

No race card under code

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Committee to draw up Code of Ethics

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KUALA LUMPUR: Politicians will not be allowed to use the race card under a Code of Ethics being drawn up by a Select Committee.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Maximus Ongkili said the code would cover all leaders of political parties, MPs and state assemblymen, and party leaders.

"Politicians should air their views with responsibility, with the intention of solving problems rather than to fan racial sentiments and anger.

"They should adopt good political practices for the good of national racial unity.

"The intention of the Code is to ensure that politicians promote national unity, rather than to restrict them from giving their views or to impede their effectiveness," he said.

Dr Ongkili was speaking to reporters after opening the two-day national seminar on "50 years of Independence and the New Generation: Appreciation and the Future of Multi-Ethnic Relations in Malaysia" yesterday.

He said the select committee meeting early

next month would set up a sub-committee to draft the code.

"We hope to complete the draft in three months and present it to Parliament before the year's end, or before Parliament is dissolved".

"The new generation of leaders should also adopt good political practices."

Dr Ongkili said that while Barisan Nasional had a pro-unity protocol and Parliament had a Standing Order prohibiting racist remarks in the House, it was good to have a written Parliamentary rule.

"The Election Commission also talks about having a guideline but the form of restriction is not very clear," he said.

He, however, admitted that it would not be easy to stop politicians from playing the race card, as some parties were race-based.

Dr Ongkili said a multi-racial party had a better check-and-balance system against racism. On sanctions against those who violated the code, he said it would be difficult to impose penalties but added there were existing laws, such as the Seditious Act, which would be used against those who instigated racial tension.