



Standardise poverty aid income level for all, urges MP

PETALING JAYA: The government needs to review the poverty line post-Covid-19, says Petaling Jaya MP Maria Chin Abdullah who also wants a standardised criteria for who can receive poverty aid.

Maria said that although the poverty line stood at RM2,208, different government agencies referred to different income levels in deciding on who qualified for aid.

The welfare department, she said, used an income level of RM980 per month as a reference point while agencies such as the Malaysian Indian Transformation Unit, or Mitra, and e-Kasih used RM4,000 and RM1,500 respectively to determine if someone qualified for aid.

“I think there has to be a realignment of the poverty line across all government agencies,” she said.

Speaking to FMT, Maria said this would better ensure the equitable distribution of aid and allow the government to more accurately identify the people who needed help.

The current poverty line was fixed by the statistics department in 2019.

Meanwhile, Maria raised the issue of the lack of a strong safety net to help deserving Malaysians, in a webinar organised by the All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia.

“In Malaysia, we have a very shallow safety net. We give a lot of aid but we are not sure about the impact or whether it reaches the deserving individuals,” she said.

The MP urged the government to create community-based childcare centres and elderly care centres.

“If the government wants more women to join the workforce, then the government needs to resolve these problems,” Maria said.

In the same webinar, UKM sociologist Denison Jayasooria expressed disappointment over the lack of emphasis on good governance and institutional reforms in the 12th Malaysia Plan (12MP) which is currently being debated in the Dewan Rakyat.

He also criticised the plan’s zero emphasis on human rights protection and independent oversight of the policing system.

In unveiling the 12MP yesterday, Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob said it aimed to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of wealth among Malaysians while safeguarding the environment and ensuring sustainable development.

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