



KEMENTERIAN PEMBANGUNAN WANITA,  
KELUARGA DAN MASYARAKAT

## **OPENING KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

**YB DATO' SRI HAJAH NANCY SHUKRI  
MINISTER OF WOMEN, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT**

**2024 WORLD WOMEN ECONOMIC & BUSINESS SUMMIT**

**26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024, SHERATON IMPERIAL HOTEL KL**

**Theme: “Power and Parity – Rewriting the Rules for the  
Future”**

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Time allocated: 15 - 20 minutes (9.20 AM – 9.40 AM)

*Salutation: (Note: KSI will update the latest list)*

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh,

Salam Sejahtera and a very good morning.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Esteemed Speakers,  
Members of the media, Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. It is both an honour and a privilege to be with you today, and I extend my heartfelt appreciation to Tan Sri Michael Yeoh and his team at KSI, as well as partners of the 2024 World Women Economic and Business Summit. Thank you for inviting me to deliver the Summit's opening keynote address.
2. This year's theme; "Champion Women, Ignite Progress", focuses on the importance of supporting for women in all aspects of society. Therefore, my speech today entitled "Power and Parity: Rewriting the Rules for the Future," is not just a call to action, but a mandate for change in the dynamic landscape of Malaysia and Asia at large.
3. As we stand at this crucial juncture in history, it's imperative that we recognize both the tremendous strides we have made and the challenges that still lie ahead. The future we envision – gender equality – means we need to rewrite the rules that have shaped our societies and economies for a long time.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

## **WOMEN STATISTICS IN MALAYSIA**

4. I will start off with our global rankings. The Global Gender Gap Index 2024, released by the World Economic Forum on 11 June 2024, shows that Malaysia has fallen 12 places from last year, now ranking 114th out of 146 countries. We are ranked 80th for health and survival, 102nd for economic participation and opportunity, and our weakest area is politics, where we are ranked 134th.
  
5. Interestingly however, the same report highlights that Malaysia, along with other 27 countries, **ranks first** for gender equality in educational attainment. However, despite this outstanding achievement in education, it has not been translated into significant increase in labour force market – be it in participation, wages or decision-making positions. In 2023, DOSM reported that only 56.2% of women were in the labour force, in comparison to 82.3% for men.
  
6. In addition, globally, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that women on average continue to be paid about 20 per cent less than men. The Malaysia Gender Gap Index 2022 shows that women in Malaysia received RM66.67 (33.33 per cent less), for every RM100 in salary and wages earned by males.

7. Apart from that, the Labour Force Survey 2023 reveals that women contribute the largest proportion of population outside the labour force at 68.7 per cent, with housework or family responsibilities being the main reason for their non-participation (62.1 per cent).

## **INITIATIVES TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT**

Ladies and gentlemen,

8. Let us see these challenges not as impossible barriers, but as opportunities for real change. This is our chance to rewrite the rules. The Government will continue to implement legal reform, introduce new initiatives and explore new collaborations to create a better future, especially for women in Malaysia.
9. For example, the Ministry of Human Resources implemented amendments to the Employment Act in 2023, including 98 days of maternity leave, seven days of paternity leave, flexible working arrangements, a prohibition of employment discrimination, and measures to raise awareness on sexual harassment.

10. To encourage women entrepreneurs, the government provides financial support through initiatives like the TEKUN Women Financing Scheme, UDA Bizznita, and the Successful Women Entrepreneurship Engagement Talent (SWEET) program, amounting to more than RM3 billion a year, just for women.
  
11. Recent efforts to further empower and provide more protection for women this year include:
  - (i) Firstly, the establishment of the Tribunal for Anti-Sexual Harassment, which provides an alternative avenue to expedite sexual harassment complaints with minimal cost and takes less time compared to court proceedings;
  
  - (ii) Secondly, the PERANTIS Program by the Department of Women Development, designed to cultivate more professional women leaders in various fields, through a mentoring programme, where the Government had allocated around RM5 million in total for the program; and
  
  - (iii) Thirdly, the Wanita MyWIRA Initiative by TalentCorp which aims to close the gender gap in the workforce by strengthening, accelerating and enhancing women

talents in Malaysia through human capital development, industry and labor force engagement as well as inclusivity in economic growth.

12. At the same time, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development is committed to develop the care industry by monetising unpaid care work. Our first step is to recognise and train those who carry out care work for the elderly, children and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) as a certified profession which will contribute to the country's economic development. To this end, the Ministry is working diligently on finalizing the draft of the Malaysian Care Industry Action Plan.
13. Through these programs and initiatives, we hope to see more women leading major corporations, spearheading entrepreneurial innovation, and shaping policy at the highest levels of government. Change doesn't happen overnight, but continuous progress is important to bring about the transformations to shape a progressive society.

### **WOMEN RELATED INITIATIVES AND PROGRESS IN ASIA**

14. Despite the challenges, we can see signs of hope and progress. Most importantly, the presence of distinguished leaders like all of you here today is proof of that progress.

15. Initiatives such as the Women's Institute of Management and the ASEAN Economic Club in Malaysia have played a vital role in championing women's economic participation especially through leadership and skills training.
16. Regionally, ASEAN is also dedicated to making sure that gender and inclusion are a key part of their plans by adopting the ASEAN Gender Mainstreaming Framework (AGMSF) in 2022. This framework sets out a comprehensive approach to gender mainstreaming, with clear goals, strategies, and actions that all ASEAN Member States can work towards together.
17. I am also proud to mention that Malaysia as the Chair of ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW), led the initiative of developing the ASEAN Gender Outlook 2.0 (AGO 2.0) in partnership with the UN Women and the ASEAN Secretariat. This initiative reflects ASEAN's fervent commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and upholding the commitment to leave no one behind.
18. AGO 2.0 is a publication that assesses the progress made for women and girls in relation to the SDGs; using detailed data across multiple levels. This latest edition highlights

significant achievements in areas such as women's participation in decision making, poverty reduction, and food security. It also points out how climate change could undo recent progress and calls for stronger efforts to empower rural and marginalized women and girls to meet the 2030 goals. Furthermore, new data in AGO 2.0 emphasizes the crucial role of digitalization in speeding up progress throughout the region.

19. These examples showcase the diverse and impactful ways in which the community worldwide is supporting the initiatives to promote economic participation and gender equality across Asia.

## **MALE ALLIES APPROACH**

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

20. While women constitute almost half of our population (47.5 per cent), we cannot ignore the other half, the men (52.5 per cent). Involving men and even boys as allies is crucial to achieve gender equality.
21. The government has been advocating to promote gender equality at home by encouraging the sharing of household



responsibilities and childcare duties. When both parents commit to this shared responsibility, it creates a balanced environment in the modern setting where both the parents are working.

22. Children who observed this dynamic between their parents, will also learn about teamwork, mutual respect, and equality. They come to understand that responsibilities are not defined by gender but are a collective aspect of family life. This approach not only nurtures a healthier home environment but also contributes to raising well-rounded, empathetic individuals for the future. This aligns with the Malay proverb, “Melentur buluh biarlah dari rebungnya”.
23. In the corporate world, we must create inclusive work environments and meaningful participation where women's voices are heard and their contributions are valued. Male employers should actively support the professional development of women in the workplace by advocating for equal opportunities and recognition, addressing unconscious bias, implementing mentorship programs, and ensuring clear pathways for advancement.
24. Additionally, employers should also support gender sensitive policies, such as flexible working arrangements,

parental leave, nursing facilities, care facilities and anti-discrimination practices.

25. More men should engage in discussions and forums that focus on gender issues to gain a deeper understanding of women's perspectives and the systemic barriers they encounter. By acknowledging and understanding women's perspectives, men can contribute to creating a supportive and empathetic environment. Men is a much-needed ally in the fight for gender equality and in contributing to a more equitable and just society.

## **CLOSING**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

26. Before I end my speech, I would like to emphasize the importance of intensifying our efforts to achieve gender equality. Our actions must be guided by the understanding that women's meaningful participation in all areas of public life, particularly in the economy, is not only beneficial for women but also for men, family and society as a whole.
27. The task ahead is significant, but our resolve is strong! By championing women and igniting progress, we are not

merely elevating half of our population - we are unlocking the full potential of our nations and our world.

28. In conclusion, I extend my sincere thanks to the organizers and wish everyone a success and productive discussions that will take place throughout the day.

Thank you.