

PM urged to set up a children's ministry

PETALING JAYA: Former deputy women, family and community development minister Hannah Yeoh has called on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob to establish a ministry for children.

The Segambut MP said there was a need for a ministry dedicated solely to children as the pandemic had exposed and amplified the weaknesses of Malaysia's systems to adequately protect the young ones.

"The well-being of our children is under severe threat during this prolonged lockdown," said Yeoh in a statement on Sunday (Aug 22).

Yeoh cited 2020 figures from the Statistics Department stating that children make up about 30% of the population, with the Federal Territories topping the list at 38.5%, or almost 40%.

"They are indeed our future and our greatest asset," she said.

Yeoh also said that during the Pakatan Harapan administration, they focused heavily on issues relating to children because of their vulnerability by launching initiatives such as appointing the first Children's Commissioner and establishing the first child sex offenders registry.

She pointed out that currently, a child protector takes up 80 children's cases, leaving them insufficient time for follow-ups.

"The actual ratio of protector and children is 1:45,142 and this is simply impossible for protection of children to be effective.

"There were also preliminary meetings being held to restructure early childhood education and care (ECCE), recommendations for the Home Ministry to simplify citizenship procedures for children involving Malaysian mothers, adoption process, foster care and data sharing with the police," she added.

<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2021/08/22/hannah-yeoh-urges-new-pm-to-set-up-a-childrens-ministry>