



**Circular No 017/2011  
Dated 25 Jan 2011**

To all Members of the Malaysian Bar and pupils in chambers

**3<sup>rd</sup> Equality Forum on “Race Relations and Religion: Towards Equality and Non-Discrimination” (29 Jan 2011)**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Equality Forum, jointly organised by Tenaganita and Bar Council, focuses on race relations and religion in Malaysia, especially with reference to equality and non-discrimination guarantees under the Federal Constitution and laws of Malaysia. The forum will analyse and evaluate the current constitutional, legal and administrative mechanisms designed to ensure equality and non-discrimination with reference to race and religion in Malaysia.

The forum will address the existing realities and concerns in relation to racial and religious equality and non-discrimination in Malaysia and put forward measures that can be carried out to strengthen substantive equality in Malaysia, especially within its diverse, multi-cultural and multi-racial context.

Details of the forum are as follows:

**Date:** 29 Jan 2011 (Saturday)  
**Venue:** Bar Council Auditorium, Level 1 No 15 Leboh Pasar Besar, 50050 Kuala Lumpur  
**Time:** 8:30 am to 1:00 pm

**Programme**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Agenda</b>
8:30 am – 9:15 am	Registration (Coffee/Tea served)
9:15 am – 9:30 am	Welcome and opening address by Dr Irene Fernandez, Director, Tenaganita
9:30 am – 11:45 am	Introduction by moderator – Andrew Khoo, Chairperson of Bar Council Human Rights Committee  Presentation by panellists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dr Dimitrina Petrova, Executive Director of the Equal Rights Trust (UK);</li><li>• Prof Emeritus Datuk Dr Shad Saleem Faruqi, Legal Advisor, MARA University of Technology; and</li><li>• YB Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad, Member of Parliament (Kuala Selangor)</li></ul>
11:45 am – 12:45 pm	Open forum
12:45 pm – 1:00 pm	Closing remarks

Admission is free. For more information, kindly refer to the attachment. To register, please contact Mary Magdaline of Tenaganita ([marymag\\_pereira@yahoo.com](mailto:marymag_pereira@yahoo.com)/03-2691 3691 ext 18); or Adilah Ariffin of Bar Council ([adilah@malaysianbar.org.my](mailto:adilah@malaysianbar.org.my)/03-2031 3003 ext 160).

Thank you.

**George Varughese  
Secretary  
Bar Council**



**TENAGANITA** Sdn Bhd (201709-W)

**Women's Force**

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## **INVITATION TO THE 3<sup>RD</sup> EQUALITY FORUM "RACE RELATIONS AND RELIGION: TOWARDS EQUALITY AND NON- DISCRIMINATION"**

**Organised by Tenaganita and Bar Council Malaysia**

### **Background**

During the last 5 years, Malaysia has gone through various changes in its perception and understanding of race relations and right to one's own beliefs and their expression. This process has been reflected in a number of court cases to recognize equality and non-discrimination as expressed in the Federal Constitution and international covenants ratified by Malaysia.

The expression of change in political thought was seen in the political tsunami of 2008, where voters saw the need to move towards multiracial politics meeting the needs of the poor and marginalized and good governance.

These expressions and new initiatives, however, have led to the development of counter forces through different forms of protests and media coverage.

In multi-ethnic, multi-religious Malaysia, the quest for equality and non-discrimination continues especially in understanding how concepts and perceptions of inequality are institutionalized; how decisions are made that deny equality and increase discrimination, and how far has race and religion been used to divide Malaysians.

The debates and discussions need to continue. We, as Malaysians, need spaces to see how equality and non-discrimination can be strengthened so that justice and peace will prevail particularly in understanding the meaning and concept of substantive equality.

Tenaganita, in partnership with The Equal Rights Trust (UK), has embarked on a project to strengthen the role of Malaysian civil society in implementing equality and anti-discrimination provisions enshrined in the Federal Constitution, in line with international law.

One of the programs under this project is the Equality Forum. This series of fora on equality seeks to synergize and strengthen this discourse and to facilitate a process to enhance jurisprudence in equality and non-discrimination that will lead to the establishment of an equal civil society.

**Tenaganita together with Bar Council Malaysia will organize the 3rd forum on Saturday, January 29, 2011 focusing on our current issue of race relations and religion. The key objective is to strengthen our understanding and see how as people of a nation we can move forward in increasing equality and non-discrimination for justice, good governance and peace building.**



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At this forum we will have three highly experienced speakers in the field of Race Relations and Religion.

From the United Kingdom, Dr. Dimitrina Petrova of the Equality Rights Trust will share with us the UK experience in developing equality legislation that moved them from a Race Relations Act to a 14-year struggle, which led to the Equality Act 2010.

Professor Emeritus Datuk Dr. Shad Saleem Faruqi, a well-known professor of constitutional laws will speak on how far the Federal Constitution protects our rights to equality and non-discrimination and what are the reflections of current realities.

Dr. Dzulkefly Ahmad, Member of Parliament for Kuala Selangor will share the socio-political dimensions and thoughts experienced in the current realities of race relations and religious pluralism.

This forum is an opportunity for us to come together to discuss, strengthen, understand and search for ways to move forward, learning from the experiences of other countries.

The details of the forum are as follows:

**Forum: RACE RELATIONS AND RELIGION: TOWARDS EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION**

**Date: Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup>, January 2011**

**Time: 9.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.**

**Venue: Bar Council Auditorium,  
Level 1, Bar Council,  
No. 15, Lebuhr Pasar Besar,  
50050 Kuala Lumpur.**

**Panelists:**

- **Dr. Dimitrina Petrova, Executive Director of The Equal Rights Trust (UK)**
- **Prof. Emeritus Datuk Dr. Shad Faruqi, Legal Advisor, University Technology MARA**
- **YB Dr. Dzulkefly Ahmad, Member of Parliament (Kuala Selangor)**

**Moderator: Mr. Andrew Khoo, Chairperson, Human Rights Committee, Bar Council**

We look forward to your presence and participation.

*Please contact Ms. Mary Magdaline ([marymag\\_pereira@yahoo.com](mailto:marymag_pereira@yahoo.com) / 03- 26913691 ext. 18) to confirm attendance.*

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### Background

Tenaganita in partnership with The Equal Rights Trust of United Kingdom will have a 18<sup>th</sup> month program to **Empower Civil Society to Combat Discrimination through Collective Advocacy and Litigation**. The main objective of this project is to strengthen the role of Malaysian civil society in realizing equality and anti-discrimination provisions enshrined in the Federal Constitution, in line with international law and to build a national anti-discrimination regime through litigation and public advocacy work.

This program has a two pronged strategy :

- Increase the capacity of civil society organisations and other professionals to improve the implementation of the right to equality and non-discrimination under the Federal Constitution and build a national anti-discrimination regime through litigation and public advocacy work;
- Create an institutional framework for civil society dialogue and strategic intervention on equality and discrimination issues through **establishing an Equality Forum**.

The Program Areas are:

- Baseline study to establish the training requirements of target groups;
- Producing a review of national equality and non-discrimination jurisprudence;
- Establishing a bi-monthly NGO Equality Forum
- Intensive training workshop on equality and non-discrimination law
- Strategic litigation – 2 cases on equality / non-discrimination
- Roundtable session with civil society and government stakeholders, judiciary and prosecutors on current status of equality law in Malaysia.