

## **DAP: Reform polls system for more women reps**

**MalaysiaKini.com**

**May 13, 2013**

**By Hazlan Zakaria**

Polls reform is needed to increase the number and percentage of elected female representatives, says the DAP.

"To achieve at least 30 percent female elected representatives, the electoral system must be changed to a proportional representation (PR) system," proposed party strategist Ong Kian Ming at a press conference in Kuala Lumpur today.

The system, he argued, has been proven to be effective in mature democracies like Norway and Finland which has hit or neared the 30 percent mark of female elected representatives.

NONEAt present, Ong said that there were 56 female candidates out of the total 523 who contested for parliamentary seats, and 112 female state seat candidates out of the total 1,210.

Of these, 13 out of the 133 elected BN MPs (9.8 percent) are women, while nine out of the 89 Pakatan MPs (10.1 percent) are women.

Although Pakatan is leading over the BN in this, the number of female MPs overall has been static at just above or below 10 percent for both sides.

Ong explained that in the present 'First Past The Post' system, it is difficult to field more women as constituencies suitable for women candidates are few and far between.

"Proportional representation is a list system, which would make it easier for us to field more women as we can add them to the top of the list of candidates."

As such, when the party wins let's say, 40 percent of the popular vote, the women can be selected as elected representatives as their names are near the top of the list, he reasoned.

'The electorate prefers locals'

The difficulty in matching women candidates with seats, said Seputeh MP Teresa Kok who joined Ong in the press conference, is not as much a difficulty in finding quality women candidates, but more in finding a candidate who is a local at the

seats they aim to contest.

NONEKok (right) argued that in many constituencies, the electorate prefers a local and one that must be seen to be hands-on and on the ground.

"This is difficult - especially in the rural seats in Sabah and Sarawak, for example," she said.

However, Ong vowed that the DAP is committed to recruiting not only more female members into the party, but to also train more of them to be potential candidates and increase women representation in our political system.

Fellow MP Lim Lip Eng, who was re-elected to represent the constituency of Segambut, said that there is no reason why a Muslim-majority country like Malaysia cannot have more women in senior leadership positions.

He pointed to similar nations like Indonesia, Pakistan and Bangladesh where the chief executive of the government are females.

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