

**DAP promises more Malay, Indian candidates**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**November 10, 2011**  
**by Andrew Ong**

DAP will be fielding more Malay and Indian candidates in the coming general election in line with its aspirations to be a truly multi-ethnic party.

Its deputy publicity chief, Teo Nie Ching (left in photo), told a conference on national unity today that the party desires to have a membership that reflects the national ethnic make-up and will take steps to achieve this.

“DAP has been trying very hard to engage the Malay community. This is not a easy job, but we are trying to reach out to the Malay community and urge them to join us.

“You have my word. In the coming general election, DAP will be fielding more Malay and Indian candidates. This is what we believe is necessary for integration,” said Teo.

Admitting that having a truly multi-ethnic party was going to be a difficult task, Teo said that her party had to have this as a target.

She was responding to another speaker at the forum, Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin, who in his speech earlier said a truly multi-ethnic political party in Malaysia was still a distant dream, citing Chinese-dominated DAP as an example.

Approached after the forum, Teo could not reveal details about DAP’s plans because seat negotiations among Pakatan Rakyat component parties are still ongoing.

“DAP is working towards fielding Malay candidates in Malay-majority or mixed seats,” she said.

KJ: Easier said than done

In her speech preceding Khairy’s, Teo said one obstacle to achieving national unity was race-based political parties which operate on a divide-and-rule basis.

“When racial differences are emphasised and re-emphasised, how can we realise the dream of having a true ‘Bangsa Malayisa’? Race-based political parties are truly the champion peddlers of racist politics.

“What we can foresee is that it will take a long time for race-based political parties to transform themselves to be principle and ideology-based political parties,” she said.

Using herself as an example, Teo said she was heavily condemned by Umno-owned Utusan Malaysia for visiting a surau as the Serdang MP, to hand out a RM1,000 cheque on behalf of the state government.

She was criticised on grounds that she was not wearing a tudung (Malay head scarf) when entering the surau and was thus insulting to Muslims.

As another example, Teo cited how MCA had once attacked the PAS candidate for the Tenang by-election Normala Sudirman (centre in photo) for her refusal to shake hands with men.

Khairy responded later that multi-ethnic political parties was “easier said than done” and cited DAP, which has existed since the 1960s, as an example.

The conference titled ‘National Unity: From Vision to Action’ was organised by Yayasan 1Malaysia and held in Subang Jaya, Selangor.

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