



KEMENTERIAN PEMBANGUNAN WANITA,
KELUARGA DAN MASYARAKAT

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS
YB DATO' SRI HAJAH NANCY SHUKRI
MINISTER FOR WOMEN, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

UNFPA Malaysia – 50 Years of Progress

**11 JULY 2023 (TUESDAY)
BOATHOUSE AMPANG
3.00PM**

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim. Assalamulaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuh and Salam Malaysia Madani,

1. A very good afternoon to everyone. We are delighted to be here to commemorate and acknowledge the 50 years of United Nations Population Fund Malaysia (UNFPA) being established in Malaysia – it truly has been 50 years of progress for all of us.

2. I believe all of us here would like to extend our heartiest congratulations to the UNFPA for achieving this significant milestone, and our heartfelt gratitude for your continuous effort to uplift and embed the rights, welfare and access to choice for all Malaysians – especially our women and girls.

3. We have come a long way now, 50 years, but as Dr. Asa just mentioned there is much work to be done. We only

have 7 years left to achieve the 2030 SDG's, and when it comes to the rights, potential, representation and empowerment of our women & girls – we have a lot to remedy.

Ministry and UNFPA's common goal

Ladies and Gentlemen:

4. The Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development was officially established in 2001 – and it has since grown to become one of the widest arching and reaching ministries in the country – which includes – social welfare & development, women's development, population & family development and counselling.

5. Our ministry is one which tangibly and visibly shapes and touches the lives of every Malaysian at each and every

stage of their lives. Similarly, UNFPA's mandates are just as wide and intimately intertwined with every one of our ministry's thrusts – and throughout the years – we have collaborated proactively towards developing support systems, legislation and awareness to ensure that no Malaysian is left behind.

6. Today's report by UNFPA in collaboration with the Ministry of Economy and the Harvard T.H Chan School of Public Health on the social and economic benefits of

investment in women's sexual & reproductive health and family support services is an important evidence-based report to justify further investments in sexual and reproductive health and support services, which in tandem will fuel a cascading range of empowering socio-economic benefits – especially for our Women and girls – impacting their labour force participation rate, quality of life, family cohesion, access and of

course address the burdens and barriers of unpaid care work.

Care Economy

Ladies and Gentlemen:

7. Care work constitutes the foundation on which our very existence depends. It includes house chores, and direct face-to-face personal care activities such as nurturing

the sick, caring for the elderly, feeding a baby, or teaching young children.

8. Overwhelmingly done by women, many care activities are often unpaid and unrecognised - leaving them with little time to pursue opportunities and growth. Taking into consideration that in Malaysia women outperform as well as make up over 62% of all undergraduates – the opportunity cost for women and the nation is very high

and detrimental. According to DOSM – female graduates make up more than half of the current unemployment rate. This is one of the gendered effect of unpaid care and domestic work.

9. This is why the Ministry will work toward incorporating the care economy into our national development and economic planning to ensure its sustainability. But in order to do that we need to identify the barriers, data-

gaps, infrastructural requirements, legislative necessities and stakeholders.

10. To be able to implement the 3 “R” approach to addressing unpaid care work – as put forth by Professor Diane Elson – being Recognition, Reduction and Redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work done by women – we need to be able to attain vital and actionable data. For example, an important data is the

average time spent on providing care for both men and women in households. From this data we are able to identify care deficits and what areas are needed to be targeted by relevant policies.

11. This will also allow us to value the care economy, in terms of time, expertise, opportunity cost and social merit – and together with the cooperation of other Ministries, agencies and social organisations – we will have annual

statistics and analysis on this to act upon – in each national budget.

12. The Ministry will also be collaborating with UNFPA Malaysia to create a realisable national roadmap towards increasing Malaysia's Female labour force participation.

Conclusion

Ladies and Gentlemen;

13. As we strive towards achieving SDG 5 (gender Equality) – we are fully aware of how much there needs to be done – and the incredible national potential we can unlock – as the voices and roles of Malaysia's women become mainstream. It is therefore essential for Malaysians to realise that “more” for women and girls does not mean “less” for the rest. Mutual respect is the foundation that our society is built upon – it is the basis that allows for equal partnership between women and

men – in society, at work or at home. There should be nothing standing in the way of any Malaysian when it comes to being able to achieve their dreams or ambitions – especially not their gender. And it is our collective duty to ensure this.

14. These core values of **equality, partnership** and **mutual respect** must endure with every step we take in advancing Malaysia's women and girls, to build a

Malaysia where everyone is respected as equal partners in nation building.

15. In conclusion, I would like to congratulate UNFPA Malaysia once again for all of your hard work to date and we are looking forward towards many, many more years of working together, as we jointly strive towards Malaysia Madani.

Thank you.