FAMILY FRONTIERS

Persatuan Kebajikan Sokongan Keluarga Selangor & KL (PPM-011-10-24072020)

Association of Family Support & Welfare Selangor & KL (Family Frontiers)

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Press Statement
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Family Frontiers Welcomes Implementation of Citizenship Amendment; Calls for Urgent Solutions to Address 'Aged-Out' Overseas-Born Adult Children

Family Frontiers welcomes the Ministry of Home Affairs' (KDN) announcement that the constitutional amendment granting automatic citizenship to children born overseas to Malaysian mothers will be fully implemented by mid-2026. This milestone represents a significant advancement in upholding the rights of Malaysian women and their children.

Meanwhile we wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Home Minister, Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail, for clearing the long-standing backlog of citizenship applications. By reducing pending cases from over 50,000 to fewer than 4,000 during his tenure and committing to a streamlined one-year processing timeline, relief has been brought to many Malaysian families.

While we celebrate this progress, it is vital to acknowledge the heavy historical burden borne by Malaysian mothers. Before 2010, the lack of a formal pathway for Malaysian mothers to register their children's citizenship meant that many families returned to Malaysia with their children on temporary visas. Today, these children have become adults who are still treated as "foreigners" in their own motherland.

Many are reliant on student passes or short-term social visit passes. Once these expire, they face the devastating prospect of being forced to leave the only country they call home. As "non-citizens", these individuals lack the right to work or stay permanently. This creates a heartbreaking set of circumstances where they are unable to care for their elderly Malaysian mothers, leading to the forced separation of families at a time when care is most needed.

Because the new amendment is non-retrospective, these individuals are now effectively "aged out" and never had a fair opportunity to secure their citizenship. Those born overseas to Malaysian mothers before the amendment takes effect are still required to apply via registration. However, many have already turned 21, rendering them ineligible for the very protection this amendment seeks to provide and lack practical and timely legal pathways to claim their heritage, as mechanisms like Article 15(2) are strictly reserved for minors

While we appreciate the Minister's initiative in allowing adult children with rejected applications under Article 15(2) to apply for a myKAS (Temporary Resident) permit, we believe this remains an insufficient substitute for obtaining citizenship for adult children of Malaysian women who have been historically deprived of the opportunity of applying for Malaysian citizenship. Currently, the lack of a clear Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) makes this pathway difficult for adult individuals born to Malaysian mothers, especially those forced to live overseas, to access Malaysian citizenship. Furthermore, the lengthy trajectory

from myKAS to Permanent Residence (PR) and eventually Citizenship can span decades, continuing to treat individuals of Malaysian parentage as foreign nationals in their own mothers' country.

To ensure that policy gaps do not continue to distance Malaysian families from their homeland, Family Frontiers respectfully urges the Ministry of Home Affairs to consider the following recommendations:

- **Establish a Multi-Stakeholder Citizenship Task Force for Citizenship approvals:** Formalise a collaborative, multi-stakeholder consultative body to oversee and consult on citizenship application approvals, mirroring the "Whole-of-Society" approach seen in other national consultative councils. This body would serve as a mechanism to specifically review the cases of individuals who have "aged out" of the system and other categories of citizenship applications, ensuring that no Malaysian-blooded individual is left behind due to procedural gaps.

- **Uphold Procedural Transparency:** Commit to a definitive processing pathway for adult citizenship applications through Article 19 (Naturalisation), to ensure that individuals of Malaysian descent are not left in a state of indefinite limbo.

As we move toward the full implementation of the historic constitutional change in 2026, it is imperative that we do not leave behind those who have already waited decades for the right to call Malaysia home. We look forward to continued engagement with the Ministry to ensure a truly inclusive future for all Malaysian families.

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