



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

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

PROGRAM

THE 2025 WORLD WOMEN ECONOMIC & BUSINESS SUMMIT (WWEBS)

LOCATION / DATE / TIME

**SERI PACIFIC HOTEL, KUALA LUMPUR
10 JULY 2025 (THURSDAY)
4.00 PM**

Updated 9 July 2025

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

(SALUTASI)

SALUTATIONS TO BE ATTACHED

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh,

A very good afternoon to all.

1. It is a great honour for me to address such a distinguished gathering at the 2025 World Women Economic & Business Summit. I commend KSI Strategic Institute for Asia Pacific for convening this important forum, now in its fourth year, and for highlighting the critical theme:

“Transforming Tomorrow: Women Leading in a Digital, Sustainable, and Inclusive Future.”

2. This theme resonates deeply with our national aspirations in Malaysia, where we are actively working to ensure that women are not only included in our future—but are central to shaping it.

The Global Landscape

3. We meet today amid profound global change—from rapid technological advances to the realities of an ageing nation. Climate change is no longer a distant threat—it is a crisis unfolding before our eyes. Conflicts, pandemics, and widespread displacement continue to test our systems and the very fabric of our societies.

4. Yet, amid this shifting landscape, one truth remains constant: the vital role of women in building a future that is resilient, inclusive, and filled with purpose.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Power of Women's Leadership

5. Women's leadership lies in our ability to lead with balance—between strength and compassion, between decisiveness and consensus-building. And evidence supports this. Studies by McKinsey and the World Economic Forum (WEF) consistently show that companies with gender-diverse leadership are more profitable, more innovative, and more responsive to stakeholder needs.

6. WEF also found, at the national level, countries with higher female representation in leadership have better outcomes in wage equality and labour protections, education, health, and environmental protection.

7. But this leadership is not just about numbers or titles. It is about a different way of thinking. Women leaders often emphasize long-term sustainability over short-term gain. We listen more. We build alliances. We focus on people, not just performance. This, ladies and gentlemen, is transformational leadership—and it is urgently needed.

Acknowledging the Gaps

8. Yet, we must not romanticize. The truth is, women's leadership is still not the norm. Fewer than 10% of Fortune 500 CEOs are women. In Southeast Asia, women make up just 34% of senior managers—despite being more than 50% of the tertiary educated population. Women make up half the global population but hold just 26.5% of parliamentary seats and 22.9% of ministerial positions worldwide.

9. When crisis hits, it is women who suffer first and recover last. During COVID-19, women were more likely to lose jobs, drop out of school, or take on unpaid caregiving. These are not just gender issues—they are economic vulnerabilities.
10. Recognising these gaps, we have taken decisive action to dismantle the structural barriers that continue to hold women back.

Call to Action – Three Strategic Imperatives

11. This is why the Government under my Ministry, recently launched the updated National Women Policy and Women Development Plan of Action 2025–2030.
12. This updated policy serves as a strategic guide for various stakeholders to implement programmes, initiatives and strategies aimed at advancing women's participation in all aspects. We have four key priority areas:

- (i) ***Economy:*** Positioning women as agents of change and strategic contributors to socio-economic growth;
- (ii) ***Leadership:*** Aim to achieve at least 30% representation in decision-making roles across sectors where women are underrepresented;
- (iii) ***Security:*** Strengthen protection against gender-based violence; and
- (iv) ***Wellbeing:*** Promotes holistic wellbeing support for women.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

13. When we speak about women in digital spaces, under these 4 key areas, the Government is committing to:

Invest in Women's Education and Digital Access

14. Education as the foundation of empowerment. In a digital economy, we must go further—investing in women's education and ensuring equal access to STEM learning, digital tools, and online opportunities. The Government is taking a whole-of-government approach to strengthen programmes to train women in coding, AI, fintech, and cybersecurity.

15. At the same time, we are also supporting single mothers and rural women with access to digital entrepreneurship platforms. The Ministry's Gig@Bit programme is a testament to strong public-private partnership with partners such as Maxis, Shopee, Canon, and more to retain women as career-seekers and entrepreneurs in the digital space.

16. In 2024, the Ministry also collaborated with Mastercard to build the first interactive one-stop portal to assist women owning micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to navigate the complexities of business such as financing and scale-up strategies, using simple language.

17. The Government will continue to invest in leadership training, financial literacy, and lifelong learning pathways so women can lead in the Fourth Industrial Revolution—not just participate in it.

Build Supportive Ecosystems for Women Entrepreneurs and Leaders

18. Secondly, we must help build Supportive Ecosystems for Women Entrepreneurs and Leaders. This is the duty of both the Government and Private sector.

19. Female representation in the private sector is still low, and we need to look at supporting women holistically. This means we must make childcare, ageing parents, healthcare, and flexible work policies integral to economic planning—not side issues.

20. This is why we are developing the Care Industry Framework to strengthen caregiving across the life cycle. In Malaysia, we are working with partners to expand childcare centres and encourage employers to adopt family-friendly practices. This is not welfare—it is workforce strategy. And we will use digital technology to our advantage. I urge the private sector to join me in advancing our care industry.

Embed Gender Parity in Decision-Making

21. Third, the Government must ensure equality is built into our institutions—not left to chance. This means setting quotas where necessary, implementing gender budgeting, and mandating diversity targets in corporate boards and public agencies. But it also means changing workplace cultures—so women are not only invited into the room, but are heard, respected, and promoted.

22. In Malaysia, we have made progress. Women now head major banks, universities, and government ministries. But we must go further to ensure this representation is reflected across all sectors—including rural cooperatives, digital startups, and climate governance bodies.

Malaysia's Commitment and Way Forward

Ladies and gentlemen,

23. Malaysia is committed to building an inclusive future where women lead not just in title, but in impact. Let me close with this:

The future is not something we wait for—it is something we build.

24. And if we want a future that is equitable, resilient, and innovative—then women must be at the centre of it. Not as beneficiaries of change, but as architects of it. Let us lead with courage. Let us build with purpose. Let us transform tomorrow—together.

Thank you.

Wabillahi taufiq walhidayah

Wassalamualaikum warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

YB DATO' SRI HAJAH NANCY BINTI SHUKRI
Minister of Women, Family & Community Development
10 July 2025