

Talks to be held to encourage women's participation in upcoming polls, says Zailah

KUALA LUMPUR: Discussions will be held with leaders of political parties to see how to increase women's participation in the coming polls, said Datuk Zailah Mohd Yusoff.

"This issue is in the ministry's planning.

"We are discussing the matter and may take it up with political leaders on how to achieve this target," said the Deputy Women, Family and Community Development Minister at a press conference in Parliament on Wednesday (Sept 29).

She noted that raising women's participation in decision-making roles to 30% is the aspiration of all political parties.

Earlier, in the Dewan Rakyat, Zailah noted that involvement of women in the nation's political decision-making process has remained very low.

"Based on the Statistics Department's National Gender Gap Index 2020, the gap between men and women in politics is somewhat extreme.

"Women in politics scored 0.18 out of the full score of 1.0," she said in reply to a question raised by Nor Azrina Surip (PH-Merbok).

She also said that women MPs in Dewan Rakyat made up only 15% or 33 out of the current 220 seats in the august House.

"It is similar in Dewan Negara where women senators make up almost 15% or only eight out of the current 53 seats," she added.

Zailah said that political parties must shoulder the responsibility of ensuring more women participation in politics, including being fielded as candidates in the polls.

"Women's participation should not merely be to fulfil the quota but to win in the polls," she added.

Nor Azrina wanted to know what the ministry's long term plans were to achieve 30% women's representation in Parliament.

She suggested making it mandatory for political parties to field 30% women candidates in the coming polls if they wished to take part in the general election.

Meanwhile, Zailah noted that women's representation in decision-making roles in the public and private sectors is much improved.

She said women make up 38.5% in decision-making posts holding Grade Jusa C and above in the civil service.

In the private sector, women constitute 25.8% of the board of directors in 100 public-listed companies, she said.

<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2021/09/29/talks-to-be-held-to-encourage-women039s-participation-in-upcoming-polls-says-zailah>