



## **SPEECH TEXT**

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

**United Nations Malaysia - International Women's Day Forum**

**7 March 2024 (Thursday) – 9.00 AM  
Asia School of Business**

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

Salam Sejahtera, Salam Perpaduan, Salam Malaysia

MADANI

**(SALUTATION)**

1. A very good morning to everyone. I would like to thank the United Nations Malaysia and all contributing partners for once again organising and hosting the International Women's Day Forum, themed "Investing in Women - Accelerating Progress".

- 2.** On 14 February this year, my Ministry launched our official theme for International Women's Day - inspired and driven by the context of what it means to proactively and tangibly invest in women.
  
- 3.** Titled "Wanita Dijulang, Negara Gemilang" which directly translates to "when Women are uplifted - the nation thrives", our objectives are not only create a call to action but to celebrate the incredible contributions of all of our Malaysian women to the nation.

4. Our campaign focuses primarily on:
  - i. A zero-tolerance policy towards gender-based violence;
  - ii. Enhancing Women's Economic participation & Equity;
  - iii. Expanding Women's presence in policy & political participation;
  - iv. Increasing women's stake in environmental preservation.
  
5. On one hand our aim is to galvanize our women and girls while on the other hand we want the campaign to collectively amplify the message to everyone in Malaysia:  
***that every ringgit, every minute and endeavor invested into***

***the lives and wellbeing of our women is time, money and resources invested in our national development - positively impacting each and every aspect of our socioeconomic pillars.***

6. We cannot progress nor make any advancement as a nation if we do not have the absolute full participation and investment of almost 50% of our population. That is a simple fact. And in order to do that, we need to collectively and proactively invest to remove each and every social, legal, economic and healthcare barrier that hinders us.

Distinguished guests,

- 7.** While we have made numerous vital legislative advancements over the years with outstanding laws on protection, discrimination and safety of our women and girls, all that was just the beginning. We now have the basic legislative foundations we needed, to start bridging gaps and addressing social and economic barriers.
- 8.** At the heart of all my Ministries efforts is our collective efforts towards increasing Female economic agency. It is central to

achieving Gender Equality and promoting the wellbeing and prosperity of our families, societies and economies. Otherwise, we risk half our population being left behind and as vulnerable as ever in the face of a world that is rapidly changing - taking into account how our women continue to be at the brunt end of any and all national disasters and climate emergencies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- 9.** Just this week the World Bank Reported that “no country in the world affords women the same opportunities as men in the workforce - and that the Global Gender Gap is far bigger than previously thought. However, the same study stated that global GDPs can rise by more than 20% in the report provided that all impediments are removed.
  
- 10.** In December last year DOSM released statistics that showed that Malaysia’s Gender Pay Gap had increased by over



30%, meaning that for every RM100 in salaries and wages received by men in 2022, women only received RM66. This combined with our already low female labour force participation, means that our national investments and efforts need to be focused towards addressing the root causes of what is holding women back.

**11.** These barriers and impediments like everywhere else in the world are a combination of social, cultural, economic and legal barriers that impact the lives and wellbeing of women throughout their lifecycle. From access to reliable Social

and Reproductive Health Education (SRHE) in their youth, to being limited to gender roles, not having agency over their own bodies, inequitable marriage laws, motherhood penalties, insufficient financial independence, lack of retirement savings and more.

**12.** That is why the Ministry has over the past 2 years worked towards creating programs, platforms and conducting studies to address all of this. We are developing roadmaps to establish and help outline the infrastructure for the care industry, in order to alleviate and recognize the unpaid care

work borne by women, which often excludes them from participating or returning to the labour force.

- 13.** We are further expanding our investments and approach towards enhancing access to women's Social and Reproductive Health Education (SRHE) modules for adolescents. Providing women and girls with the ability to better exercise their rights and choices over their bodies and health which in turn will alleviate life-cycle poverty.

**14.** Our awareness campaigns on balancing the equity and participation of fathers when it comes to providing care work for children and the elderly are creating the kind of public conversations on traditional gender roles that we have long been waiting for.

**15.** When it comes to the safety, protection and rights of our women and girls, we are continuing to not only amplify awareness on eliminating gender-based violence especially with the establishment of protective legislation. Our squad of nationwide volunteers and social workers are constantly

being upskilled and recruited to be able to reach as many women in need as possible.

- 16.** And lastly, when it comes to economic empowerment JPW continues to run entrepreneurship workshops, upskilling programs and access to basic finance to women especially from more economically challenged backgrounds.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- 17.** These endeavors are only a fraction of the responsibilities and mandates of my Ministry and we understand our pivotal role in bringing about Malaysia's and our people's aspirations but we cannot be the sole drivers of this. It is a collective effort of all of us to bring drive gender equity.
- 18.** We need the proactive participation of all Ministries and law makers to begin to develop more gender centric programs and investments in line with enhancing women's economic

equity. And this needs to be guided by a national Gender Equity economic roadmap or masterplan. Something we hope that we can discuss with our counterparts at the ministry of economy very soon.

- 19.** We also need to be legislatively dynamic and brave and be willing to venture forth into somewhat unfamiliar territory especially when it comes to issues which relate to legislating equitable wages and potentially wage transparency.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

**20.** When it comes to investing in women, it is a proven fact that across sectors and considerations, there is and never will be a better return on investment. There are reports and evaluations from incredible micro-finance returns, to 3:1 return ratio on investments in Sexual and Reproductive Health Education and so much more.

**21.** For Malaysia and our women, the road forward is still somewhat unpaved and laden difficulties and unfair



barriers, but overcoming challenges is what makes us stronger and going forward I am confident in stating that the health, equity and potential of this beautiful country will be determined by the status health, equity and potential of our women.

**22.** Therefore, every ringgit, every minute and effort invested into the lives and wellbeing of our women is a collective investment into the future of Malaysia

Thank you

**YB DATO' SRI HAJAH NANCY BINTI SHUKRI**  
**Minister of Women, Family & Community Development**  
**7 March 2024**