

## Be progressive and legalise medical marijuana, urges Ras Adiba

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia should take progressive action to allow the use of cannabis and hemp, especially cannabidiol (CBD), for medical purposes, says Senator Datuk Ras Adiba Radzi.

"This is in line with Strategic Thrust Four of the Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities (OKU) 2016-2022, which is to increase access to quality health services for their well-being," she said in a statement here yesterday.

Ras Adiba, who represents OKU at the Dewan Negara, said this was also in line with Malaysia's commitment to Article 25 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which stresses their right to enjoy the highest standard of health without discrimination on the basis of disability.

"This would open a new wing in the medical sector that could help reduce the effects of diseases such as chronic anxiety which have been proven through scientific studies," she said.

According to Bernama, Ras Adiba said the government and non-governmental groups must intensify activities, campaigns and public education because knowledge related to cannabis use was still low.

She proposed nine areas for immediate action to enable cannabis and hemp to be used in the medical sector, among which was to create a Cannabis and Hemp Roadmap by the Health Ministry and the Parliamentary Medical Cannabis Caucus, which would comprise stakeholders such as activists, non-gov-

ernmental groups, experts and representatives of vulnerable groups, especially those with disabilities, and the elderly.

She also proposed that the results of the study on the impact of cannabis cultivation be tabled in Parliament by the Agriculture and Food Industries Ministry and for an amendment to the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952 to differentiate between CBD and tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) be expedited.

Other proposals are for the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry to develop new technologies to produce new variations of Cannabis sativa with low psychoactive substance content, for hemp cultivation to be made one of the country's main commodities and for research grants to be provid-

ed to institutes and universities to conduct research and clinical studies.

Ras Adiba also suggested that Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin allows more industries to carry out hemp cultivation for research purposes under Section 6B (2) of the Act.

"I am confident that allowing the use of CBD and cannabis cultivation in Malaysia will help, among others, the OKU community, chronic patients of cancer, and those with dementia, Parkinson's, seizures, mental problems and emotional stress," she said.

She added Malaysia as a country with world-class health tourism should emphasise the use of "medical cannabis".

"When else if not now?" Ras Adiba asked.