

DEKAT IS READY TO ASSIST IN THE FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR THE RESTORATION OF LOCAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Gabungan Demokrasi Tempatan (DEKAT) welcomes the statement by Housing and Local Government Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin in the Dewan Rakyat on 14th July that the Perikatan Nasional government (PN) is still conducting studies on the feasibility of instituting local council elections (LCE) in the country.

DEKAT is a coalition of 10 non-governmental organisations that are advocating for the restoration of LCE and was formed in August 2019. Since then, we have had several meetings with Zuraida and her ministry officers to discuss steps to prepare a research and working paper. The change of government in early March this year and the Movement Control Order (MCO) to curb the spread of COVID-19 has put a halt to our discussion and work plan.

DEKAT and its pool of experts stand ready to assist the Minister in carrying out the necessary research on LCE, the consultation with stakeholders and propose implementation plans by mid-2021 for the Cabinet to consider the restoration of LCE.

We believe that local council elections would make local government officers like mayors and councillors more accountable to the ratepayers they are serving and would bring about

improved services, usher in innovations and curb corrupt practices. The overall cost of conducting council elections would be more than offset by savings in wastage due to inefficiencies and corruption under the current practice of appointed councillors. It would also encourage greater citizen-participation and sense of ownership by citizens in the improvement and development of communities around the country.

DEKAT hopes to engage with all stakeholders, especially those who have concerns, so that we could understand their concerns, allay these concerns with updated facts and propose workable solutions to bridge the gaps between those who support the restoration of LCE and those who opposes it. It is our firm belief that empowering citizens with the third vote (or second vote for Federal Territories) would bring about immeasurable benefits for all Malaysians regardless of ethnicity, industry or socio-economic backgrounds.

Statement Issued by:

The Steering Committee of DEKAT

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