes to express its gratitude to YB Dato' Sri Azalina Binti Othman Said, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law and Institutional Reform) for her relentless effort in bringing the Human Rights agenda forward through institutional reforms. We also wish to convey our sincere appreciation to the Legal Affairs Division of the Prime Minister's Department (BHEUU) for conducting the engagement session with Members of Parliament (MPs) and Senators to present the proposed amendments. The session has served as a platform for MPs and Senators to share their views and concerns over the 11 proposed amendments aimed at strengthening the role and authority of the Commission, to better safeguard and promote human rights within the country. SUHAKAM takes this opportunity to thank all representatives for their commitment and support to empower the Commission through legislative changes.

This Bill, which seeks to reinforce the role and authority of SUHAKAM, was designed to ensure diverse representation and establish an independent, integral organization to effectively address human rights issues across Malaysia. It is important for SUHAKAM, as an independent NHRI to reflect on the balanced composition of the Commissioners that have the ability to promote and protect the rights of children, women and persons with disabilities. In addition to this, the Bill will also strengthen the role of the Children Commissioner by institutionalizing and expanding the Office of Children's Commissioner (OCC) within SUHAKAM. Cementing the existence of the OCC within SUHAKAM gives legitimacy and certainty from the Government to the public on our commitment to protect and promote children's rights.

SUHAKAM would like to thank all stakeholders including the Government Agencies, CSOs and NGOs for their cooperation, contribution and unwavering effort in the preparation of this comprehensive amendment to SUHAKAM founding Act (SUHAKAM Act 1999). In anticipating the Bill's second reading, SUHAKAM recognizes the crucial role it plays in further empowering the organization and augmenting its capabilities in upholding and advancing human rights in Malaysia. SUHAKAM will continue to carry out its functions independently and with integrity by ensuring continuous accountability in promoting and protecting human rights in Malaysia.

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**Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)
29 November 2023**