

# Ethics code to curb race-based politics

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**PETALING JAYA:** A political code of ethics should be implemented to prevent and curb political parties from practising communal-based politics.

This was one of six recommendations that have been made by the Parliamentary Select Committee on National Unity and National Service (NS) on politics and unity in its report that was tabled in Parliament on Tuesday.

Parliamentary debates should also steer clear of the use of racially-sensitive rhetoric, the committee said.

It also called for inter-religious and inter-faith dialogue to be held under the supervision of the Prime Minister's Department, and for local authorities to adhere strictly to the guidelines for building places of worship.

Other suggestions included strengthening multi-racial politics by using national unity as the basis of political struggle, and developing a spirit of accommodation and

tolerance within political parties.

The committee, headed by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Maximus J. Ongkili, was set up on Dec 14, 2004.

It comprised 10 MPs and was tasked to discuss issues on racial unity and national integration.

The feedback from the public, organisations and associations were mostly concerned with the importance of racial unity and national integration towards creating an ideal economic environment that addresses inequalities, the committee said.

Under its section on education and national unity, the committee proposed for pre-NS module programmes to be introduced in schools to help prepare participants.

It lauded the teaching of the Ethnic Relations Module at institutions of higher learning as an effort to instil patriotism.

But the committee said the implementation and approach used for the module must be checked.

On undocumented migrants, the committee said new migrants

should be prevented from entering the country, and a solution found for those already here.

Calling for enforcement to be strengthened through more aggressive and continuous operations, the committee also suggested for more detention centres to be set up.

The committee called for a solution to resolve the issues of refugees in Sabah and of children with no nationality.

The report outlined 12 areas of concern. Others included:  
» a National Unity Policy, in which the committee called for a Multi-Culturalism Policy to ensure that policies and development programmes do not sideline national unity and integration and instead cultivate tolerance and respect for all races.

» The implementation of economic development policies and programmes that do not create disparity among and between races and the eradication of poverty regardless of race. The committee said privatisation should also not burden the people.

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