Avoid disputes with strong relations: Maliki

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SINGAPORE - When communities connect with and trust each other, disputes between neighbours can be avoided, said Dr Maliki Osman, Minister of State for National Development, when asked about an upcoming law to deal with such disputes.

He was asked about the Community Disputes Resolution Bill, which is likely to be tabled in Parliament in March, on the sidelines of a Singapore Management University (SMU) conference on Friday.

"Even if there are budding issues and the flames just started, do you have infrastructure in place in the community where we can come in and try to help address those issues?" he said. "That's where community resources and positive energies in the community is required."

The conference was organised by the Behavioural Sciences Institute at SMU and discussed how positive attitudes and experiences can generate constructive solutions in society.

Dr Maliki said it was important for society to start looking at things from a positive angle even as the Government works to address negative sentiments.

"Government agencies would have to begin to appreciate some of these sources of negative sentiments and try to understand where they came from (and) at the same time create opportunities for people to feel and experience positive outcomes and positive processes," he said.

The conference was attended by 300 civil servants, academics, and representatives from the private and non-government organisation sectors.

Among the speakers were Professor David Chan, director of the Behavioural Sciences Institute, Professor Tommy Koh, Ambassador-at-Large, and Mr Han Fook Kwang, Editor-at-Large at the Straits Times.