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Wanita Gerakan urges all Malaysians to reject hudud

WANITA Gerakan has urged every Malaysian - regardless of race, creed or religion - not to accept the use of hudud in the country.

Its chief Datuk Kee Phaik Cheen said such a stand was necessary as hudud violated the basic principles of the Federal Constitution.

"Gender equality has just been legally established in our Constitution, but the new hudud legislation blatantly discriminates against women's status as witnesses," said Kee.

"It does not accept women and non-Muslims as valid eye-witnesses and rape is proven only if four adult male Muslim witnesses give evidence or the accused makes a confession," she added.

Speaking at the opening of the Wanita Gerakan delegates conference in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, she said the movement fully supported the struggle to repeal all draconian and unjust laws passed under religious or secular guises.

She said all laws that violated the principles of human rights and equality must be abolished.

"We, therefore, call on all who believe in basic human rights to set aside our differences and be fully committed to defending the rights of all Malaysians to equal treatment, access to opportunities and dignity," she added.

Kee noted that with the formation of the Women and Family Development Ministry, the Barisan Nasional Government had given women full access to government machinery and funding as well as a system of networking to bring about continual development and progress.

"We no longer have an excuse for not holding up half of our Malaysian sky, as the saying goes. If laws and practices still discriminate against women, then they have to be weeded out and repealed," she said.

Kee said many were still unaware that Malaysia was unique because of its diversity, rich culture and multi-talented people.

The ICT and globalisation era has now imposed greater demands on Malaysians to continue their quest for higher skills and more knowledge to sustain our competitive edge.

"Languages, especially those used on a global scale, should be viewed as an access to knowledge, a means of effective communication and a way of sustaining our competitive edge.

"Hence, the call by Prime Minister (Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad) for an extensive and intensive usage of English, especially in the teaching of Mathematics and Science, must be supported by all," she said.

Kee said Malaysia's international standing in the world today had made the people proud of being Malaysians and this was largely attributed to Dr Mahathir's consistency in voicing his stand on world issues without fear or favour.