



## **Content Forum Joins Forces with Advocates to Promote Respectful Disability Language and Drive Inclusivity**

**CYBERJAYA, 30 JUNE 2023** — The Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia (Content Forum) strongly believes in the importance of using respectful and appropriate disability language in communication to shape positive perceptions and behaviour, which will help break barriers and lead to inclusivity for all.

In response to the open letter signed by 108 signatories to media representatives and politicians urging the use of appropriate terminology when referring to persons with disabilities and disability-related matters, the Content Forum expresses its full support for this cause.

As an industry-led organisation tasked with promoting self-regulation in content creation and consumption, the Content Forum is committed to taking proactive steps and initiatives to enhance its understanding of the issue. It aims to ensure that all its endeavours with regards to disability-related matters are empowering, inclusive, and free from negative stereotyping and derogatory labels.

“We have much to learn in this aspect, and we are committed to being an effective advocate for meaningful inclusion and representation of all persons with disabilities across all platforms, especially by involving those with lived experience,” says Mediha Mahmood, the Executive Director of the Content Forum.

With a dedication to fostering inclusivity and ensuring equal representation for all individuals, the Content Forum is thrilled to collaborate with several esteemed partners, including AIDA (Autism Inclusiveness Direct Action Group) and The OKU Rights Matter Project ([www.okurightsmatter.com](http://www.okurightsmatter.com)). This collaboration aims to establish a comprehensive framework that promotes effective and practical guidelines for disability-inclusive language and content. The resulting initiative will serve as the go-to reference for a diverse range of professionals, including members of the media, medical practitioners, advocates, and the general public.

Dato' Dr Amar-Singh HSS, Consultant Paediatrician and child-disability rights activist, emphasized, "Using respectful language in referring to persons with disabilities is not only a matter of courtesy but one of justice, inclusion and empowerment. Respectful language is not about being politically correct; it is about being accurate, recognizing the person (instead of focusing on the impairment), the dignity of each human being, and their rights to equality and justice."

Beatrice Leong, Co-founder of AIDA and an autistic self-advocate states, "For a lot of us, the disabled community, and especially the autistic community, the media and the internet are our bridges for communication. By changing how we report and speak of the disabled community, we will also begin changing society's perception and stigma towards them. We cannot discount the power of seeing our own lives and stories reflected respectfully in empowering our identities."

In addition to the Disability-inclusive Language Guidelines, the Content Forum firmly believes in the power of collective action and collaboration to bring about positive change. Therefore, alongside its partners, the Content Forum is actively working on various initiatives, such as public awareness campaigns, advocating for disabled community representatives as collaborators for accurate representation, and providing content and language training based on the guidelines for its members and the public.

The Content Forum reaffirms its commitment to fostering a more inclusive society and invites all stakeholders to join this crucial mission.

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### **ABOUT THE CONTENT FORUM**

The Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia (Content Forum) is a self-regulatory organization and industry forum registered under the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) and designated by the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 (CMA'98) to oversee and promote self-regulation of content over the electronic networked medium. The Content Forum consists of key players of the content industry i.e., advertisers, advertising agencies, broadcasters, content creators/distributors, audiotext hosting services providers, advertising agencies, internet service providers and civic groups.

Aimed at facilitating self-regulation, which provides an additional layer of consumer protection that complements the legal framework, the Content Forum is committed to govern and promote the creation, distribution and consumption of electronic-networked content.

As an industry self-regulatory body, the Content Forum comprises of key members of the communications and multimedia content industry, including broadcasters, advertisers, content creators, internet access service providers and civic groups. This dynamic and robust representation of industry practitioners ensures that content standards continue to be developed with the objective of establishing a level playing field in the industry.

The Content Forum is responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Content Code ("the Content Code"). The Content Code was prepared by the Content Forum and first registered with MCMC on 1st September 2004. The Content Code is the principal source for industry self-regulation as it contains governing standards and best practices for content dissemination within the communications and multimedia industry in Malaysia. The main objective of the Content Code is to outline procedures of self-regulation that provides the platform for creativity, innovation and healthy growth of a fast-evolving industry.

The Content Forum houses a Complaints Bureau that is empowered to address all complaints relating to content disseminated over electronic networks. The Complaints Bureau is empowered to investigate possible breaches of the Content Code, mediate disputes, adjudicate cases, publish orders and impose sanctions where necessary. The Complaints Bureau accepts complaints from industry players and the general public.

Additionally, it plays an advisory role to any party that requires guidance on electronic content matters.

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**Issued by GO Communications on behalf of the Content Forum**

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