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Shahrizat-Constitution

GOVT TO AMEND CONSTITUTION TO GIVE WOMEN EQUAL RIGHTS

KUALA LUMPUR, July 23 (Bernama) -- The government has agreed to amend Article 8 (2) of the Federal Constitution to ensure no gender discrimination in the country, Women and Family Development Minister Datuk Shahrizat Abdul Jalil said today.

According to her, the Cabinet approved the proposed move at its last meeting on July 18.

The proposed amendment seeks to grant Malaysian women equal rights as men.

"This entails adding the word sex to Article 8 (2) of the Malaysian Constitution to now ensure no discrimination of citizens merely because of sex, religion, race, descent or birth place in any law," she said.

Shahrizat said this when speaking at the launch of a campaign against violence in society by Ombak or the women's organisation against violence by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad here.

The move signified a major accomplishment for the Malaysian womenfolk, she said.

"This amendment is clearly a watershed decision and a great breakthrough for the women of Malaysia.

"When this amendment becomes law, the Malaysian constitution will specifically spell out that there shall be no discrimination by virtue of sex," she said emphasising its great significance to Malaysian women.

"This means a lot to the women of Malaysia because, usually although not always of course, women are subject to discrimination, either blatantly or implicitly," she said.

Dr Mahathir in his speech said the proposed amendment underscored the recognition of the ever increasing role of women in the country.

"This is to ensure equal rights for both women and men...no differentiation according to the laws or policies in Malaysia. We are convinced it will be well-received," he said.

Speaking to reporters later, Dr Mahathir said the proposed amendment bill would be tabled during the current sitting of the Dewan Rakyat.

-- BERNAMA

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