

# Beijing Declaration & Platform for Action



- Poverty
- Education & Training
- Health
- Violence
- Armed Conflict
- Economy
- Power & Decision Making
- Institutional Mechanism
- Human Rights
- Media
- Environment
- Girl-Child

**MALAYSIA PROGRESS REPORT  
on the Implementation of the Beijing  
Declaration and Platform for Action and the  
Outcomes of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Special Session of the  
General Assembly (2000)**

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# ***Introduction***

The Government of Malaysia stands by our commitments to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Fourth World Conference on Women provided the international community with a consensus to move forward on issues affecting women. The global policy framework encapsulated in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is a tool for all countries, the United Nations system, civil society, as well as individuals, wherever they are. Implicit in the Declaration and Platform for Action is that in efforts for the advancement of women, both women and men can contribute, and both genders have an inherent interest in the matter.

Malaysia has made remarkable progress in gender equality, whereby women and girls have enjoyed equal opportunities with men and boys in terms of access to basic social services. The National Policy for Women was formulated in 1989 and the Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women was adopted in 1997. Keeping abreast with the current challenges and changes in the nation's development, both the policy and plan of action were reviewed and approved by the Government in 2009 with the aim of integrating women in all sectors of national development and to reaffirm our commitment in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Malaysia.

The Government of Malaysia has placed special emphasis on continuous efforts to empower women in various fields in the Tenth Malaysia Plan (2011 until 2015). Under the Plan, the Government will increase efforts to enable women realize their full potential and

participate more effectively in the economic and social development of the country.

The Government of Malaysia acknowledges that gender equality and the empowerment of women through social, educational, economic and political status are vital for full sustainable development in all spheres. Gender equality and the empowerment of women will provide substantial impetus to economic growth and propel Malaysia towards its goal of becoming a developed nation by 2020. It will also contribute greatly in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, especially Millennium Development Goals 3, which is to promote gender equality and empower women.

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# **BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION**

## **SECTION ONE: OVERVIEW ANALYSIS OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES SINCE 1995**

1. Women in Malaysia have actively contributed towards the development of the country since independence. Over the past decades, significant improvements have been made in the status of women and gender mainstreaming. The significant economic progress made in the last decades was possible, due to the greater participation of women in the development process. The educational attainment of women is at an all-time high, their participation in the labour force has increased and legislation that grants equal opportunities for women and respect for their rights has been adopted in Malaysia. Particularly encouraging is the progress made by women in many key areas such as education, health, and economic activities.
2. Addressing women's concerns in a manner that acknowledges their changing and multiple socioeconomic roles within a rapidly changing economic environment is a challenging and continuing task. Changes in the legal and institutional frameworks have also been made to protect, preserve and safeguard their rights and further improve their status.
3. In Malaysia, the National Policy on Women (1989) formed the basis for efforts to fully integrate women in the nation's development. The main objectives of this policy are to ensure an equitable sharing in the acquisition of resources, information,



opportunities and benefits of development for women. The National Social Policy was officially adopted by the Government in 2003 to further enhance the creation of a progressive society, with every member having the opportunity to develop his or her optimum potentials in a healthy social environment, based on the qualities of unity, resilience, democracy, morality, tolerance, progress, care, fairness and equity.

4. Malaysia is very much cognisant of her obligations as a signatory to Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and pledges made to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Malaysia is committed to realizing women's rights as human rights. To achieve this goal, changes in its legal and institutional frameworks have been made to protect, preserve and safeguard the rights and improve the status of women in all areas.

## **KEY ACHIEVEMENTS**

5. Since 1995, Malaysia has made significant strides in the advancement and empowerment of women. Listed below are some of our key achievements.

- a. **Education**

Malaysia has made remarkable progress in gender equality, whereby women and girls have enjoyed equal opportunities with men and boys in terms of access to education. The achievement of women in formal education has been

remarkable as seen by the steady increase in participation rate at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

At primary and secondary level, the enrolment ratio of girls is almost equal to boys. At the macro level, the enrolment rate at primary education increased from 95.05 percent in 2001 to 96.59 percent in 2013, while the enrolment rate at secondary education increased from 85.85 percent in 2001 to 91.12 percent in 2013.

The Government of Malaysia has given special attention to education for women. This is evident in the enrolment of women for first degrees in public universities which has been consistently above 62 percent for the period 2009-2012. For the 2013/2014 academic year, 68.02 percent of 41,573 new students for first degrees in public universities are female students.

## **b. Health**

As a result of its excellent health system, Malaysia has one of the lowest mortality rates among developing countries, which is 4.6 deaths per thousand population in 2012 compared to 4.7 deaths per thousand population in 2011. The average life expectancy at birth in 2013 was 72.6 years for males and 77.2 for females compared to 70 years for males and 74.7 for females in 2000.

**c. Economic Participation**

Under the Tenth Malaysia Plan (2011 to 2015), the Government of Malaysia has set forth a plan to increase women's participation in the labour force to 55 percent by the year 2015. With the size of the female population in Malaysia increasing from 13.8 million in 2000 to 14.5 million in 2013, women have to be the primary force in contributing to the economy. Overall, the participation rate of women in the work force increased from 46.8 percent in 2010 to 49.5 percent in 2012 and rose to 52.4 in 2013.

**d. Power and decision making**

With more educated women entering the workforce, Malaysia has achieved the Policy of At Least 30 Percent Women in Decision Making Positions in the Public Sector. Proactive implementation of this policy has seen the percentage of women holding decision-making positions in the public sector increased from 18.8 percent in 2004 to 33.7 percent in 2013.

The same target was set for women at decision-making levels in the corporate sector in 2011. Following the implementation of this policy, women representation in the Boards of Directors of Government Investment Companies (GIC) has increased from 14 percent in 2012 to 15.2 percent in January 2014.

## **MAJOR LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENTS**

6. Multifarious measures have been adopted to mainstream gender perspectives into the development process, including reviewing legislations affecting women. In line with Malaysia's accession to CEDAW, several legislation have been enacted or amended by the government in order to eliminate discrimination against women.

### **Article 8(2) of the Federal Constitution**

7. Article 8(2) of the Federal Constitution was amended in 2001 to include the word 'gender'. By virtue of the amendment, the Federal Constitution, which is the supreme law, prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender in any other laws.

### **Pensions Act 1980**

8. The Pensions Act was amended in 2002. Prior to the amendment, widows lose their husbands pension if they remarry. The purpose of this new ruling is to ensure the well-being of widows and their children is protected.

### **Land (Group Settlement Areas) Act**

9. The Land (Group Settlement Areas) Act 1960 (Revised 1994) which was amended by Parliament in 2002, allows wives or ex-

wives or the next-of-kin of settlers, who have jointly developed the estate to become joint owners of the land settlement.

### **Immigration Regulations 1980**

10. With effect from 1 September 2001, the Immigration Regulations was amended to allow foreign men married to Malaysian women to renew their social visit pass annually as opposed to every three months. Under the same amendment, foreign women who are divorced or separated from their Malaysian husbands can apply for social visit pass on an annual basis. Previously, they would lose their rights to apply for a social visit pass.

### **The Penal Code**

11. The Government has amended the Penal Code in July 2006 to provide greater deterrence for sexual related offences. The amendments took into consideration a wider definition of the term 'rape' and provision of stiffer penalties.

### **Anti-Trafficking In Persons Act 2007**

12. The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act 2007 has been passed by the Government in May 2007. Under this Act, trafficked victims will not be prosecuted for illegal entry or charged with entering the country with fraudulent documents that were provided by traffickers.

## **BUDGET FOR PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT**

13. Since 1997, the Government of Malaysia has been allocating annual allocation into the five-year national development plans to carry out projects and programmes for women in line with the Government's Vision 2020. Malaysia also recognises non-governmental organizations (NGOs) important role in complementing the efforts of the Government for the benefit of women. Thus, funding for NGOs is provided within the budget to implement activities and programmes for the advancement of women.
14. Table 1.1 indicated the annual budget allocated to the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development and funding for NGOs to implement activities and programmes for the advancement of women from 2011 to 2014.

Table 1.1: Annual Budget Allocated to the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development and Funding for NGOs from 2011 to 2014

<b>Year</b>	<b>Annual Budget Allocated to the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development</b>	<b>Funding for NGOs</b>
2011	USD348,863,760.00	USD636,420.40
2012	USD550,558,344.00	USD792,710.80
2013	USD518,330,120.00	USD251,581.12
2014	USD604,535,764.00	USD360,520.44

15. Malaysia is also appreciative of the assistance from the United Nations organisations. Since 2003, the Government has been

collaborating with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in implementing gender equality programmes and projects involving; a gender responsive budget; capacity building on gender mainstreaming; and an Action Plan entitled, “Towards Achieving 30% Participation of Women at Decision Making Levels in Malaysia”.

16. Apart from that, a pilot project of *Gender Budget Analysis* was introduced in five key ministries, namely the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education, and Ministry of Human Resources in 2003. This project aimed to create awareness of gender perspectives in policies and budgets by taking into account the differences in status, role, and contribution of men and women especially to cope with the different demands of women and men, so that their respective potential can be realised. The focus of gender budget analysis is not merely on budget allocation per se. It is an analysis of policies and provides input to government policies and programmes. For the gender budget pilot project, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development served as the lead agency.

## **BILATERAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

17. Malaysia has actively participated in regional meetings and international conferences to exchange views, share experiences and learn from others in the areas of advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women. At the regional level, Malaysia participation can be observed in fora such as ASEAN

Committee on Women (ACW), ASEAN Commission for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Women and ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR).

18. Malaysia has published *The Compilation of ASEAN Best Practices in Eliminating Violence against Women and Children* in December 2013. The book highlights each ASEAN country's best practices on measures to prevent violence against women and children. The book also serves to pave the way for possible collaboration among ASEAN member states to provide better protection for women and children with regard to the issue of violence against these two vulnerable groups in society.
19. Recognising the existing friendly relations between two countries, the Government of Malaysia represented by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Sultanate of Oman in the field of women, family and social development. Both countries agreed to exchange information and share experiences on the policies, programmes and activities on the above mentioned target groups.
20. At the international level, Malaysia's participation can be observed in various arenas such as Commission on the Status of Women, APEC Women and the Economic Forum, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, East Asia Gender Equality Ministerial Meeting, Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Women Ministerial Meeting, Global Summit of Women, Annual



Consultation of Commonwealth National Women's Machineries as well as various workshops, seminars and conferences, in relation to women's issues.

## **CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD**

21. Like many countries, Malaysia has her fair share of challenges.

The key challenges are:

- increasing women labour force participation rate;
- increasing the number of women in decision making;
- achieving work-life balance; and
- mainstreaming gender equality.

22. Key strategies and programmes to address these challenges are explained in Section Four of this report.

## **SECTION TWO: PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN OF THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION SINCE 2009**

### **A. WOMEN AND POVERTY**

23. Malaysia has already surpassed the first and third target of the Millennium Development Goal 1, which aims to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, both nationally and in rural and urban areas. The country's overall poverty rate dropped to 1.7 percent in 2012, compared to 3.8 percent in 2009, with fall in incidences of poverty occurring in both rural and urban areas. Malaysians also enjoyed

an annual increase of 7.2% to their average household income over the 2009-2012 period.

24. In many parts of the world, households headed by women are at elevated risk of poverty. The same holds true for Malaysia. Urban female-headed households in 2009 had a higher probability of being poor than urban male-headed households and rural female-headed households. This represents a change from 1989 when rural, but not urban, female-headed households had a higher probability of being poor than male-headed households. Among the poor, female-headed households are at the very bottom the income distribution.

### **Safety Net Programmes for Underprivileged Groups**

25. This positive trend mentioned in paragraph 22 can be attributed to the successful implementation of various poverty eradication programmes at the national level. These include the establishments of health clinics, affordable housing), welfare programmes providing assistance for low-income senior citizens, children and disabled people , as well as a government backed trust fund for low-income households benefiting around 100,000 households.
26. Underpinning these programmes is the concept of 1Malaysia, which stresses the importance of national unity and ethnic tolerance. In 2013, the Government has allocated substantial budget to ease the burden of the poor by providing training for Malaysian students from the minority group to equip them with

skills in line with market demands, as well as providing educational grants and financial assistance to build mobile clinics and repair houses for the poor and needy.

### **Capacity Building for the Low-Income Households**

27. In addition to these programmes, the Government of Malaysia has also launched the Government Transformation Programme. The Government Transformation Programme aims to raise the living standards of low-income households (LIH) which is one of the six National Key Result Areas (NKRA). The target is to completely eradicate hard-core poverty, reduce the incidence of poverty, and enhance the income of low-income households through:

- enhancing capacity and capability via promoting productivity, education, training and entrepreneurship;
- implementing fast, high-impact initiatives immediately coupled with laying the groundwork for longer term actions; and
- strengthening delivery system and effective inter-agency coordination of initiatives.

28. In the delivery system to assist the poor and disabled group, the Government of Malaysia is moving towards **productive welfare approach**. This programme is not just a one-off welfare support but aims to ensure sustainability and economic independence for

the targeted groups. Participants of this programme are subjected to compulsory training in the fundamental principles of business such as cash flow, marketing and customer service. Thus the goals of the Low Income Household National Key Result Areas are twofold, first, to provide immediate help for those most in need, and second, to ensure that the poor and extreme poor develop are given the right support to become financially self-sufficient.

29. Malaysia wishes to highlight three particular programmes that have played a pivotal role in reducing poverty in Malaysia. Firstly, the development of the e-Kasih system, a centralized Malaysian National Poverty Data Bank, which stores information related to poverty. It can be accessed by all government agencies and other related parties for planning, coordination and monitoring of poverty eradication programmes in Malaysia. It is an innovation which assesses the effectiveness of poverty eradication programs, which are crucial for their strengthening and development. While Malaysia is proud that this innovation was awarded the first prize in the United Nations Public Service Awards in 2012, we are not resting on our laurels. In 2013, the government has set up the e-Kasih mobile team to reach out to deserving applicants who are not on the registry and to set up focus groups to help filter the applications, ensuring that all deserving citizens obtain the assistance that they need.
  
30. Secondly, the rural development programme which remains as one of Malaysia's biggest success stories. The rural development scheme implemented by the Federal Land Development Authority of Malaysia (FELDA), has successfully elevated the quality of life

and brought social and economic benefits to hundreds of thousands of rural families and increased their household income over the years. In 2013, FELDA completed 20,000 units of new generation housing projects for a period of five years on 5,000 acres of land in FELDA areas at a cost of approximately USD 469 million. FELDA also spend approximately USD 31 million a year for education and skills training programmes, as well as providing scholarships for 5,000 new generation children from which 30% or 2,000 people are children outside the FELDA scheme.

31. Thirdly, the 1AZAM programme implemented by the Government in 2010, which provides assistance in four essential areas; job placements, creating small business enterprises, creating small service providers and creating opportunities in agriculture. The emphasis of the programme is productive welfare; striking a balance between providing direct aid and economic opportunities to its participants to ensure that these individuals become financially self-sustaining.
  
32. In the future, the programme will be more granular and state specific to target under-served districts and to place greater emphasis on the urban poor. Further, recognizing the important role women play in the Malaysia's socio-economic development, women are encouraged to participate in these income-generating programmes. As of 30 September 2014, out of 164,813 who enrolled in the 1AZAM project, 104,513 participants or 63.4 percent are women.

### **Focusing on Bottom 40 Percent**

33. In line with the principle of social justice which is at the core of the 10<sup>th</sup> Malaysia Plan, one of the key goals of the Plan is elevating the livelihoods of the bottom 40% of households. The strategies adopted focuses on raising their income generation potential, boosting education and skills attainment of children, strengthening the social safety net to reduce vulnerability of disadvantaged groups, and assessing the needs of special target groups with integrated programmes.
34. At the same time, the focus of the strategies is anchored on enabling equitable opportunities for all Malaysians (applied equally to women and men), which includes equitable access to health, education and basic infrastructure. The government prioritizes the interests of each and every community, ensuring no group is left behind or marginalized in the course of the nation's development.

## **B. EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF WOMEN**

35. Article 12 (1) of the Federal Constitution which guarantees the right to education for all Malaysians regardless of gender has enabled Malaysian women to gain equal access to education and training. They have benefited from the increased access as indicated by the improvement in women's literacy rates and net enrolment at all levels of education since independence.
36. The introduction of compulsory education in 2003, beginning at primary level, bolstered the achievement of women in education. This policy ensures that every child in Malaysia, including those

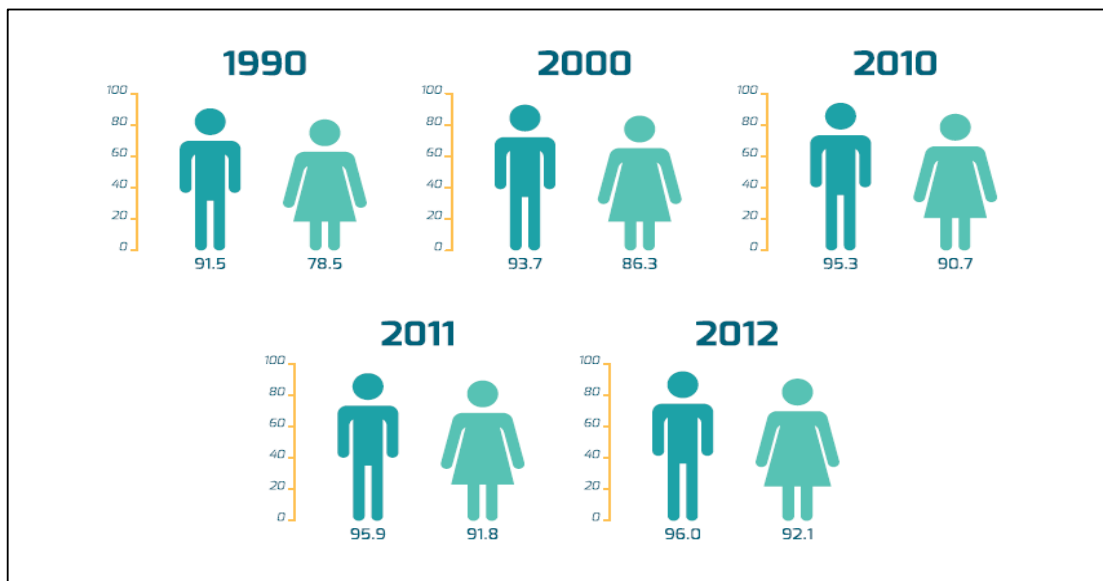
with physical disabilities, beginning at age six, regardless of sex, social and economic background, and residential locality, has the right to primary education. Accordingly, Malaysian parents must ensure that their children, at the age of six, or on the first day of the current school year when the child would be six year old, have access to compulsory primary education. Apart from the policy, the Government of Malaysia also provides 11 years of free primary and secondary education in public schools.

37. Education, formal and non-formal has been vital for the personal, social and economic development of the women in Malaysia. It has been the means for improving the knowledge, skills and attitudes of Malaysian women and their development capacity. With higher educational attainment Malaysian women are able to participate actively in the development of the nation, exercise their voice in the family, the community, place of work and the public arena of politics as well as enjoy greater economic independence.

### **Ratio of literate women to men**

38. An important outcome of the investment to achieve universal primary education is closing the gender gap in literacy between men and women. Figure 1.1 shows the literacy gap between men and women in 1990 until 2012. The figure demonstrates a steady increase in the literacy rate for both groups. However, the progress made by women in closing the gender gap in literacy is extremely remarkable.

Figure 1.1: Literacy Gap between Men and Women from 1990 until 2012



Source: Statistics on Women, Family and Community Development, Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, 2013

39. At primary level, the enrolment ratio of girls is almost equal to boys. This is also the case at secondary level in which the ratio of females to males is almost 1. In post-secondary school, girls outnumber boys' consequence of higher dropout rate. Female students' enrolment for first degrees in public universities has been consistently above 60 percent for the period 2006-2012. For the 2013/2014 academic year, 68.02 percent of 41,573 new students for first degrees in public universities are female students Table 1.2 indicated the enrolment in Government and Government-



assisted educational institutions by level of education from 2006 to 2012.

Table 1.2: Enrolment in Government and Government-Assisted Educational Institutions by Level of Education, 2006 - 2012

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Primary</b>							
Male	1,612,154	1,628,388	1,621,693	1,522,698	1,492,014	1,441,522	1,444,903
Female	1,524,487	1,539,387	1,532,397	1,436,394	1,407,214	1,362,883	1,366,361
Total	3,136,641	3,167,775	3,154,090	2,959,092	2,899,228	2,804,405	2,811,264
<b>% Female (over total)</b>	<b>48.6</b>	<b>48.6</b>	<b>48.6</b>	<b>48.5</b>	<b>48.5</b>	<b>48.6</b>	<b>48.6</b>
<b>Secondary (Lower &amp; Upper)</b>							
Male	1,052,716	1,074,879	1,106,747	1,117,456	1,124,349	1,139,198	1,110,672
Female	1,045,063	1,065,416	1,098,748	1,111,882	1,117,986	1,142,577	1,102,321
Total	2,097,779	2,140,295	2,205,495	2,229,338	2,242,335	2,281,775	2,212,993
<b>% Female (over total)</b>	<b>49.8</b>	<b>49.8</b>	<b>49.8</b>	<b>49.9</b>	<b>49.9</b>	<b>50.1</b>	<b>49.8</b>
<b>Post-Secondary Form Six &amp; Matriculation</b>							
Male	53,410	46,115	43,733	43,122	36,419	44,242	47,329
Female	100,484	86,180	84,772	80,371	66,142	82,148	87,466
Total	153,894	132,295	128,505	123,493	102,561	126,390	134,795
<b>% Female (over total)</b>	<b>65.3</b>	<b>65.1</b>	<b>66.0</b>	<b>65.1</b>	<b>64.5</b>	<b>65.0</b>	<b>64.9</b>
<b>University</b>							
Number of Universities	17	18	20	20	20	20	20
Male	119,304	126,836	143,338	174,332	184,457	201,733	203,378
Female	189,787	204,189	226,687	263,088	278,323	306,523	318,415
Total	309,091	331,025	370,025	437,420	462,780	508,256	521,793
<b>% Female (over total)</b>	<b>61.4</b>	<b>61.7</b>	<b>61.3</b>	<b>60.1</b>	<b>60.1</b>	<b>60.3</b>	<b>61.0</b>

Source: Ministry of Education, Malaysia

40. Female enrolment at different level of higher education in public institutions was higher than among males, except at the doctoral levels as shown in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3: Enrolment in Public Higher Education Institutions and Private Higher Education Institutions, 2010-2012

	2010		2011		2012	
	PuHEI	PrHEI	PuHEI	PrHEI	PuHEI	PrHEI
<b>Certificate*</b>						
Male	8,850	44,774	8,498	13,427	7,678	20,563
Female	12,927	38,937	13,563	10,401	13,210	20,073
Total	21,777	83,711	22,061	23,828	20,888	40,636
<b>% Female (over total)</b>	<b>59.4</b>	<b>46.5</b>	<b>61.5</b>	<b>43.7</b>	<b>63.2</b>	<b>49.4</b>
<b>Diploma</b>						
Male	38,315	87,844	43,667	76,962	44,091	82,859
Female	55,711	128,944	62,069	94,235	63,456	92,601
Total	94,026	216,788	105,736	171,197	107,547	175,460
<b>% Female (over total)</b>	<b>59.3</b>	<b>59.5</b>	<b>58.7</b>	<b>55.0</b>	<b>59.0</b>	<b>52.8</b>
<b>First Degree</b>						
Male	103,483	105,984	112,273	90,263	112,748	99,678
Female	171,207	114,315	186,906	89,802	192,393	105,278
Total	274,690	220,299	299,179	180,065	305,141	204,956
<b>% Female (over total)</b>	<b>62.3</b>	<b>51.9</b>	<b>62.5</b>	<b>49.9</b>	<b>63.1</b>	<b>51.4</b>
<b>Post Graduate Diploma</b>						
Male	1,181	974	654	4,232	958	
Female	1,987	813	1,270	1,397	3,178	
Total	3,168	1,787	1,924	5,629	4,136	
<b>% Female (over total)</b>	<b>62.7</b>	<b>45.5</b>	<b>66.0</b>	<b>24.8</b>	<b>76.8</b>	
<b>Masters</b>						
Male	21,620	8,281	22,226	8,124	22,109	8,232
Female	28,056	5,757	31,041	6,193	32,484	6,614
Total	49,676	14,038	53,267	14,317	54,593	14,846
<b>% Female (over total)</b>	<b>56.5</b>	<b>41.0</b>	<b>58.3</b>	<b>43.3</b>	<b>59.5</b>	<b>44.6</b>
<b>PhD</b>						
Male	10,416	2,537	12,846	2,879	13,944	2,390
Female	7,302	1,267	9,748	3,071	11,096	1,146
Total	17,718	3,804	22,594	5,950	25,040	3,536
<b>% Female (over total)</b>	<b>41.2</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>43.1</b>	<b>51.6</b>	<b>44.3</b>	<b>32.4</b>
<b>Total</b>						
<b>Male</b>	183,865.0	250,394.0	200,164.0	195,887.0	201,528.0	213,722.0
<b>Female</b>	277,190.0	290,033.0	304,597.0	205,099.0	315,817.0	225,712.0
<b>Total</b>	461,055.0	540,427.0	504,761.0	400,986.0	517,345.0	439,434.0
<b>% Female (over total)</b>	<b>60.1</b>	<b>53.7</b>	<b>60.3</b>	<b>51.1</b>	<b>61.0</b>	<b>51.4</b>

Source: Ministry of Education, Malaysia

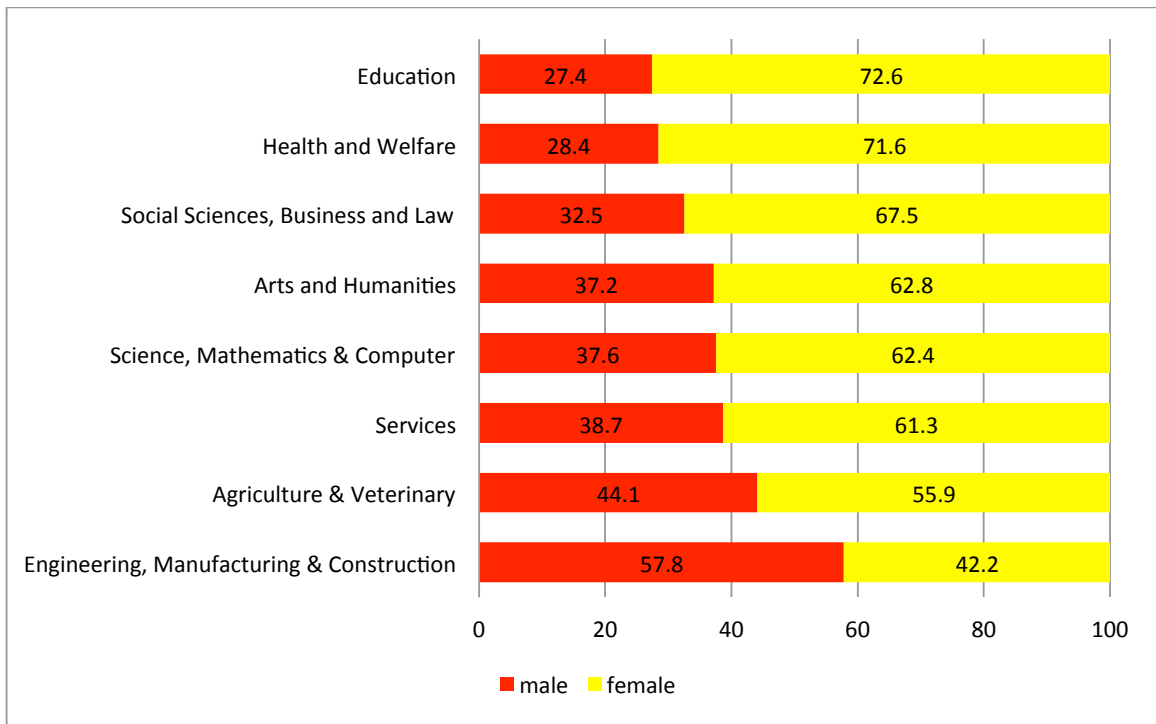
PuHEI: Public Higher Education Institutions

PrHEI: Private Higher Education Institutions

41. Gender gaps exist in the selection of courses. Women dominate in the arts, social sciences, education, health and welfare but make

up only 42 percent of students in engineering, manufacturing and construction courses as shown in Chart 1.1.

Chart 1.1: Student Enrolment in Public Higher Education Institutions by Level of Study and Sex, 2012



Source: Ministry of Education, Malaysia

42. Malaysia has achieved gender parity at primary, secondary and post-secondary levels of education and greater than parity at university level. At tertiary level, however a gender gap remains in technical courses, probably a consequence of gender stereotypes and the labour market for technical personnel. This pattern is gradually changing as women are being encouraged to enter other fields, especially those to do with science and technology.

## **C. WOMEN AND HEALTH**

43. There has been a steady improvement in the health status of Malaysian women as indicated by the rising life expectancy at birth and declining maternal mortality and fertility rate. The average life expectancy of women increased from 74.7 years in 2000 to 77.2 in 2013. Men, however, have a shorter life span, with a life expectancy of 72.6 in 2013 compared to 70 years in 2000. Access to health services and improved quality of life have contributed to the lowered crude death rates for male and female.

### **Improvement in Infant Mortality Rate**

44. Malaysia has one of the lowest mortality rates among developing countries, which is 4.6 deaths per thousand population in 2012 compared to 4.7 deaths per thousand population in 2011. Among several factors that contribute for the reduction in mortality rates are the national commitment to improve maternal health, as reflected through the allocation of resources for health care, access to professional care during pregnancies and childbirth and increasing access to quality family planning services and information.

### **Decline in Fertility Rate**

45. Malaysia's total fertility rate declined from 2.9 in 2000 to 2.2 in 2006 and to 2.1 in 2012. Urbanisation, late marriages and increased access to education as well as more employment

opportunities have contributed significantly to the decline in fertility. The decline in fertility level will have profound effects on the nation's population size and composition. This will result in significant age structural shift and population ageing that will determine future labour supply.

### **Sexual and Reproductive Health**

46. Although health care for women has expanded since independence, a new perspective was introduced in 1994 through the concept of reproductive health. This new approach calls for empowerment of women and enhancing their capability and social status to protect women rights relating to reproductive health.
47. The Government of Malaysian supports sexual and reproductive health of women through their international commitments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the International Conference on Population and Development and Programme of Action, as well as through domestic policies on reproductive health.
48. In Malaysia, reproductive health, including family planning services are widely accessible from an extensive network of clinics under the Ministry of Health, the National Population and Family Development Board, the Federation of Family Planning Association and private clinics. In complying with the International Conference on Population and Development and Programme of

Action recommendations, family planning services have been provided as part and parcel of the reproductive health services to married women.

### **HIV Incidence**

49. The number of reported HIV cases has declined steadily. However, while the epidemic was initially dominated by transmission through drugs users, there has been a rise in HIV cases attributed to heterosexual intercourse and this phenomenon is prevalent among the younger cohort (aged between 15 to 24) years old). To address new challenges, Malaysia formulated the National Strategic Plan on HIV and AIDS 2011-2015.
50. This National Strategic Plan incorporates a multi-sectoral strategy that takes into account young people's vulnerability and provides the delivery of free first line treatment for all patients at government hospitals and clinics, provision of sexual reproductive health education and services as well as encouraging HIV testing through voluntary testing and counselling.

### **Preventive Measure for Cervical Cancer**

51. With regard to reproductive cancers, Malaysia has introduced a national *human papilloma virus* (HPV) vaccination programme in 2010. Free HPV immunisation is given to 13 year old Malaysian

girls who are in schools to protect them from cervical cancer. An average of 250,000 girls benefit from the programme every year which costs the government USD12.2 million per year.

### **Adolescent Reproductive Health**

52. The Government of Malaysia has adopted various approaches to address issues related to the reproductive health of adolescents. The introduction of the National Policy on Reproductive Health and Social Education and its Action Plan in November 2009 has paved the way for increased access to reproductive health education, information and services for adolescents and youth. A major milestone under this policy is the integration of Reproductive Health and Social Education into the National Service Training curriculum in 2011 which benefits around 100,000 school leavers each year.
  
53. In addition, the National Adolescent Health Policy (2001) and the National Adolescent Health Plan of Action (2006-2020) were formulated to empower adolescents (aged 10–19 years) with the appropriate knowledge and assertive skills to enable them to practise healthy behaviour and lifestyles.

### **D. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

54. Recognising that the violence against women is a violation of human rights, the Government of Malaysia has undertaken various initiatives and steps to eliminate any form of violence against women. In addition, the Government of Malaysia has made violence against women as one of the 13 key sectors under the Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women.
  
55. Malaysia's seriousness in overcoming violence against women is also evident in the number of amendments made to broaden the priorities and rights of the victims of violence. Malaysia had taken continuous steps to protect the rights of women and girls and to ensure their safety through constant improvement of policy framework, legislation, institutional framework and programmes.
  
56. The legislation used to safeguard women against violence includes the Penal Code, Employment Act 1955, Domestic Violence Act 1994 and Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007

**a. Penal Code**

The Penal Code was amended in 2013 to provide greater deterrence to domestic and sexual-related offences. Stiffer punishments are given to those found guilty of sexual offences, spousal abuse, organised crime and acts of vandalism under amendments to the Penal Code. The amendments seeks to send a strong message to perpetrators with the increase in prison term for incest to not



less than 10 years and not more than 30 years. The former offence is punishable with imprisonment for a term not less than six years and not more than 20 years.

**b. Employment Act 1955**

The Employment Act 1955 which was amended and came into force in 2012, addressed the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace. Prior to the amendment, there was no specific employment legislation on sexual harassment in the workplace. However, in respect of civil service, the Public Services Department had issued a service circular dated 10 September 2005 known as Guidelines for Handling Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Amongst the Civil Servant No. 22 of 2005. The circular provides a more comprehensive guidelines for handling sexual harassment in the workplace for the civil servant.

As for private sector employees, the Code of Practice on the Prevention and Eradication of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace 1999 served as guidelines. The aim of the Code is to ensure that sexual harassment in the workplace does not occur and, if it does occur, adequate procedures are available to deal with the problem and prevent its recurrent. The introduction of the Code has shown the seriousness on

the part of the government in dealing with the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace.

By virtue of the amendments of the Employment Act 1955 in 2012, employers now have a duty to act. The Employment Act imposes an obligation on the employer to inquire into any sexual harassment complaints in the prescribed manner unless the stipulated grounds of refusal are satisfied. Any persons dissatisfied with the refusal may refer the matter to the Director General of Labour.

An employer is liable to a fine not exceeding RM10,000 if he fails to conduct an inquiry into a complaint of sexual harassment, or inform the complainant why he refuses to conduct an inquiry, or conduct any inquiry when directed to do so by the Director General of Labour, or submit a report of inquiry to the Director General.

Briefly, a complaint of sexual harassment includes that made by an employee against another employee, an employee against any employer, and an employer against an employee.

**c. Domestic Violence Act 1994**

Malaysia's Domestic Violence Act, which was enacted 1 June 1996, stated that the definition of domestic violence includes physical injury, fear of physical injury, unlawful detention and mischief or destruction to property knowing

that it is likely to cause distress to the victim. The Act was amended in October 2011 to expand the definition of domestic violence not only from physical abuse but also from emotional, mental and psychological abuse and the usage of drugs or intoxicating substance on the victim without his / her consent.

**d. Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007**

The Government of Malaysia has enacted the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act in 2007 to provide, among others, protection and rehabilitation for trafficked victims. To ensure the Act is comprehensive to combat human trafficking and smuggling of migrants, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act 2007 was amended in 2010 to include the smuggling of migrants and tougher penalties for human trafficking. Accordingly, the Act was renamed as Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007

**National Council for Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants**

57. The National Council for Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants is headed by the Ministry of Home Affairs Secretary General. The main objective of the Council is to make Malaysia internationally accredited as being free of illegal activities in connection with human trafficking and smuggling of migrants.

58. The Council conducts year-round training programmes and workshops aimed at increasing awareness in the need to eradicate human trafficking and migrant smuggling, strengthening enforcement procedures, investigation methods, evidence gathering and victim protection; and enhance inter-agency cooperation within the Home Affairs Ministry as well with non-government organisations (NGOs).
59. There are five committees were established to support the functions of the Council, namely:
- Enforcement Committee headed by Royal Malaysian Police;
  - Legislation Committee headed by Attorney General's Chambers;
  - Protection and Rehabilitation Committee headed by Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development;
  - Labour Trafficking Committee headed by Ministry of Human Resource; and
  - Media and Publicity Committee headed by Ministry of Communication and Multimedia.

### **Support Mechanisms for Victims of Violence**

60. Undeniably, legislative and policy measures are indispensable as mechanisms to address violence against women. However, to eliminate violence against women, much more needs to be done beyond legislative and policy measures, and this is where women and the community assume important roles. The Government of

Malaysia has put in place support mechanisms for victims of violence. These include:

**Awareness campaign: *Women Against Violence***

61. An awareness campaign known as *Women Against Violence* (WAVe) was launched in July 2001, which promotes the community's role in preventing violence and provide early intervention as well as support for those affected. It was organised with the cooperation of government agencies, NGOs as well as the media. Various activities, including the dissemination of information brochures, talks and seminars were organised to ensure efficient handling and management of issues relating to domestic violence.
62. In addition, training workshops were conducted for volunteers to assist in implementing programmes to eliminate domestic violence. The awareness campaign is held every year for the duration of 60 days. In 2014, the campaign has been extended to 90 days. The Government of Malaysia forges smart partnerships with various corporate bodies for funding this awareness campaign. As the result of the aggressive campaign and awareness, domestic violence victims are more willing to speak out and share information about their abusive situations.
63. Awareness programmes remain the main initiative with continuous legal literacy programmes held around the country to provide knowledge and awareness to the community, especially women, on their rights in cases related to marital problems, divorce,

alimony, sexual harassment, rape, outrages on decency and exploitation by drug trafficking syndicates and fraud by job agencies. Government agencies, NGOs and the corporate sector have also developed a number of women friendly programmes namely, assigning special train coaches for women passengers, employing women taxi drivers to cater for women passengers and allotting women-friendly parking spots at shopping malls.

### ***Talian Nur 15999 and Safe Houses***

64. *Talian Nur* 15999, a dedicated line established in 2007 acts as a platform to enable members of the public to report acts or suspicion of acts of domestic violence, human trafficking and child abuse to ensure immediate action can be taken. Calls to this number are handled by fully-trained call agents. These agents are trained to answer various enquiries. The *Talian Nur* service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This programme is fully funded by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development.
  
65. A total number of 765 (from 2008 to Oct 2013) complaints of domestic violence have been received via *Talian Nur* 15999 and looked into by the Social Welfare Services Department under the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development. Apart from that, the ministry had provided 41 safe houses under the Social Welfare Services Department and non-governmental organisations nationwide to protect victims of domestic violence.

## **One-Stop Crisis Centres**

66. The one-stop crisis centre (OSCC) is a coordinated first line emergency setup in hospitals that provide medical services for abused victims. Established in 1996, the objective of the OSCC is to enable survivors of violence to access comprehensive treatment and services at one centralised location. An OSCC is characterised by an integrated and coordinated teamwork of multi-sectoral and inter-agency network for the management of domestic violence, rape, sexual abuse and child abuse. The OSCC also provides therapeutic and medical intervention, multi-level crisis intervention, counselling and emotional support, temporary shelters as well as legal assistance. This programme is funded by the Ministry of Health.

## **Compilation of Good Practices: Eliminating Violence against Women and Children**

67. Malaysia has published *The Compilation of ASEAN Best Practices in Eliminating Violence against Women and Children* in December 2013. The aim was for the good practices to be shared and introduced in each ASEAN country in the fight against domestic violence against women and children. The book is not just about good practice models but also contains initiatives undertaken by ASEAN Commission for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Women and Children members to curb violence against women and children.

## **E. WOMEN IN ARMED CONFLICT**

68. This section is not applicable to Malaysia.

## **F. WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY**

69. Women make up 48.6% or 14.4 million of the total population of Malaysia which is 29.71 million (in 2013). With the size of the female population in Malaysia increasing from 11.5 million in 2000 to 14.4 million in 2013, women have to be the primary force in contributing to the economy.

70. The latest five year development map for Malaysia, the Tenth Malaysia Plan (2011-2015), outlines four key programmes to further enhance women's position in society, namely; increasing **women's participation in the labour force**; increasing the number of women in decision making positions; improving provision of support for women in challenging circumstances; and eliminating all forms of discrimination against women with the aim of empowering women economically, socially and politically. In addition to that, the Government of Malaysia has set forth a plan to increase women's participation rate in the workforce to 55 percent by the year 2015.

71. Due to the Government's effort in providing an enabling environment through gender-sensitive policies and programmes, the participation rate of women in the work force increased from 46.8 percent in 2010 to 49.5 percent in 2012 and rose to 52.4 in 2013.



## **The Employment Act 1955**

72. The Employment Act 1955 without any reference to gender provides a comprehensive legal framework governing matters such as payments of wages, rest days, hours of work, holidays, termination and all other matters pertaining to employment. From the outset, the labour law in Malaysia has not permitted inequality or discrimination against women.

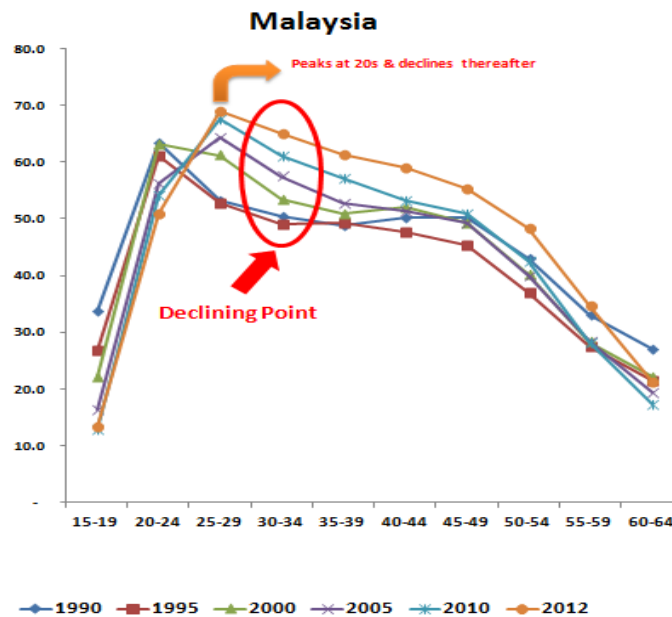
## **ILO Convention No.100**

73. Malaysia ratified ILO Convention No.100 on Equality of Wages between men and women in September 2007. Women therefore are paid the same amount as men for the same job in both public and private sector.

## **Women labour force participation rate**

74. Figure 1.2 shows the labour force participation hits its peak for women in the age group of between 25 and 29, after which there is a dramatic fall. This means that the majority of women will work upon graduation, but leave as they start and take care of their families, and very rarely they return to the workforce.

Figure 1.2: Women in the Labour Force Participation Rate in Malaysia



Source: Department of Statistics, Malaysia

## Supporting Mechanism to Retain Women in the Labour Force

75. The Government of Malaysia recognise that an enabling environment must be created for women to remain in the labour force, especially women with young families. A lack of support system hinders women from entering the workforce after giving birth. Various measures have been taken to overcome this problem.

- Firstly, the introduction of **incentives to encourage the establishment of child care centres at the work place**. The Government of Malaysia has allocated USD60,000 to any ministry or agency to establish child care centres at the work place. Apart from that, a launching grant of USD3,000 has been provided to assist the private sector to establish

early childhood education centres. Such financial support would enable more women to work by improving access to child care centres;

- Secondly, **tax exemption incentives** are provided **to set up child care centres at work places**. Since 1994, the Government of Malaysia has given 10 percent Industrial Building Allowance per year for 10 years for employer in the private sector on the expenses incurred in building or purchasing premises to establish day care centres. Beginning 2013, income tax exemption for 5 years and Industrial Building Allowance at a rate of 10 percent a year are given to operators of pre-school and private child care centres. Apart from that, a double tax deduction is given to employers on allowances or subsidies paid to their employees or on maintenance expenses for the child care centres;
- Thirdly, the **child care fee subsidy**. The Government of Malaysia provides a monthly subsidy of USD 55 for each child of parents with household income of below USD 1,500 per month in the public sector. This form of assistance is given to ease the financial burden of civil servants from the low income group;
- Fourthly, the enactment of the **Employment Regulations 2010** (Part-Time Employees) which came into force on 1 October 2010 to encourage more women, particularly

housewives to enter the labour force on a part-time basis;  
and

- Fifthly, in the same year, 2010, the Government of Malaysia **extended maternity leave** (fully paid) for civil servants from 60 days to 90 days. This benefit has also been implemented by Malaysian local banks. This strategy encourages women to stay employed and at the same time takes into consideration the welfare of female employees as they need to take care of their newborn babies.

### **Work-Life Balance**

76. The Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development and TalentCorp had launched *flexWorkLife.my* to promote best practices and jobs with flexible work arrangements. *flexWorkLife.my* has a repository of best practices in flexible work arrangements as well as family-friendly facilities aims to build a network of employers and talent to optimise work-life integration, while maximising work efficiency and enhancing employee engagement. Potential employees will also find case studies, success stories and job opportunities which offer flexible work arrangements.

### **Economic Empowerment for Women in Challenging Circumstances**

77. Taking cognizant that rural women continue to be socially and economically disadvantaged due to their limited access to economic resources and opportunities, the Government of

Malaysia has introduced income-generating programmes for the advancement of women especially in challenging circumstances. These women have been given education, training and entrepreneurship skills to enhance their capacity and capability in order to raising living standard of low-income households.

**a. 1AZAM Programme**

78. The Government of Malaysia is mindful that women from marginalised groups continue to be economically disadvantaged. Therefore, the government has introduced an income generating programme known as the 1AZAM programme in 2010 to raise the living standard of low income households. This programme provides skills training and income generating opportunities through its four sub-programmes, namely *AZAM Kerja* (jobs-placement), *AZAM Niaga* (business), *AZAM Tani* (agriculture) and *AZAM Khidmat* (services).
79. This programme is not just a one-off welfare support but aims to ensure sustainability and economic independence for the targeted groups. Participants of this programme are subjected to compulsory training in the fundamental principles of business such as cash flow, marketing and customer service. This measure is a critical success factor that ensures results. Since its inception in 2010 until 30 September 2014, the 1AZAM Programme has benefited 164,813 recipients, of which 104,513 or 63.4 percent are women.

**b. Micro-franchising**

80. Malaysia's latest initiative to empower women economically is **micro-franchising**. The franchise industry in Malaysia contributed USD6.6 billion (RM21.2 billion) to the GDP in 2011 and it rose to USD7.64 billion in 2013 (RM24.6 billion). For the year 2014, the industry is targeted to contribute USD7.88 billion (RM25.3 billion) to the GDP.
81. To ensure the franchise industry remains competitive, the Government of Malaysia has introduced the Micro Franchise Financing Scheme in 2011 to assist franchise entrepreneurs. The objective of the micro-financing scheme is to encourage all Malaysians, from fresh graduates to the disabled, single parents, ex-servicemen, women and those from the lower-and middle income groups to become entrepreneurs.
82. The micro financing scheme has benefited 264 entrepreneurs. Out of the 264 micro-franchise entrepreneurs, 138 or 52.2 percent are women entrepreneurs. Without a doubt, micro-franchising businesses has help women entrepreneurs in generating income.

**c. Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (Micro Credit Financing)**

83. Malaysia has provided the right kind of assistance to existing and would-be entrepreneurs through improving access to the knowledge, finance and skills needed for success in business. Meanwhile, access to credit and financing facilities made available to women include micro credit financing schemes such as the

*Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia* (AIM), the Rural Economy Financial Scheme (SPED) and the *Tabung Ekonomi Kumpulan Usaha Niaga* (*Tekun Nasional*). In addition, the World Bank has ranked Malaysia as number one globally in terms of accessibility to credit for 5 years in a row.

84. The Government of Malaysia has forged a strategic partnership with ***Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia*** (AIM), a large micro-credit organisation in Malaysia. The AIM provides financial assistance to poor households to enable them to undertake viable economic activities, and hence increase their household income. Training and advisory services are provided to participants.
85. AIM has disbursed a total financing of USD3.4 billion (RM11.3 billion) to 347,907 women entrepreneurs from September 1987 to September 2014. This programme has been a success due to the strong commitment of participants, of which 99 percent of the applicants for the micro-credit facilities offered by AIM are women.

**d. Purple DNA Entrepreneurship Programme**

86. The *Purple DNA Project* is a social enterprise initiative under the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD) that focuses on the economic empowerment of the disadvantaged/ marginalized groups that include persons with disabilities, single mothers, senior citizens, residents of protection and rehabilitation institutions and women from *Orang Asli* (indigenous) and ethnic minority groups.

87. The *Purple DNA Project* provides the platform and necessary assistance for the participants to enhance their skills and diversify their products for the commercial market. MWFCF facilitates in every step of the process – from product development, training, providing the equipment and raw material needed, packaging and branding, to securing the market for the products made by the participants. The products include a variety of bags, accessories made from clay, handicrafts and home furnishings that are suitable as corporate gifts, souvenirs and for personal use.

**e. MAMACARE**

88. MAMACARE is a Confinement Care Program initiated by the National Population and Family Development Board (NPFDB), one of the agencies under the MWFCF, for the Low Income Households to increase their monthly income. This programme focuses on holistic confinement care for post natal mothers to increase their health status, increase knowledge in management of their new born babies and also their families.

89. The participants will provide their services at NPFDB Family Centres and also to the public on their own initiatives or referral from the NPFDB nurses through the Ward Motivation programme in the hospitals. 91 participants were selected to undergo this programme. The total income generated by these participants from January 2013 to June 2014 is USD197,436 in which the highest income received was USD2,100 per month. In 2014, a total of 140 new participants had been trained in the MAMACARE programme.



**f. Single Mothers Skills Incubator Programme**

90. The Department of Women's Development has embarked on the Single Mothers Skills Incubator Programme to empower women economically. The programme is an intensive and comprehensive package where single mothers are given skills and entrepreneurship training under close supervision. This programme helps them to generate income based on the skills that they have acquired in various fields such as agribusiness, home management, grooming and beauty treatment, and tourism related activities. Since its inception in 2008 until October 2014, a total of 4,868 single mothers had benefited from this programme.

**g. Women's Entrepreneurship Incubator Programme (I-KeuNITA)**

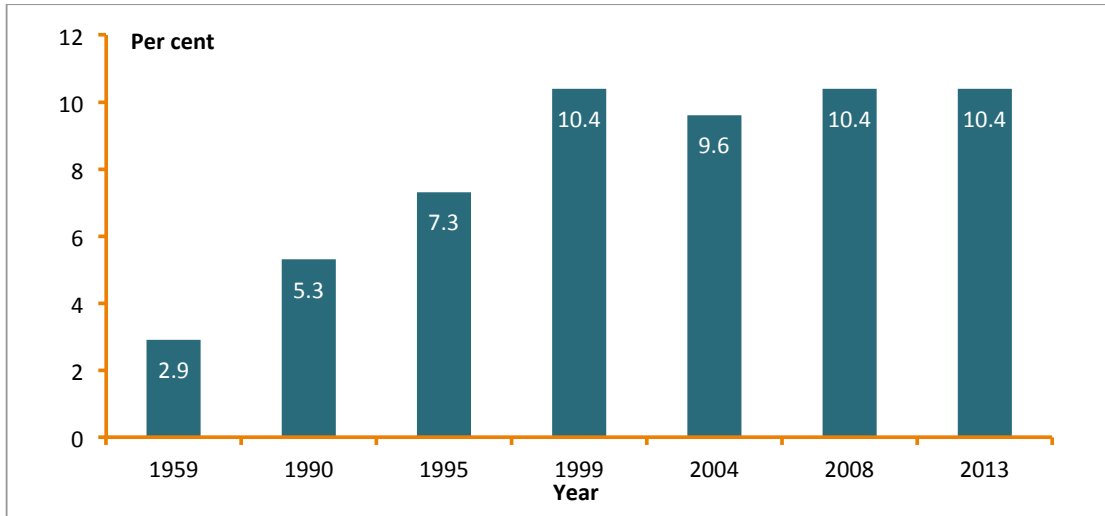
91. To increase the number of skilled and semi-skilled women in Malaysia, the Department of Women's Development has implemented a programme called I-KeuNITA for skills training that meets current market demand. This programme has been implemented in 2010 throughout the country in an effort to encourage women's participation in the employment market. Until October 2014, a total of 6,752 women were involved in this programme.

**G. WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION MAKING**

## **Women in Politics**

92. In Malaysia, there is no legal discrimination against a person based upon gender with respect to participating in the electoral process and holding elected offices. Malaysian women are conferred with the right to vote since independence. Therefore women in Malaysia are not prohibited from participating in election at any level of office and are free to participate in political movement. However, women are still under-represented in political spheres. Mostly women played a supportive role to men except in the women's wings of political parties, where women elect and choose their own leaders.
93. Capable women have been given the opportunities to contest in elections for their constituencies at both federal and state levels. The number of female candidates elected to Lower House has increased at moderate rate. In the 1995 elections, only 7.3 percent of the candidates elected to office in the Lower House were female. This increased to 10.4 percent in 1999.
94. However, in 2004 elections, the percentage decreased by 0.8 percent to 9.6 percent. In the 2008 and 2013 elections, percent of female candidates elected to office in the Lower House remain at 10.4 percent. Chart 1.2 shows a percentage of female members of Lower House from 1959 to 2013.

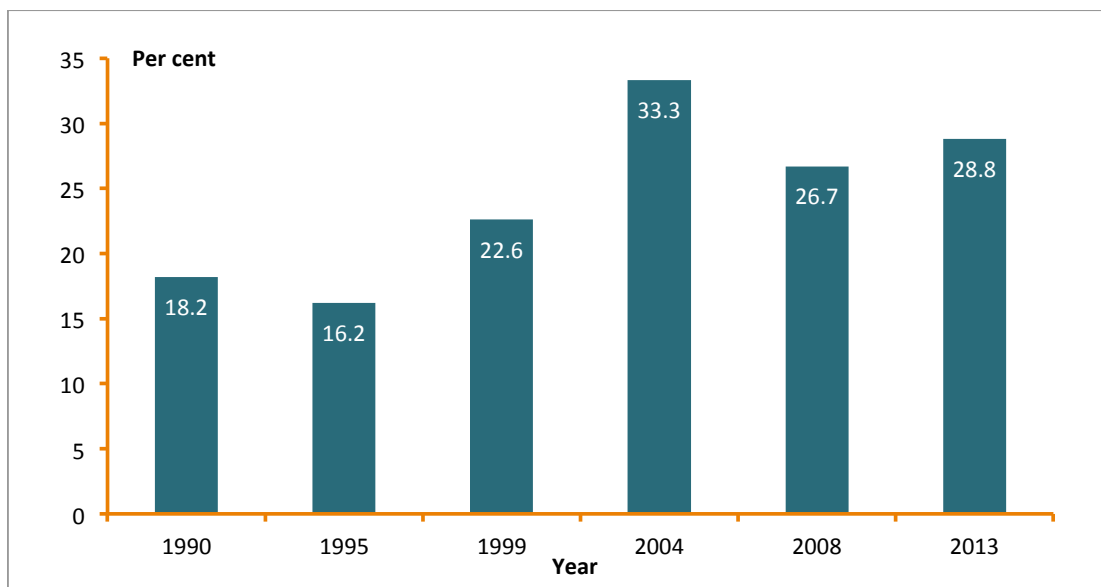
Chart 1.2: Percentage of Appointed Female Members of Lower House, 1959 – 2013



Source: Parliament of Malaysia

95. Percentage of appointed female members of Upper House from 1990 to 2013 increased from below 20 percent to almost 30 percent during 1990 to 2013 as shown in Chart 1.3.

Chart 1.3: Percentage of Appointed Female Members of Upper House, 1990 – 2013



Source: Parliament of Malaysia

96. The number of women occupying minister and deputy minister posts also remained almost constant throughout 1995 to 2013 as shown in Table 1.4.

Table 1.4: Number of Minister and Deputy Minister by Gender

Position	Year	Number of men	Number of women	Total	Percentage of women
Minister	1995	23	2	25	8.0
	2000	26	2	28	7.1
	2012	27	2	29	6.9
	2013	30	2	32	6.3
Deputy Minister	1995	28	2	30	6.0
	2000	25	2	27	3.8
	2012	33	7	40	17.5
	2013	20	5	25	20.0

Source: Parliament of Malaysia and Statistics on Women, Family and Community, 2013

97. The low representation of women in politics is an indication of the fact that few women are elected to the apex bodies of the various

political parties. However, as each political party is now wooing more women as members, it is anticipated that this representation will change over the coming years.

## Decision Making Positions in the Public Sector

98. Women’s overall participation in the public sector has increased gradually from 41.8 percent in 2000 to 47.9 percent in 2005 and to 53.4 percent in 2010. Table 1.5 shows the distribution of personnel in the public sector according to gender and service group.

Table 1.5: Numbers of civil servant in Malaysia according to gender and service group

Source: Parliament of Malaysia and Statistics on Women, Family and Community, 2013

Year	Top Management			Professional & Management			Support		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<b>2000</b>	468	82	<b>550</b>	46,393	41,396	<b>87,789</b>	346,390	241,176	<b>587,566</b>
<b>2005</b>	1,345	320	<b>1,665</b>	97,826	116,375	<b>214,201</b>	381,999	326,522	<b>708,521</b>
<b>2010</b>	1,086	519	<b>1,605</b>	107,041	166,931	<b>273,972</b>	376,116	387,536	<b>763,652</b>
<b>2012</b>	1966	752	<b>2,718</b>	114,159	182,241	<b>296,400</b>	381,553	394,242	<b>775,795</b>

99. In 2004, the Government of Malaysia announced the policy of having women occupy 30 percent of decision-making positions in the public sector. The policy stipulates that women must comprise at least 30 percent of those in decision making positions in the public sector. Proactive implementation of this policy has seen the percentage of women holding decision-making positions in the public sector increased from 18.8 percent in 2004 to 33.7 percent in December 2013.

## **Decision Making Positions in the Corporate Sector**

100. The Government also announced the policy of at least 30 percent women in decision-making positions in the corporate sector in 2011. Following the implementation of this policy, women representation in the Boards of Directors of Government Investment Companies (GIC) has increased from 14 percent in 2012 to 15.2 percent in January 2014.
101. In line with this policy, the Women Directors Programme was introduced in 2012 to provide training to talented and capable women candidates so that they are ready to hold decision-making positions. The objectives of Women Directors Programme are to achieve at least 30 per cent decision making positions for women in the corporate sector by 2016 and develop sustainable supply of candidates who are available and board-ready. A database of women directors was established to register potential participants, monitor training status of approved participants and as a database of registered women directors to be sourced by companies.
102. In 2013, a total number of 721 women have undergone the Women Directors Programme, while a total of 790 women have registered in the Women Directors Registry. The Women Directors Programme will continue to be implemented under the 2014 Budget. From 2012 to 10 October 2014, a total of 828 women have been trained. Meanwhile, since January 2013 until October 2014, there had been a total of 164 placements of women directors on the boards of Public Listed Companies.

## **H. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**

103. Significant progress has been made in setting up of the required institutional and administrative machinery to plan, coordinate implement and monitor development progress of women, among others are:

- a. Establishment of the Ministry of Women and Family Development on January 17, 2001 which marks the culmination of efforts to strengthen the national machinery for women. There are two main departments under the Ministry of Women and Family Development that are directly related to gender equality and the empowerment of women, which is the Department of Women's Development and NAM Institute for the Empowerment of Women.

The objective of Department of Women's Development is to enhance the capability of women to contribute more to national development through the provision of support service, efficient and effective capacity-building programmes.

The establishment of NAM Institute for the Empowerment of Women or NIEW in 2006 as an international institute dedicated to women's development and empowerment. Its vision is to be a training and research center for NAM Member Countries to strive for the achievement of gender equality.

The specific objectives of NIEW are to provide training for government officials, NGOs, private sector representatives, related institutions and individuals in planning and implementing legislation, programmes and commitments, strengthening national machineries, gender analysis, mainstreaming and awareness, to develop benchmarks and collection of sex-disaggregated data, to undertake applied research and produce publications and to provide consultancy services on issues of priority to NAM Member Countries.

- b. The National Advisory Council on Women, Inter-Ministerial Committees on Women, Technical Working Groups, and the various state level liaison and consultative committees, task force and ad hoc committees on women's issues.
- c. Appointment of representatives from NGOs such as the National Council of Women Organisation (NCWO) and All Women Action Malaysia (AWAM) to sit on various advisory council in order to promote co-operation between governmental agencies and NGOs.
- d. Women's Service Centres (WSC) at the state level and district to provide services such as training, counselling and as a one-stop information centre for women's programmes. At present, 14 WSC were established at the state capitals and 15 at the district level.



- e. To ensure gender issues are mainstreamed in the government administration, Gender Focal Point were appointed at the ministries and key government department in 2004. To further enhance the initiatives, the Deputy Secretary General of Ministries and Deputy Director General of the departments (top management) were appointed as Gender Focal Point instead senior officers of beginning August 2010.

## **I. HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN**

### **Constitutional Rights**

- 104. Malaysian women's rights as citizens are implicitly recognized and guaranteed by the Federal Constitution. Article 8(2) of the Federal Constitution was amended in 2001 to include the word 'gender'. By virtue of the amendment, the Federal Constitution, which is the supreme law, prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender in any other laws.
- 105. Article 8 (2) reads: Except as expressly authorized by this Constitution, there shall be no discrimination against citizens on the ground only of religion, race, descent, place of birth or gender in any law or in the appointment under a public authority or in the administration of any law relating to the acquisition, holding or disposition of property or the establishing or carrying on of any trade, business, profession, vocation or employment.

## **Regional Commitments**

106. Malaysia together with other ASEAN Member States affirmed their commitment to advance the promotion and protection of human rights in the region by adopting the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration in 2012. In so doing, ASEAN Member States also reaffirmed the importance of ASEAN's efforts in promoting human rights, including the Declaration of the Advancement of Women in the ASEAN region and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the ASEAN Region.
  
107. Malaysia actively participates in meetings and conferences at the regional level particularly through ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) and ASEAN Commission for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC). Since the establishment of both forums, Malaysia meets regularly with other ASEAN Member States to coordinate and carry out the implementation of ASEAN's key regional priorities and cooperation in women's issues.

## **International Commitments**

108. At the international level, Malaysia's participation can be observed in fora such as Commission on the Status of Women, APEC Women and the Economic Forum, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, East Asia Gender Equality Ministerial Meeting, Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Women Ministerial Meeting, Global Summit of Women, Annual

Consultation of Commonwealth National Women's Machineries as well as various workshops, seminars and conferences.

109. Besides ratification to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1995, Malaysia was a former member of the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women from 2005 to 2008. Apart from that, Malaysia was elected as one of the member of the Commission on the Status of Women from 2010 to 2014.
110. Malaysia has co-sponsored with Germany on the side-event, Due Diligence Project, during the 57<sup>th</sup> and 58<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2013 and 2014 respectively. Apart from that, Malaysia hosted ACWC and ACW+ 3 (Japan, Korea and China) meetings as well as Global Summit of Women and Women Deliver in 2013. Both meeting and summits reflects the manifestations of the Government towards gender equality and the empowerment of women.

## **J. WOMEN AND THE MEDIA**

111. The Government of Malaysia stands by her commitments to the Beijing Declaration and Platform of to Action to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women through the media and new technologies of communication. Malaysia has translated the Beijing Declaration and Platform of to Action recommendations into her National Policy on Women and Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women (2009). The action plan underpinning the

National Policy of Women aims to increase public awareness and sensitivity towards issues relating to women.

112. While women are encountering profound changes in their lives, the role and responsibility of media is critical in facilitating women's voices, perspectives and issues. The Seventh Malaysia Plan (1996 – 2000) indicated that the media played a pivotal role in facilitating the dissemination of information pertaining to the rights of women in areas such as marriage, divorce, employment and property and in the promotion of a healthy lifestyle and nutrition.
113. The media play a critical role in framing women's issues and constructing a more positive representation of women as powerful actors and active citizens in fostering social change in society. In 2013, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development held a gender sensitization seminar for 200 media practitioners. The participants include reporters from the press and electronic media, representatives from media organisations, owners of media companies, film directors and producers and university lecturers and students in media and communications specialization.
114. Gender sensitization seminar was organized as a way to encourage the creation and use of non-stereotyped, balanced and diverse images of women in the media. Apart from that, the seminar emphasized the need of gender-sensitive training for media professionals, including media owners and managers.

## **K. WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

115. Women have a key role to play in preserving the environment and natural resources, and in promoting sustainable development. Malaysia's efforts at sustainable development, which include policies to build and maintain good environmental outcomes, impact all residents, including women.

116. **National Policy on the Environment** which integrates the three elements of sustainable development: economic, social and cultural development and environmental conservation was formulated and approved in 2002.

117. The National Policy on Environment states that the nation shall implement environmentally sound and sustainable development for the continuous economic, social and cultural progress and enhancement of the quality of life of Malaysians. The National Policy on the Environment has seven Green Strategies that are directed towards sustainable development. The key areas for the seven Green Strategies are:

- education and awareness;
- effective management of natural resources and the environment;
- integrated development planning and implementation;
- prevention and control of pollution and environmental degradation;
- strengthening administrative and institutional mechanisms;

- proactive approach to regional and global environment issues; and
- formulation and implementation of action plans.

118. Therefore, the ultimate objective of Malaysia's environmental management is improvement of living standards and the sustainability of its citizens' quality of life. Programmes implemented by the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment in ensuring environmental awareness and to also mobilise community members in a *hands-on* environment are as follows:

**a. *Rakan Alam Sekitar (RAS) Programme***

The *Rakan Alam Sekitar (RAS)* programme was launched on the 4th of June 2009, and currently, a total of 100,420 members had been registered. This programme intends to increase environmental awareness and to also mobilise community members in a *hands-on* environment, as well as to act as the eyes and ears of government agencies that are responsible for combating environmental pollution.

**b. *Jelajah Jejak Mesra Rakan Alam Sekitar (JJMRAS) Programme***

The *Jelajah Jejak Mesra Rakan Alam Sekitar (JJMRAS)* programme being one of RAS initiatives, is based on the concept of expedition. The JJMRAS programme also provides an opportunity for participants including women to

be directly involved in activities related to environmental preservation and conservation.

Besides that, one of the strategic efforts is the smart partnership programme with NGO. Malaysian Environmental NGO (MENGO) participated in programmes consist of talk on the roles of women in environmental protection and simple steps women can start at home to help reduce the impact of daily activities on the environment.

## **L. THE GIRL CHILD**

### **The Policy of Protection**

119. Besides legislative provisions such as the Child Act 2001, the Government of Malaysia routinely provides for better child protection through comprehensive national policies. The National Child Policy and the National Child Protection Policy are two key instruments promulgated by the Government in 2009. Both these policies uphold the belief that children are important national assets.

120. The policies translate the legal provisions of the Child Act 2001 into proactive mechanisms that can be implemented in all levels of Malaysian society. The National Child Policy seeks to provide children regardless their gender access to the necessary care, education and opportunities to ensure that they grow up healthy and active; with enough knowledge, creativity and innovation to

thrive; and with the ability to compete well in our increasingly globalised environment.

121. The policy preserves each child's right to care, nurturing and love as well as healthcare, support and social assistance via access to the basic rights to identity, housing, nutrition, clothing security and safe environment in which they can grow and learn. It also provides special attention to disabled children and seeks to ensure that these receive all the necessary love and help from their own families as well as social support such as general insurance and legal protection from harm, violence and exploitation.
122. In view of these goals, the policy requires the active and constant engagement of all stakeholders – whether local authorities, non-governmental organisation (NGOs), individual parents and children themselves – and through it the stakeholders build partnerships with media in order to play more responsible roles both in child-rights advocacy as well as to ensure that child-related stories are reported responsibly.
123. The National Child Policy seeks ultimately to build social awareness of children's rights and, recognising that this process involves children as well as parents, caregivers and society at large, it provides for greater education in children's rights both as a principle as well as in practice through engagement, advocacy, and practical workshop for parents, media campaigns and the like.
124. The Child Protection Policy, meanwhile, provides specific attention to the issue of crimes against children, and focuses primarily on



strategies and action that deal with abuse, neglect, domestic violence and exploitation.

125. In seeking to strengthen social networks via education and development, the policy details methods to provide for safe environment for children (both urban and rural, rich and poor) and unites all stakeholders – including teachers, medical professionals, law enforcement officers, and even public transport providers – in a single effort to ensure that no child is endangered by the action of adults.
126. Recognising also that violence against children requires holistic approaches to solution, the policy provides for greater outreach, counselling and support services not only to any child who is a victim, but also to families, offenders (including juvenile offenders), and society generally.
127. These two policies are critically important to the welfare of children in Malaysia, and with the staunch support of many non-governmental organisations, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, as the primary administrator of the policies, remains firmly committed to the belief that all Malaysians must play a greater role in the care and welfare of the nation's children.

### **SECTION THREE: DATA AND STATISTICS**

128. The Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOS) is a premier government agency under the Prime Minister's Office entrusted with the responsibility to collect, interpret and disseminate latest and real time statistics in the monitoring of national economic performance and social development.
129. Periodic DOS publications, such as the Malaysia Statistics Yearbook provides comprehensive and up-to-date information on social and economic characteristics of Malaysia. The publication presents statistics on a wide array of topics which include among others population, employment, education, health, prices, external trade, national accounts, environment as well as data for various sectors of the economy.
130. Apart from DOS, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development publishes statistics on Malaysian women which includes the profiling of female population by age group, labour force participation rate, reproductive, women and education, women and economy, women and health, women in decision making etc. Gender statistics are not just relevant for monitoring the status of women, but also make important decisions in the formulation of policy and programmes for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

131. The Government of Malaysia has always stressed the importance of incorporating gender perspectives into its development planning and allocation of resources. The National Policy on Women, 1989 notes the need for information on target clientele to be gender categorized to enable appropriate assessment. Consequently, the Government shall ensure that all data collection by various sectors and agencies are disaggregated according to gender so that women's needs can be identified for a more accurate policies, programmes and project formulation.

#### **SECTION FOUR: EMERGING PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS TO ADDRESS THEM**

132. Malaysia's immediate key priorities in further advancing its efforts in gender equality and the empowerment of women that will make further inroads towards increasing women labour force participation rate and the number of women in decision making levels (especially in private sector and political spheres) as well as achieving work life balance and mainstreaming gender equality.

133. Women's labour force participation rate has increased over the years, but is still significantly lower than that of men. As mentioned in section two, a large number of women leave the workforce to raise and care for their families. In addition, a 2013 study by PricewaterhouseCoopers Malaysia commissioned by TalentCorp Malaysia Berhad showed that majority of

corporations in Malaysia did not offer family-friendly facilities or flexible work arrangements.

134. The Government of Malaysia has initiated family-friendly policies and practices, including the provision of childcare facilities, tax deduction for employers who provide and maintain childcare centres at the workplace, allowing paternity and maternity leave and flexible work arrangements to help mothers face the dual demand of work and family life. To accelerate the adoption of flexible work arrangements, the Government of Malaysia announced that training expenses and consultancy fees incurred by employers in implementing flexible work arrangements be given further tax deduction. The Government of Malaysia will also continue to work to identify and rectify or eliminate the problems or obstacles, which hinder women's full participation in the work force.
135. In the political sphere, women continue to be under-represented. Out of 222 Parliament seats contested in the 13<sup>th</sup> General Election, women were elected only to 24 seats. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the strategies to provide women with greater access to the political system.
136. The most important criteria is political awareness. The Government of Malaysia has outlined strategies under the National Policy on Women and the Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women on women's participation in politics. An assessment has been made on the disabling conditions that result in women's disproportionate representation in political and

public life compared with men. In these regard, political parties have been urged to implement the strategies recommended in the Plan of Action as follows:

- a. providing training and capacity building to women in politics especially young women;
  - b. implementing gender-sensitising courses to politicians and individuals who are interested in politics;
  - c. studying the possibilities of having at least 30% women candidates in general elections for the Lower House and State Legislative Assemblies; and
  - d. increasing the role of media in gender-sensitisation campaign.
137. Apart from that, there is a need to create links between civil society and political institutions. In this context, it is therefore important that all parties committed to strengthening women's political participation make a concerted effort towards increasing women's representation in political institutions. Civil society organizations (CSOs) working on women's issues as well as women's studies centres in many public and private universities have undertaken an in-depth understanding of the issue and are therefore better positioned to take the lead. On the other hand, CSOs focusing on women's issues have made significant achievements in advocating their respective causes such as

eliminating domestic violence, improving the status of women, women in education, etc.

138. Strategies are being developed to provide women with access to the power structure. Training in specific traits such as independence, control, responsibility, self-esteem, self-confidence and self-awareness that suit managerial careers and may increase women's sense of empowerment offered to counteract the effects of the stereotyping of female as passive and dependent.
139. Malaysia has long been an advocate of gender mainstreaming in terms of its implementation and practice. However, the progress achieved is limited as it involves the implementation across many agencies and ministries. Effective implementation requires cooperation from various concerned parties. The Government of Malaysia is giving serious attention and will focus more on the gender mainstreaming implementation in Malaysia.
140. Malaysian women have made significant progress in almost all areas since Malaysia's independence in 1957. Their achievements have no doubt been facilitated by inclusive policies and plan of action developed by the Government of Malaysia. The way forward is for the Government of Malaysia to continue to foster strategic collaboration with relevant partners to equip women with the necessary skills, knowledge and abilities to fulfil their aspirations and multiple roles in our society. More importantly, the Government wants to ensure that women are not left out of the process of national development.





*Ministry of Women, Family  
and Community Development, Malaysia*