

## KOTAKAN KATA!

There is a Malay saying which we all hold dear: *Kata mesti dikota*. Your word is your bond, and promises must be kept. The Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG) congratulates you on winning in the 12<sup>th</sup> General Elections, look forward to the fulfillment your election promises.

The orchid symbolizes our sincerity and willingness to work with you to end discrimination against women and to bring about gender equality. In your folder, you will find a ruler: We will be measuring your performance.

Yang Berhormat. We are confident you will measure up.

We list below the main areas that need your urgent attention and action:

**1. Amend the following:**

- i. article 15 of the Federal Constitution to allow women the same rights as men with regards to citizenship status of their foreign wives
- ii. the language Schedule II of the Federal constitution to allow women to confer citizenship status on their children even when the child is born outside of Malaysia
- iii. the Islamic Family Law Act according to JAG's proposal. Standardize the Syariah Laws in all States and the Federal Territories;
- iv. the Law Reform (Marriage and Divorce) Act 1976;
- v. the Domestic Violence Act 1994;
- vi. the Parliamentary Standing Order so that sexism is disallowed;
- vii. the Penal Code, to criminalize marital rape, stalking and domestic violence which is psychological in nature; and
- viii. the Local Government Act 1976 to enable elections to be held at the local government levels.

**2. Enact the:**

- i. Gender Discrimination Act to incorporate the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) into national law;
- ii. Sexual Harassment Act; and
- iii. Freedom of Information Act;

**3. Repeal the:**

- i. Internal Security Act;
- ii. Official Secrets Act;
- iii. University and University Colleges Act;
- iv. The Printing Presses and Publications Act; and
- v. all existing Emergency Ordinances

4. **Re-activate** the Parliamentary Gender Caucus into a body that is pro-active in dealing with gender discrimination and inequality within the Parliament, and nationwide.

5. **Institutionalise** regular dialogues between MPs and civil society organizations to bring about substantive democratic and gender responsive policies.

6. **Form** a permanent Standing Committee on Integrity and Governance to advocate for legal reforms to bring about greater transparency, accountability and participation.

These are exciting times, and the space to make changes for the greater good is now open. We wish you a fruitful term.

*Kotakan Kata!*

This statement is issued on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2008 by the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality comprising:

All Women's Action Society (AWAM), Sisters in Islam (SIS),  
Women's Aid Organisation (WAO),  
Sisters In Islam ( SIS)  
Pusat Janadaya (Empower)  
Women's Centre for Change (WCC), Penang