



## PRESS RELEASE

### MINISTER IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT (PARLIAMENT AND LAW)

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#### **Status of Sarawak Natives Need to Be Redefined – Dr Wan Junaidi**

Kuala Lumpur, 21 December 2021 – The younger generation of Sarawakians could potentially risk losing their native status if special position of natives of Sarawak, under Art 161A (6) & (7) of the Federal Constitution is not amended.

Minister In The Prime Minister's Department Dato Sri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar pointed out that currently in Sarawak one will only be recognised as natives when both of the parents are from the native groups as specified under the Federal Constitution.

In relation to Sarawak, under Art 161A (6), a person who is a citizen is a native of Sarawak when both of the parents are of native origin, as listed under Article 161A(7). Furthermore, to date, the article only recognises 28 ethnic groups in Sarawak whereas there are more than 70 ethnic groups in the state.

“If not addressed accordingly, this would become a big problem. Sarawak is a melting pot and the people live harmoniously with each other – regardless of race and religion. That is why almost one third of Sarawakians population are of mixed parentage. Intermarriages are a common thing in Sarawak.

“However, because of the provisions – many of the children from these mix marriages, under the laws, are not recognised as natives and as such would not be able to enjoy the rights and privileges as Sarawak natives. That is why we need to review and amend this law to ensure the younger generation of Sarawakians will not lose what is theirs,” he said, yesterday, during his engagement session with members of the Dewan Negara.

Under the Bill to amend the Federal Constitution related to the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63), which was unanimously passed in the Dewan Rakyat recently, it was also proposed for the amendment of Article 161(A) to give status of a native to the offsprings of the marriages of a native to a non-native in Sarawak.

With this amendment, the power to decide which races in Sarawak shall be recognised as being indigenous to the State shall be determined by the State through State laws.

The Bill is scheduled to be tabled for the second and third reading in the Dewan Negara this Thursday, on 23 December.

**Dato Sri Dr Haji Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar**  
**Minister In The Prime Minister's Department (Parliament and Law)**