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Campaign calls for a stop to discrimination against young

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - The first imperative action of the "Say Yes for Children" campaign, "Leave No Child Out", calls for a stop to all forms of discrimination and exclusion against children worldwide.

In many parts of the world, children inadvertently face discrimination and are marginalised due to a variety of reasons.

These reasons include gender and race, and sometimes the traditions of their parents, which then cause the children to be left out and unable to reach their full potential.

In Malaysia, the Government, through the National Unity and Social Development Ministry, strives to ensure that all children are provided equal access to all opportunities.

Ministry secretary-general Dr P. Manogran told the New Straits Times today that most children in Malaysia are well provided for, and do not suffer discrimination.

He said, however, a small number do not receive equal access to opportunities due to reasons such as poverty.

He cited an example of a case where children were unable to attend school because they did not have identity cards.

"When these cases are brought to the ministry's attention, we then take the necessary action to ensure these children receive an education," he said.

Manogran said children, especially the disabled, enjoy full participation in all areas, such as education.

"Disabled children are provided ample opportunity to an education... we have enough schools and accessible facilities for them. In the area of sports, we even have athletes in the Paralympics," he added.

Manogran said the most important thing to do is to raise awareness that children too are citizens of the world who have their own rights.

He said the ministry is working closely with non-governmental organisations, by providing them with grants and aid, to ensure that this conscious awareness is spread to the public.

The "Say Yes for Children" campaign, which was launched in Malaysia last Saturday by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, requires the public to pledge their support towards 10 imperative actions that will make children happier and healthier.

These pledges will then be brought to the United Nations Special Session on Children, which will be held from Sept 19. Malaysia will be sending a delegation which includes 10 teenagers to the session in New York.

According to the Global Movement for Children (GMFC), there is never a good reason for denying a child freedom and opportunity.

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