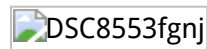


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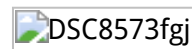
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN RIGHTS AND NATION BUILDING – TAN SRI HASMY AGAM



PENANG, November 2015 – The words ‘human rights’ and ‘nation-building’ may appear to be obvious and straightforward for some people, but not necessarily for others, as understandings and perspectives may differ from one individual or a group to another.

This was mentioned by SUHAKAM Chairman, The Honorable Tan Sri Hasmy Agam during his public lecture titled ‘Relationship between Human Rights and Nation Building’ at Dewan Budaya Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) recently.

Hasmy said that based on the survey and the informal feedbacks from members of the public, it showed that majority of the people did not have a clear idea about what human rights is and for those who know more about human, they tend to perceive it from the prisms of race or ethnicity, culture and religion. While most Malaysians, including those who should know better are unaware that the concept of human rights are protected in the Charter of the United Nations (UN).



“Aside from the UN Charter, there are other UN conventions or instruments of human rights that UN member states are obliged to respect and uphold that is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which consists of civil protection, political, economic, social and cultural rights, such as the basic rights to life, food, shelter or housing, schooling or education, work or employment, health, personal liberty, faith or religion, citizenship, marriage and having a family, property ownership, freedom of assembly, freedom of views or opinions, and of course the freedom to express themselves, political choices and participations, among many other things,” he mentioned.

He further added that nation-building is not limited to economic development only but also to the development of infrastructures to become a successful commercial and industrialised nation.

“Nation-building is a comprehensive, over-arching and holistic concept and process which requires the full participation and involvement of all stakeholders, the government and all its institutions, the corporate sector, people and civil society who will be the beneficiaries of good policies and processes,” he added.

As a nation that respects and upholds human rights of all the people living in its territories, both the citizens as well as non-citizens, it is the duty of the government to be democratic and people-oriented.

It needs hardly to be emphasised here that fundamentally the government of a country, especially in democracy, is the main protector of its people. However, given the complexity of governance and competing claims and interests of the citizenry, it is not always possible for policies and processes to be completely in sync with the wishes and aspirations of all sectors of the population.

“This is where the quest for better and exemplary standards of human rights in our country is so vitally important, and that each and everyone of us as citizens has an important role to play in pushing the human rights agenda forward, it is not just the exclusive role or domain of SUHAKAM as the National Commission of Human Rights of Malaysia alone to do it,” he explained.

Furthermore, it remains the fervent hope of SUHAKAM that through its creation of awareness and training programmes involving government departments, schools, colleges and universities, handling of complaints relating to violations of human rights, continuous engagement with all stakeholders, Malaysia will move forward and be among the leading countries in the Asia Pacific region, if not the world, in promoting and safeguarding human rights.

“We therefore look forward to your individual and group involvement, particularly among the younger generations, in this common cause and our common quest demands an open and respective attitude, abandoning of prejudices and old mindsets, a strong believe in and commitment or passion for human rights causes,” emphasis by him at the end of his lecture.

Also present at this session are the USM Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dato’ Dr. Omar Osman and Chairman of Yayasan Tun Sardon, Dato’ Rizal Al-Amin Tun Sardon.

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Photo : Mohd Fairus Md Isa



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