

Suaram lauds citizenship proposal

PETALING JAYA: Human rights group Suaram welcomed the Government's plan to consider giving citizenship to illegal immigrants who had been in Malaysia for more than 30 years.

"Those who are here for many years should be given citizenship or some form of legitimacy to stay in the country," said Suaram executive director Cynthia Gabriel.

She reasoned that such a move was in accordance with globalisation where cross-border migration of talents was common in many countries.

Gabriel was commenting on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's recent announcement made in Brunei that Filipino illegals who had resided in Sabah for more than 30 years be given citizenship.

He had said that it applied only to

those who had no connections with the Philippines while "late comers" would be deported, adding that the matter would be handled fairly.

On whether such policies would lift the floodgates for more unskilled immigrants to enter the country illegally, Gabriel said the problem existed because Malaysia did not have a long-term strategy to tackle the problem.

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