

Idris Jala's take on 1Malaysia concept



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Government policy alone will not be enough to put the nation on the 1Malaysia path, said Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Idris Jala.

"The way to become 1Malaysia is not through government policy but through behavioural change," he told the plenary at UCSI University's National Congress on Integrity today.

Malaysians, he said, should move from merely tolerating each other to celebrating the differences.



"If you tolerate someone, you don't mind having someone as your neighbour but will be happy if they leave.

"When you celebrate diversity, you celebrate the achievements of others - that I welcome you in my home and wish I was like you," he said.

Idris however glazed over the issue when asked by press how this concept would appeal to groups like vocal Malay-rights NGO Perkasa.

"Every Malaysian needs to look at themselves and see which rung of the ladder they are at and work towards celebrating diversity," he said.

In his keynote address, the Sarawak-born minister also said that issues of race relation and religious conflict are not "problems to be solved".

Rather, they are "polarities to be managed" and "mis-filing" them otherwise will only cause more problems.

"When you 'mis-file' something as problems to be solved, you solve the problems for yourself but create problems for other people," he said.

Husband and wife analogy

Malaysians, he said, must come to terms with the fact that the diverse members of the society has needs that cannot be changed, rather managed.

He likened the situation to his marriage where his wife has to accept that he would always leave his dirty socks everywhere and while he needs to accept that she will always take a long time to decide what to wear.

"This is polarisation. This is the way she is and this is the way I am," he said, illustrating his point to much amusement.

However, he added, Malaysians could not learn to celebrate each other as long as they refuse to forgive.

"When you start to hold bitterness against others it will become a rot within yourself," he said.