



**MEDIA STATEMENT
THE OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER OF THE
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF MALAYSIA (SUHAKAM)**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**OCC CALLS FOR STRENGTHENED IMPLEMENTATION, INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY
AND CONTINUED REFORM FOLLOWING THE “SYMPOSIUM ON CHILDREN’S RIGHTS
LEGISLATIVE REFORM” HELD ON 8-9 JUNE 2026**

KUALA LUMPUR (9 JUNE 2026) - The Office of the Children’s Commissioner (OCC) of the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) welcomes the successful conclusion of the Symposium on Children’s Rights Legislative Reform and commends the commitment demonstrated by policymakers, parliamentarians, government agencies, civil society organisations, academics, and child rights advocates in advancing discussions on strengthening Malaysia’s child protection ecosystem. The symposium provided an important platform to assess Malaysia’s progress in implementing its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), identify persistent gaps in law, policy and implementation, and explore reforms necessary to ensure that every child enjoys their rights without discrimination and in accordance with the principle of the best interests of the child.

As an independent mechanism mandated to promote and protect the rights of children in Malaysia, the OCC monitors the implementation of children’s rights, receives complaints concerning violations of those rights, and advocates for laws, policies and practices that uphold the rights and best interests of every child. The discussions throughout the symposium highlighted that the advancement of children’s rights requires not only strong legal frameworks, but also effective implementation, adequate resources and coordinated institutional responses.

Malaysia has been a State Party to the CRC for more than three decades. Over the years, Malaysia has undertaken important efforts to strengthen child protection through legislative amendments, policy development and the establishment of various child protection mechanisms. These developments reflect Malaysia’s continued commitment towards building a stronger system for children. Nevertheless, the next phase of child rights advancement requires moving beyond the existence of laws towards ensuring their meaningful implementation. The effectiveness of any legal framework ultimately depends on whether the institutions entrusted with protecting children are equipped with sufficient resources, trained personnel, sustainable funding, and operational capacity to deliver protection in practice.

The OCC notes that many contemporary challenges affecting children do not arise solely from legislative gaps, but also from systemic implementation barriers. These include challenges relating to inter-agency coordination, availability of specialised services, human resource constraints among frontline child protection actors, data collection and monitoring mechanisms, and the capacity to translate policies into timely and effective interventions for children. Existing mechanisms established under the Child Act 2001 and related frameworks must therefore be continuously strengthened to ensure that the safeguards envisioned by law are fully realised. A child protection system is only as effective as its ability to reach children when protection is needed. This requires sustained investment in social services, professionalisation of the child protection workforce, evidence-based policymaking and stronger institutional coordination.

At the same time, the OCC recognises that child rights implementation requires meaningful engagement with Malaysia’s social, cultural and community contexts. The universality of children’s rights under the CRC is strengthened when implemented through approaches that acknowledge local realities while preserving shared fundamental values of dignity, protection, non-discrimination, participation and the best interests of the child. Constructive dialogue involving policymakers, communities, religious leaders, civil society organisations, families and children themselves remains essential in ensuring that reforms are both principled and practically sustainable.



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The symposium further highlighted several longstanding child rights issues requiring continued attention, including access to protection for vulnerable children, strengthening child-friendly justice systems, safeguarding children's health and wellbeing, and ensuring that every child is protected from situations of violence, neglect, exploitation and exclusion. Many of these concerns have been consistently raised by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, SUHAKAM, the OCC, civil society organisations and child rights advocates. The symposium has provided an important opportunity to reaffirm the need for a whole-of-society approach in strengthening Malaysia's child protection ecosystem.

Moving forward, the OCC stands ready to support Members of Parliament, government agencies and other stakeholders through evidence-based recommendations, monitoring, research and engagement with children and communities. Ensuring that children's voices are heard and considered in decision-making processes remains central to building policies that respond effectively to their lived realities. The OCC emphasises that Malaysia's continued progress in child rights requires translating commitments into measurable outcomes. Strengthening implementation capacity, ensuring adequate resources and addressing systemic barriers are essential to fulfilling Malaysia's obligations under the CRC and ensuring that every child can grow up in an environment that respects their dignity, rights and full potential.

The OCC hopes that the recommendations and insights emerging from this symposium will contribute to renewed national commitment towards advancing children's rights and building a sustainable, inclusive and effective child protection system for all children in Malaysia.

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**Office of the Children's Commissioner
The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)
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