



Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

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STATEMENT BY
THE HONOURABLE SENATOR SHAHRIZAT ABDUL JALIL
MINISTER OF WOMEN, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,
MALAYSIA

**ON AGENDA ITEM 3: FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOURTH WORLD
CONFERENCE ON WOMEN AND TO THE TWENTY-THIRD SPECIAL
SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, ENTITLED "WOMEN 2000:
GENDER EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE FOR THE
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY"**
**OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE
STATUS OF WOMEN**

24 FEBRUARY 2011, UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK.



Chairperson,

1. On behalf of the Government and people of Malaysia, allow me at the outset to extend my sincere congratulations to you on your appointment as the Chair of this session. I would also like to congratulate Ms. Michelle Bachelet on her appointment as the Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UN Women. We fully support the establishment of UN Women and are confident that it will strengthen the ability of the United Nations to carry out its mandate in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women worldwide. We are honoured to be a member of the Board, and we look forward to actively participate in the formulation of UN Women's Strategic Plan.

Chairperson,

2. Malaysia recognises that women's access to and participation in education and training, as well as science and technology, is essential to the development of a country. As indicated by the Secretary-General's report, E/CN.6/2011/3, education is a key driver of economic growth and social change, and women's access to scientific and technological knowledge and skills is a rights issue, in as much as education is a basic human right. As an essential part of education, science education contributes to human development by providing tools with which to make sense of the world and empowers individuals to make informed decisions related to critical aspects of their lives.

3. Acknowledging the economic imperative of education, human capital, science, technology and innovation, Malaysia, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Dato' Sri Mohd. Najib Tun Abdul Razak, has highlighted the importance of these issues in propelling Malaysia towards a developed, high-income nation status. Under the concept of "*1Malaysia, People First, Performance Now*", the Government has introduced the Transformation Plan, Economic Transformation Programme, New Economic Model and Tenth Malaysia Plan (2011-2015). Under the latter, the Government of Malaysia is committed to increase the number of women in the workforce. As such, our national target is to increase the female labour force participation rate from 47.3 per cent presently to 55 percent by 2015.

4. In this regard, I am proud to inform you that the women of Malaysia are not excluded from this important process. My Ministry, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development was chosen as one of the lead agencies in the implementation of the National Key Results Areas (NKRA) under the transformation programme, i.e. to increase the income of poor households. The decision of the government clearly indicates its recognition and confidence in the Ministry to champion the mandate for the elimination of the hardcore poverty and economically empower the low-income households. Likewise, the NKRA pertaining to education is spearheaded by the Ministry of Education with the objective of delivering a higher level of education and better student performance, including

improvements in students' intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical aspects.

5. In the area of science, technology and innovation, I am pleased to inform you that although science was once a very much male dominated area, it is now being much taken up by women, and they are showing great enthusiasm and achieving much success. The Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation is now a highly creative Ministry that has undergone a considerable systematic and fundamental changes in structure and function to enable it to be the engine which promotes science, technology and innovation and to support a transformation of the economy into an innovation-led high-income economy. I am proud to inform the Commission that the 3 top management positions of the Ministry are now being headed by women and more than 50% of the second tier management are made up of women.

6. Realizing the importance of science, technology and innovation as tools for development, the Ministry had declared the year 2010 as the Year of Innovation and Creativity and 2011-2012 as the Year of Science with the theme, "*Go Science, Love Maths*". The campaign is to instil the culture of innovation and creativity based on science and technology, eagerness and curiosity and eventually to create a "*1Malaysia Innovative Nation*". Taking off from here, I am pleased to share with that the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development will form a strategic and innovative

alliance with the Ministry of Education as well as the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation to implement programmes that allow women to unleash their potentials, thus empowering women in science, technology and innovation. This in turn will allow women to be more resilient in the ever competitive and challenging world.

Chairperson,

7. Notwithstanding the great inspirations and the immense effort that has been made in empowering women and girls to participate fully and meaningfully in education, training, science and technology, experience has shown that these have not sufficiently translated into decent employment opportunities for women. Gender stereotyping has been a powerful, albeit insidious, influence on career choices. Therefore, the preconceived ideas, bigotry and even conventional wisdom that “males tend to take charge while females tend to take care” should be re-examined and has to change.

8. In Malaysia, effective measures have been taken to address these unequal and unjustifiable scenarios. Embedded in our gender mainstreaming programmes are measures to sensitize the young, the school children, and students in institutions of higher learning on the need to acculturate gender equality mindedness.

Chairperson,

9. Malaysia recognizes that civil society, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), play an important role in complementing the efforts of the Government in the development process for the benefit of women. As a matter of fact, the NGO are our strategic partners in implementing programmes at the grass roots level. In this regard, funding for NGOs is provided within our national budget to enable them to implement activities and programmes for the advancement of women.

Chairperson,

10. The Government of Malaysia reaffirms its commitment to enhance efforts to further improve the status of women and girls to enable them to reach their full potential and contribute towards the social and economic development of the country.

Thank you.