



MAJLIS KEBANGSAAN PERTUBUHAN-PERTUBUHAN WANITA MALAYSIA
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS MALAYSIA (NCWO)
(MEMBER OF ASEAN CONFEDERATION OF WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS)

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MEDIA STATEMENT

SPEECH MATTERS : PARLIAMENTARIANS COUNT FOR GENDER EQUALITY

NCWO is deeply concerned with the use of abusive language and derogatory remarks made by the Deputy Minister YB Dato' Sri Tajuddin bin Abdul Rahman in Parliament on 21 November 2016 with reference to Member of Parliament YB Theresa Kok.

NCWO strongly calls for all Members of Parliament to maintain decorum and discipline in Parliament at all times and in all debates. The said remark and the perpetuation of such abuse violates the nation's aspiration for a gender sensitive democracy. Such remarks further erode the confidence of Malaysians, in particular Malaysian women, on how gender issues would be taken into consideration by the country's leaders. We should continuously strive to focus on significant matters and deliberation towards more effective and meaningful outcomes, including upholding the rights of women as equal members of this nation. We call that the prestige of the Parliament be enhanced and preserved through orderly decorum by all who walk its corridors.

On 27 November 2012, Standing Order 36(4) of the House of Representatives was amended as follows: "(4) It shall be out of order for Members of the House to use offensive language or make a sexist remark." NCWO applauds the Government for this positive action of no tolerance for such language. The Government report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women also reported this Standing Order as "measures which have been undertaken even by the highest body i.e. legislative with regard to the elimination of gender stereotypes". However, if we are to change the culture of this esteemed Institution we must ensure the full implementation of the Standing Order.

There is little doubt that it is time all political parties initiate steps to improve the quality of member's participation in parliamentary proceedings and ensure that members conduct themselves in a dignified manner reflective of their position as elected representatives. It is important to be mindful that gender-sensitivity and basic respect is observed in the conduct of all Parliamentarians – one which reflects a mature democratic society.

NCWO emphasizes the hope for a gender-sensitive parliament and stands against all such derogatory statements, which should no longer be a feature in our Parliamentary debates.

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Hon Secretary General
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