

Deputy minister okays equality panel, not race laws
MalaysiaKini.com
March 31, 2012
By Leven Woon

The government should form an equal rights commission emulating Suhakam rather than enact race relations laws, opines Youth and Sports Deputy Minister Gan Peng Sieu.

Addressing an 100-odd strong audience at the Bar Council's forum on race relations laws today, Gan dismissed such legislation as unnecessary as the country already has sufficient.

"Just like faith cannot be legislated, we also cannot legislature someone to love somebody," he said.

Gan Ping Sieu at bar councilHence, Gan (left) said, an equal rights commission, with non-partisan members, should be pushed for to study discriminatory laws and policies at the institutional level with the aim of purging them.

The MCA senator added that the commission would study complaints from the public and put forward recommendations to the government.

The next step , he said, would be for each ministry to setup a committee to scrutinise its respective policies.

Elaborating on this later, Gan told reporters that he would raise the matter with the cabinet, but it will not top his agenda.

Race relations bill still hanging

Asked about the status of the proposed race relations bill , he confirmed that it will not be tabled at the current parliament session.

"And since the election is around the corner, the last thing the government would like to do is to plunge into another rounds of debate on this law in parliament," he said.

NONEOn the "Christianisation" seminar in Johor which provoked an uproar, Gan reckoned that Minister of Prime Minister Department Jamil Baharom backed the organisers, but not the others.

"There are ministers who said they are supporting it, but there are ministers who said otherwise.

"This is where an equal rights commission is needed," he said.

Gan, however, shied away from responding when asked whether the race column in government's forms is still relevant, saying that government must make its purpose clear.

But he was in favour of it as the column was for statistical purposes. "But don't abuse the statistics," he declared.

