

PRESS STATEMENT
LAUNCH OF CAMPAIGN SEXUAL HARASSMENT OUT (*SHout*)
10th September 2011

Today is a very important day for women and men who have faced sexual harassment in our society. Today, we are revisiting a campaign that was started ten (10) years ago by the Joint Action Women's Group against Violence Against Violence when a memorandum on combating sexual harassment at workplaces in 2001.

Since 2001, no significant moves have been made by Federal government to initiate a specific law against sexual harassment. Only in 2011, a move for a specific law was included in the Economic Transformation Plan to leverage on working women. Since then, a roundtable discussion organized by the Women's Ministry was held.

This year, the Sexual Harassment out (***SHout***) joint-committee, a newly revised initiative, is concerned with continued sexual harassment cases in the society. This year's reported case of a discipline teacher charged with 11 counts of molesting underage girls in the school he teaches and the attempted rape of a woman tourist are some of the cases of sexual harassment. In the past Members of Parliament had made sexist remarks on female menstrual cycle of female Members of Parliament; and sexist remarks by the Director-General (DG) of Labour Department, who in 2009 commented, that having a Sexual Harassment Act "could lead to a dull and rigid environment in the workplace"[\[1\]](#). Such discriminatory and sexist remarks by a senior government official is proof that sexual harassment is not viewed seriously even by the Government.

These are not the only cases of sexual harassment in our country and they will also not be the last. It must be stressed that since 2001, a draft sexual harassment bill had been submitted to the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development for action to enact a specific law against sexual harassment by the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality.

This SHout Joint-Committee on the campaign against sexual harassment says "***out*** with all forms of sexual harassment" and is calling a Press Conference to launch the "***SHout***" campaign, with following objectives:

- (i) To build awareness on the issue of sexual harassment at all levels of society, from homes, schools, workplaces to public spaces.
- (ii) To have a specific law against sexual harassment either at Federal level or at State level.

The SHout campaign hopes that with this launch, the society would become more aware of sexual harassment, especially in the workplace. Internationally, sexual harassment is seen as a discrimination especially towards women. Malaysia, being a signatory to the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1995, has an obligation that all women are not discriminated by any forms of sexual harassment. In a society working towards Gender Equality, we also want to ensure that this form of violence does not happen to anyone.

Let's all SHOUT out against sexual harassment! You have a right not to be harassed and shout if you are facing sexual harassment starting today!

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