

PRESS STATEMENT

CAREER COMEBACK GRANT PROGRAMME

In Malaysia, women made up 70 percent of public university enrolment in 2014, the female labour force participation rate stands at 52.4 percent in 2013. This means that almost half of Malaysian women of working age group are not in the labour market. This phenomenon may derail the Government's target to increase the women participation in workforce to 55% by the end of 2015.

2. A joint study conducted by Ministry of Women, Family and Communiy Development with the cooperation of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), found that almost 67 percent of the married women surveyed gave up jobs to look after their children, followed by marriage, and to comply to their husbands' request that they stop working. And 63% of these women aged between 25 to 39 years old, the golden age where women were at the peak of their careers.

3. In countries such as Japan and Korea, the women who left the workforce subsequently a return to the labour force when the children get older. In Malaysia, the women do not return to the workforce, causing the female labour force participation rate in our country to be one of the lowest in ASEAN.

4. The Government via TalentCorp in Budget 2015 will implement the Career Comeback Grant Programme, an initiative to encourage women to return to the workforce. The Women Career Comeback Grant Programme aims to **Retain** women at work, to encourage those who have left the workforce to **Return** to work and to motivate women to **Rise** to senior management roles. The **Resourcing Grant** will be given to companies so that they can design and implement a new Career Comeback Programme, or they can use it to enhance existing programmes to hire women who have stepped out of the workforce. The **Retention Grant** focuses on recruiting and retaining women returnees.

Companies will get a retention grant if they successfully recruit and retain female returnees for more than 6 months.

5. The private sector can complement the Government's initiative by implementing flexible working arrangement to allow women to juggle their home and work responsibilities. Flexible working arrangements, which include part-time work as well as flexible working days, working from home and flexible start and end times, will help not only women with children but all employees manage their work-life balance. The employers' support to offer flexible work arrangements will be the way for talented and educated women to continue working.

6. The Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development has implemented flexible working arrangement on 1st March 2015. It will allow our officers and staff, especially the women to achieve work-life balance, and reconciling the pull of mothering and the demands of work as career women. It will complement the efforts of Government to ensure talented and educated women are retained as productive workforce and partners in contributing to our economic growth and development.