



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

**EDITOR, NEWS DESK**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**PRESS STATEMENT**

**KUALA LUMPUR (31 MAY 2024)** — SUHAKAM was represented by Commissioner Prof. Datuk Noor Aziah Mohd Awal during the recent 88th session of the CEDAW Committee hearing in Geneva on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.

The Committee on CEDAW, a body of independent experts, monitors the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. CEDAW, an international bill of rights for women, was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979 and came into force in 1981. Malaysia ratified the Convention in 1995 and, as a signatory, is reviewed by the UN every four years.

SUHAKAM commends the Malaysian government for sending a high-level delegation headed by Minister of Women, Family and Community Development, YB Nancy Shukri, along with senior officers of the ministry. The presence of the Honourable Minister was noted by the Committee, which expressed their elation at such a high-level presence. The Committee took note of developments in areas of equal recognition through laws and proposed amendments to the Federal Constitution. Positive developments include the enactment of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act 2022 [Act 840], amendments to the Employment (Amendment) Act 2022, and the introduction of anti-stalking laws in the Penal Code. However, the Government acknowledged ongoing challenges, notably the need for better representation of women in Parliament.

SUHAKAM attended and was allowed 5 minutes intervention at the Committee hearing and acknowledged the positive steps taken by Malaysia towards compliance with the Convention. During the formal discussions, the Committee raised several questions, including Malaysia's reservations on Articles 9(2) and 16(1) (a), (c), (f), and (g) of CEDAW and the status of the ratification of the optional protocol of CEDAW. Other issues discussed included the harmonization of Syariah and civil laws, the effectiveness of the Domestic Violence Act, measures taken to reduce statelessness among women, the criminalization of out-of-wedlock pregnancy, proposed amendments to the Education Act, the introduction of indigenous languages as a medium of instruction in schools, unpaid care work, the impact of climate change, and the plight of women on death row. The Committee stressed that the Government should focus on policies and laws that will benefit all women, particularly those from the most marginalized communities.

Prior to the formal proceedings, on May 20th, SUHAKAM presented a detailed statement in an informal session with the Committee. Among the issues highlighted by SUHAKAM were citizenship issues, female genital mutilation, child marriage, and sexual harassment. SUHAKAM urges Malaysia to engage with all Malaysian stakeholders on a regular basis to identify areas of shortcomings and propose steps moving forward to address existing reservations.

SUHAKAM commends the commitment made by the Malaysian Government to the CEDAW reporting process and is hopeful that the Committee's recommendations will act as a catalyst in further advancing women's rights and the broader human rights agenda in Malaysia.

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**Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)  
31 May 2024**