



## **OPENING KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

by

**THE HON. DATO' SRI HAJAH NANCY SHUKRI**

Minister of Women, Family and Community Development,  
Malaysia

**2023 WORLD WOMEN ECONOMIC & BUSINESS SUMMIT (WWEBS)**

***“Empower A Woman, Change the World –  
Creating Hope and Opportunities”***

15<sup>th</sup> May 2023 / 9.00 am / InterContinental Kuala Lumpur

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Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh,

Salam Sejahtera, a very good morning and Salam Malaysia  
Madani.

**(SALUTATION)**

- **Dato' Jessie Tang**, Chairman, Organizing Committee & Director of KSI
- **Tan Sri Michael Yeoh**, President of KSI
- **Dato Halimah Said**, Co-Chairman, Organizing Committee
- Excellencies, distinguished speakers, ladies, and gentlemen.

1. Firstly, I would like to thank Tan Sri Michael Yeoh and his team at KSI, as well as partners of the 2023 World Women Economic and Business Summit for giving me this honour to

deliver the Summit's opening keynote address and to speak to everyone here today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

2. Fighting for gender parity is a consistent cause that requires timeless efforts from everyone. It is therefore platforms like this, where we assess how women have fared in Malaysia and the world, that never lose its importance. As Minister of

Women, Family and Community Development, it is my mission to ensure that more is done to elevate the status of Malaysian women all across the country.

3. Even before joining this Ministry, I have long been part of women empowerment, through my association with NGOs, and yes, we have come a long way, but we must do more to empower and enable more women to reach positions of

prominence and leadership in many aspects of society which are still dominated by men.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

### **Women Labour Force Participation Rate**

4. We are no stranger to the World Bank 2019 Malaysia Country Report: Breaking Barriers which states, “If all economic barriers are removed for women in Malaysia, the

country's income per capita could grow by 26.2 per cent – implying an average annual income gain of RM9,400". We also know that female students' enrollment rate is higher than male students at all levels of education with the highest difference being in tertiary level.

5. However, this is not reflected in our labour force participation. The Department of Statistics Malaysia reports

that **labour force participation rate for women is only 55.5%, compared to men at 80.9% in 2021.**

## **Government Intervention Policies**

6. Therefore, continuous efforts are being taken by the Government to close the gender gap, starting with **protection and benefits for women in the workforce.** For



example, the Employment Act (Amendment) 2022 introduced several significant changes to the previous act that aimed at benefiting both employees and employers in Malaysia that includes to increase women participation in the work force. The amended Act increased the length of paid maternity leave from 60 to 98 days. The Act also introduces a new section that prohibits an employer from terminating an employee who is pregnant or is suffering from an illness arising out of her pregnancy. The

amendments also require an employer to always exhibit visibly a notice to raise awareness on sexual harassment at the place of employment, because it is important to make women or men feel safe at work.

7. In addition to that, this year, Social Security Organization (SOCSO) will amend the Employment Insurance System Act 2017 to provide the allocation of Childcare Grants to women who are returning to work. This one-month grant

equal to 80 percent of the insured monthly salary will be provided to approximately 136,800 women who returned to work after their maternity period, amounting to RM290 million.

8. Another important benefit for women to join the workforce that must be upheld by the Government is the governance and quality of childcare centres. For this, a total of RM15 million is allocated as a soft loan for childcare operators in

recent Budget 2023 announcement. 80 new KEMAS nurseries will be built to support this initiative. Further, a monthly childcare fee subsidy of RM180 per child will be provided for civil servants while the monthly income limit of households eligible for nursery fee subsidy was raised from RM5,000 to RM7,000.

9. The on-going legislative reforms, policies and plans reflects the Government's commitment towards supporting women

(such as childcare or return to work policies) by building a society of equal opportunities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

10. The Malaysian government aspires to **increase female labour participation to 59% by 2025, and that is why the policy on 30% women in decision making positions is consistently incorporated in our Malaysia Plans. Why is this important? It sends a signal that women can make it to the**

**top, challenging 3 stereotypes: firstly, that only women need to balance career and family commitments, secondly, the deep-rooted bias that men should have more power and privilege than women, and thirdly the belief that women are more emotional and thus hindering the promotion of women.**

11. We are happy to report that in the public sector, we have reached 38.8% of Top Management Women

Representation, and for our national effort, we received international accolade for our best practice at the recent 2023 Global Summit of Women in Dubai. To get there, more needs to be done. While efforts are being undertaken by the government to protect women and ensure their fundamental rights, there are still systematic cultural barriers that need to be overcome.

12. To conclude my speech, I once again thank the organisers for inviting me to deliver the Summit's opening keynote address and wish success to the discussions that will take place throughout the day.

Thank you.

**Dato' Sri Hajah Nancy binti Shukri**  
**Minister of Women, Family and Community Development,**  
**Malaysia**



**15th May 2023**