

Govt to table 'Good Samaritan Law' to regulate food bank



Deputy Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail (second from right), Domestic Trade and Consumers Affairs Minister, Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution (right) and Penang Chief Minister, Chow Kon Yeow (second from left) launched the Food Bank Foundation at Equatorial Hotel, Penang. (NSTP/MIKAIL ONG)

By Mohamed Basyir
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BAYAN LEPAS: The government is expected to table the 'Good Samaritan Law' in Parliament by end of this year, aimed at regulating activities under the Food Bank programme.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail said the law serves to protect both the contributors and recipients of the initiative.

"For instance, hoteliers are concern about legal action that might arise from the food they donated.

"So we want to gazette the law that can protect them," she said at the launch of the Food Bank Foundation and Contributors Appreciation Night at Hotel Equatorial here tonight.

Also present were Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow and Domestic Trade and Consumers Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution.

Dr Wan Azizah, Chow and Saifuddin also witnessed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony between strategic partners of the Food Bank Foundation.

Primer Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad launched the Food Bank Malaysia last December, aimed at reducing the cost of living for local consumers, especially those in the B40 group.

Since it was launched, 430 supermarkets' branches have agreed to contribute to the programme, with about 1,701 metric tonnes of food saved.

As of August this year, 311,189 households have benefited from the programme.

The programme has also been expanded to 16 public universities, known as Food Bank Siswa.

In a press conference later, Saifuddin said that the new law would enable the programme to absorb any risk and liabilities faced.

"The law is based on the best practices around the world, and we believe more companies will eventually come forward to contribute.

"We expect the contribution will increase by up to 20 per cent," he said.

He said that the Food Bank programme would be expanded even further to 123 other institutions, including polytechnics and private universities in the country.

Besides that, the programme will also 'fast track' the food supply directly to the recipients rather than collected at a hub first as how it is done currently.

"I have initiated a pilot project to be carried out in the Klang valley," he said.

To further enhance the effectiveness of the programme, he hopes to come up with the Virtual Food Bank to connect the contributors to the recipients directly.

