NUCC should be made statutory body, seminar told

by P PREM KUMAR

THE National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC) should be accorded statutory status as one of the ways to restore unity in the country, said Universiti Teknologi Mara legal advisor Emeritus Prof Datuk Dr Shad Saleem Faruqi.

He said the statutory body can be modelled after the UK’s Race Relations Board.

“The proposed statutory board must be given statutory powers to prosecute,” he said at a consultation at a youth seminar organised by the Asian Law Students’ Association of Malaysia, Akademi Belia and the Global Movement of Moderates.

The scholar said perhaps there should also be a statutory interfaith council whose job should be to foster dialogue over all that unites Malaysians and to seek tolerance and compassion towards that entire divide.

Also agreeing on the thought was NUCC’s working committee deputy chairperson on law and policy, Lim Chee Wee.

He said the proposed statutory body should have adjudicating powers, so that it can come up with decisions instead of recommendations.

The NUCC, headed by Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department Tan Sri Joseph Kupur has been tasked with gathering feedback and opinions from local communities on national unity and integration.

Its findings will be presented to the government in a blueprint and will be discussed by the Cabinet, which will then decide whether to implement the blueprint’s ideas.

Shad, meanwhile, also urged political leaders to condemn hate crimes and hate speeches “immediately, strongly, publicly and consistently”.

“They must send out a message of tolerance and restraint. It is not enough to ignore the ignorant and the extremists,” he said.