OFFICIATING SPEECH

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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY

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LIMKOKWING UNIVERSITY of CREATIVE TECHNOLOGY
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Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

Salam Negaraku 1Malaysia

Happy International Women’s Day

First and foremost, let us together extend our gratitude to the most gracious, the most merciful Allah S.W.T because of his grace we can all gather here in Limkokwing University of Creative Technology. Today, women worldwide are celebrating the “International Women’s Day”.

I would also like to take the opportunity to welcome and thanked, Excellencies, representatives from Embassies and High Commissions for taking the time to celebrate this very special day with us.

Thank you and congratulations to the organiser, the Department of Women Development and the various government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and corporate companies who have collaborated in ensuring the smooth organising of today’s event.

On behalf of the Ministry, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all of you with your presence in supporting the celebration of the International Women's Day this year. I was made to understand that we have over 1,000 guests for this year event. Congratulations, we all deserve a big pat on the back!
INTRODUCTION
Ladies and gentlemen,

In the era of sustainable development, our nation aims to create a nation that is inclusive, equitable and sustainable, a country in which no one would be left behind and opportunity would be made available for all, for a secure, stable and successful Malaysia.

Without the role and contribution of women, the nation will not able to progress as it is today. It is vital for all parties to respect the contribution of women in all areas: economy, social, politics and cultural. This year in line with Women Empowerment Year the Ministry are focusing on strengthening women in economy, health, safety, education and culture.

Women have contributed significantly to the growth of our economy and development of our nation for the last 50 years since our independence. Women not only contribute to family well-being but generate income for the nation as productive labour force. Women's involvement is crucial as they are an important asset to the country. It has always been the Ministry’s agenda to ensure women’s voice are heard and for us to mobilise our energy, thoughts and efforts to ensure gender equality and women empowerment.

Please give a big round of applause to all women in Malaysia who have excel in their roles and contribute towards a prosperous Malaysia.

Ladies and gentlemen,
On 20 February 2018, Malaysia presented its Combined Third, Fourth and Fifth Reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to the CEDAW Committee in Geneva. The presentation of our reports to the Committee was our commitment to inform on the progress we have made on measures to eliminate discriminations against women, and the progress we have made in areas of education, health, legislation, politics and economy. Although significant progress was achieved in health and education, we still have to strive harder in politics and economy. There is also a need for us to continue working on harmonising our Civil and Syariah Laws to ensure women’s rights are protected.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY 2018 THEME “PRESS FOR PROGRESS”

Ladies and gentlemen,

The whole world today stands firm and united stating that the equality and empowerment of women is a matter of urgency. This is because partnership and balanced roles of both men and women alike will contribute towards maximum national development.

Hence, the theme selected for the International Women's Day celebrations this year "PRESS FOR PROGRESS" is very apt and timely. In addition, to celebrating the successes of women in all areas of importance, it is also the time for all women and men, those working in the government or private sector, living in urban and rural areas, old and young to come together in strengthening efforts to achieve equality in all aspects of life.
Based on the World Economic Forum 2017, Global Gender Gap Report it will take us over 200 years to achieve gender parity. This is a very dismal prognosis. Therefore, this is the time for us to keep motivated to “PRESS FOR PROGRESS” to get a strong global momentum striving for gender parity.

While we know that gender parity is not achievable overnight, the positive news is that across the world women are making positive gains day by day. There is indeed a very strong and growing global movement of advocacy, activism and support for women empowerment and gender equality.

Moving on the basis of pressing for progress, we cannot be complacent. Now, more than ever, there is a strong call to action to press forward and progress on gender parity. A strong call to motivate and unite friends, colleagues and whole communities to think, act and be gender inclusive. Let us move forward and continue to “PRESS FOR PROGRESS”.

Malaysia celebrates International Women's Day to increase public awareness of the roles played by women since the nations' independence as well as to bond women of diverse communities. International Women's Day is not country, group or organisation specific. The day belongs to all groups collectively everywhere. So together, let's all be tenacious in accelerating gender parity. Collectively, let's all “PRESS FOR PROGRESS”. So make International Women's Day YOUR day and do what you can to truly make a positive difference for women.
Ladies and gentlemen,

WOMEN ENPOWERMENT YEAR 2018

We have started planning for today’s International Women’s Day celebration since the end of last year and we have myriads of programmes lined up for the today’s celebration. We have LPPKN’s clinic, international food bazaar, financial street and business matching programme, fashion and food showcase, self-defence demo technique and we most importantly we also will be having Minister’s Talk, International Women’s Forum and Speakers Corner and tonight we will launch a special film titled *Takdir*. These are some of the activities we organised in conjunction of International Women’s Day celebration.

Apart from that, we are also delighted to have TalentCorp Career Comeback ReIGNITE Award 2017/2018 to be awarded to the top 5 employers in Malaysia who have recruited the most number of women on career breaks in 2017.

WOMEN ERA AND ASPIRATION

In line with the National Women Policy as well in conjunction with TMW18, the government has taken the necessary efforts, to provide funding and access for women to be entrepreneurs and to be self-sustaining economically.

Moreover, to realise the 30 per cent target of women in decision making at corporate sectors, the Prime Minister has urged more women on board of directors in GLCs and GLIC. The Prime Minister’s seriousness
in this matter came loud and clear with the “name and shame” publication of Public Listed companies that did not have women directors on their board last year. I am pleased to share with you in an announcement by the Bursa Malaysia last January, only 7 out of the top 100 companies have yet to name women to their board of directors.

Progress is being made, there is an increase in the percentage of women as a member of the board of directors in top 100 listed companies from 16.6 per cent in 2016 to 19.2 per cent in 2017. This increase is a positive indicator that women are given the trust to be key players as decision makers in the corporate sector.

Over the years, women’s participation in the labour force has progressively increased from 48.0 per cent in 2011, 52.6 per cent in 2013 and 54.3 per cent in 2016. The government is targeting women workforce participation at 59 per cent by 2020.

However, in terms of wages there is a pay gap between male and female employee. According to the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Report 2017 the average pays for women in 2017 was USD12,000 compared with USD21,000 for men. In Malaysia, according to the Department of Statistics’ Salaries & Wages Survey Report 2016, male employees receive a mean monthly salary of RM2,500 compared to the RM2,398 received by female employees.

There are many underlying reasons as to why females are paid lower than males around the world, Malaysia included. However, it's undeniable that female participation in the workforce brings benefits to a country’s economy. The Female Labour Participation Rate (FLPR) in
Malaysia climbed to 54.3% in 2016 from 46.8% in 2010. However, to attract more women to join and rejoin the workforce, the gender wage gap needs to be addressed.

On a positive note, gender parity has been achieved for participation and completion of education as well as transitioning between primary and secondary education levels. In fact, Malaysia has reached gender parity, with a slight advantage to girls in secondary and tertiary education participation as of 2016 with the ratio of girls to boys of 1.01 at secondary and 1.06 at tertiary level.

**CLOSING**

International Women's Day Celebration 2018 is a sign of Government's appreciation and recognition of women's involvement and contribution in the development of our country. The government always gives strong support to women's efforts in achieving its aspirations.

Finally, on behalf of the Ministry I wish to once again express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to all parties that have supported in the organising and celebration of International Women's Day 2018. Therefore, let's get **“PRESS FOR PROGRESS”**.

Wabillahitaufik Walhidayah Wasalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

Thank you.