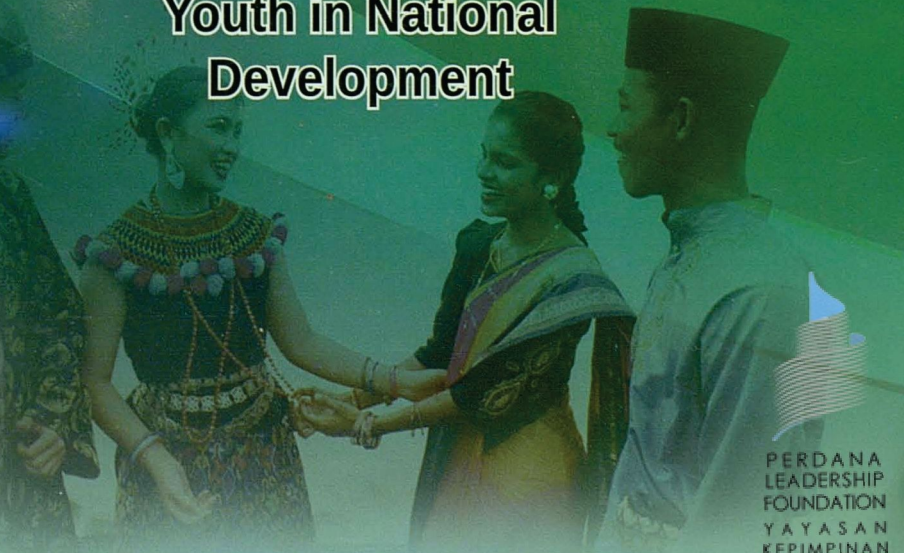


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THE ROLE OF WOMEN AND YOUTH IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



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**THE ROLE OF WOMEN
AND YOUTH IN NATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**



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TUN DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD

THE ROLE OF WOMEN AND YOUTH IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Perdana Leadership Foundation (PLF)
Putrajaya, 2010

University Publication Centre (UPENA)
Universiti Teknologi MARA • SHAH ALAM • 2010

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Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia

Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

The role of women and youth in national development

(Perdana Discourse Series 2009)

ISBN 978-967-363-091-2

1. Women in development-Malaysia. 2. Women-Malaysia—Social conditions. 3. Youth in development—Malaysia.
4. Youth—Malaysia—Social conditions. L Series 305.409595

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Cover design : Visual Print Sdn. Bhd.
Typesetting : Visual Print Sdn. Bhd.
Typeface : Helvetica / Times
Typesize : 10/13

Printed in Malaysia by: Visual Print Sdn. Bhd.
A-1-7A, No. 2, Jalan 12/144A
Taman Bukit Cheras
56000 Kuala Lumpur

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Perdana Discourse Series No. 10/2010

Organized by:



UNIVERSITI
TEKNOLOGI
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University Publication Centre (UPENA)

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Institute of Quality and Knowledge Advancement (InQKA)
Universiti Teknologi MARA
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CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	<i>lx</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>Prologue</i>	<i>xiii</i>
<i>Summary</i>	<i>xv</i>
<i>Keynote Address</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad</i>	
<i>Question & Answer Session</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Panelist Session</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Ms Zuraidah Haji Musib - Moderator</i>	
<i>Associate Professor Saliha Hassan</i>	
<i>YM Tengku Zafrul Aziz</i>	
<i>Ms Dina Zaman</i>	
<i>Question & Answer Session</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>Appendix i : Profile of Keynote Speaker</i>	<i>53</i>
<i>Appendix ii : Profile of Panel Discussants</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>Appendix iii : List of Group Participants</i>	<i>61</i>
<i>Appendix iv : Group Summary</i>	<i>67</i>
<i>Appendix v : Organizing Committee</i>	<i>71</i>



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PREFACE

Women and youth play a special role in the overall development of the country. Both the women and youth should come forward to take part in the process of nation building, because the future of Malaysia is in their hands. "I think that the educated women and youth have to play an important role in creating an atmosphere of equality and dispelling darkness of ignorance," they would have to work in the interests of the nation, giving up their narrow self-interests. They need skills training, jobs and a means of participating in shaping their country's future. Women on their part are demanding the promotion of "women's rights through gender awareness campaigns and training". Generally, women and youth have been treated "as passive objects rather than participants in shaping the society.

The term 'nation building' or 'national development' is usually used to refer to the constructive process of engaging all citizens in building social unity, economic prosperity and political stability in an inclusive and democratic way. A nation is built out of the human intellect. This means that a nation cannot be built without the recognition and the collective efforts of all citizens, skilled and unskilled, young and old. We have often heard of countries with limited mineral resources developing at a speedy rate. This is usually attributed to the fact that such countries have developed a mechanism for making maximum use of its people and labor force, thus making its human resource its most precious and priceless resource. Nation building is a process. Its benefits are

never rewarded to the present generation of builders, but to its future inhabitants.

There is no other resource that matches the human being because mankind is the foundation or the corner stone of every civilization. Women and Young people are a crucial segment of a nation's development. Their contribution, therefore, is highly needed. Young people are social actors of change; and as the saying goes, "The youth are not only the leaders of tomorrow, but also the partners of today." The government and society at large have equal responsibility to provide the women and youth with an environment that is conducive to bringing about a mature and responsible population for the coming generation to lead a better life. This means a brighter tomorrow depends on how well today's generation is emotionally, culturally, academically, morally, spiritually, skillfully and vocationally prepared. In as much as the Government owes a platform to the women and youth, they also have a responsibility to this nation. It is well known that the most vibrant section of every society is the women and the youth. Therefore, they have the responsibility of being at the fore-front of any national exercise. They also have to realize the opportunities made available to them, making the best use of them will provide beneficial result that may lead to their own social and economic growth, hence, the growth of the nation.

Several interesting perspectives were highlighted during the tenth discourse series held on 4th November 2009, co-organized by the Perdana Leadership Foundation together with the Institute of Quality and Knowledge Advancement (InQKA) of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). The discourse was a vibrant discussive platform participated by academicians, students and members of various women and youth associations.

Editors

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the Board of Trustees of the Perdana Leadership Foundation (PLF), the Executive Director of PLF, Tan Sri Nik Mohamed Nik Yaacob, and the Former Vice Chancellor of University Technology MARA (UiTM) Tan Sri Dato' Seri Professor Dr Ibrahim Abu Shah for their continued support and confidence in PLF and Institute of Quality and Knowledge Advancement (InQKA), for yet another chapter of the series of joint publications. In this 10th discourse, we are very honoured to have Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who shared his ideas and opinions on the topic of 'The Role of Woman and Youth in National Development'. We are also grateful to have with us distinguished personalities of their respective fields: Ms. Zuraidah Hj Musib, Ms. Dina Zaman, Tengku Zafrul Aziz, and Associate Professor Saliha Hassan, who further contributed to the development of knowledge on this topic. Our gratitude goes to Associate Professor Dr Shireen Haron, the UiTM Assistant Vice Chancellor for her support and direct involvement in this series. We express our appreciation to all the participants who have further enriched the knowledge gathered. We would also like to thank the staff of PLF, fellows and staff of InQKA and UiTM, for their tireless effort in making this discourse a success. Last but not least, we acknowledge the contributions made by the transcribers of PLF, and friends of InQKA and the University Publication Centre (UPENA) of UiTM, who have helped us with this 10th issue of the Perdana Discourse Series.



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PROLOGUE

Women and youth are keys to development and are crucial to the goal of sustainable development. There is a widely held adage that young men are the nation's hope and young women the nation's pillar. To this effect, the government has established various nation-building programs and policies so that women and youth can participate in the process. Today, women's roles are not limited to merely molding happy families but they also participate actively in the labor market. Statistics show that almost half of Malaysia's labour force consists of women, and there are growing trends seeing women and youth as agents and beneficiaries in all sectors and at all levels of development process. Women and youth are actively engaged in all facets of social, religious, cultural, political and economic life of the nation. They have become ubiquitous as entrepreneurs, lawyers, doctors, directors, ministers, and in other top positions. They have continued to advance in various fields of development, largely due to their access to education and training, healthcare as well as improved employment opportunities. In short, women and youth are considered agents of change through which they are empowered and transformed in terms of socio-economics status and position.

Despite the progress that has been made, debates about gender differences still persist particularly in the context of feminization of labor, gender inequality and discrimination. There is also the notion of gender as a manifestation of patriarchy or male

dominance over women. In many situations, women are poorly represented in the structure of decision-making and planning which contribute to the lack of information regarding issues and problems confronting women. Related issues such as gap in wages, insecurity in employment, work-family conflict, sexual discrimination practices, and domestic violence further heighten this debate.

Youth studies, on the other hand, drawn from around the world, demonstrate how youth marginalization links with demographic stressors (such as illegal demonstration, gangsterism, bullying, etc) to serve as catalyst and exacerbating factor in conflicts usually embedded in terms of class, religion and ethnicity.

To that extent, a few questions need to be answered to address the issues, challenges, and future direction of women and youth in national development, namely:

1. What are the factors that influence women and youth to participate in national development?
2. What are the significant events that have made great impact on the role of women and youth in national development?
3. What are the strategies that government should adopt for closing the gap between policies and practices on issues pertaining to women and youth?
4. How can government and NGOs encourage greater levels of involvement of women in the implementation of gender-sensitive operations or activities?
5. What are the recommendations that can be forwarded to address issues and challenges faced by women and youth in sustaining national development?

SUMMARY

The topic of the Tenth Perdana Discourse Series' keynote address by Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad is, *The Role of Women and Youth In National Development*. He divided his speech into two parts: women and youth. He began by talking about the population of women and men in Malaysia. He touched briefly on the topic of polygamy and then elaborated on the subject of women who tend to work harder and become more independent than men. Women are better able to acquire knowledge and skills compared to men; as a result, there are now more women than men studying in universities and colleges. Next, he talked about the role of youth in national development, and admitted that youth nowadays are more intelligent and can contribute many ideas for the development of this country. Dr. Mahathir said that youths must acquire knowledge and skills and must have the necessary qualifications to prepare them to lead other youths and the nation.



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Keynote Address by Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad
Perdana Leadership Foundation
Putrajaya · November 4th, 2009

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim. Yang Berbahagia, Tan Sri Datuk Azman Hashim; Yang Berbahagia, Tan Sri Datuk Sri Professor Ibrahim Abu Shah; Dif-dif kehormat, Puan-puan dan Tuan-tuan sekalian. I am very conscious that I am in the minority as there are more women than men in this hall today; so, I will address the women first.

Puan-puan and Tuan-tuan; I would like to thank Tan Sri Ibrahim Abu Shah for his remarks on the beginnings of UiTM; my relationship with the institute was what we may call a "love-hate" relationship. One of the experiences that I went through before I became a minister was when I was still Chairman of the Higher Education Council. There was a meeting one day, and I was warned that there would be a demonstration, and they wanted to shift the meeting to some other place. I disagreed and continued with the meeting, and when it ended, I was "arrested" by students and subjected to a "kangaroo court" trial where they asked many questions, which I answered; until they didn't know what else to ask and instead complained about the bad condition of the canteen furniture in ITM (now UiTM). So, I agreed to go and see, and agreed with them that the furniture was indeed old and needed to be replaced. The demonstration took place in Universiti Kebangsaan's (UKM) campus; but, the student leader was from ITM. He was unhappy because he felt that he could not pass his English exam, and what he actually wanted, was for ITM to exempt him from this exam as he had been busy being a

student leader. That was a good excuse; but, I was happy that ITM did not exempt him. Subsequently, he stood against me in the election in my constituency of Kubang Pasu. He lost and I won. That was my first involvement with ITM.

Of course, when I was Minister of Education, I had more problems with ITM. I had to close the Institute for a short while; I couldn't really go there when it was closed. When it reopened, the students held a demonstration; they performed well, but unfortunately not in their academic activities. I must say that I had been very harsh, perhaps; some of the students, including the son of a friend in my own constituency, were not allowed to come back. His father appealed to me; I apologized to him and told him that I would stick to the decision I had made. You can see how strict and unrelenting I was, and now I am asked to talk about women *and* youth.

The two are always mentioned together. However, each has different attributes; so, it is quite difficult to discuss these two groups, as if they are one. Women have certain attributes and youth, which also includes girls, have got different attributes. So, throughout my discussions, there would be times when I would talk only about women; at other times, I would talk only about youth, and where they have things in common I will talk about both together. I will begin by discussing about the two groups together. As far as I am concerned, they make up the numbers in a country like Malaysia, which is relatively a small country. In fact, when I became the Prime Minister, the population of Malaysia was only 13 million. Today, with 27 million in the country, the number is more than twice that in 1991. In a country where the population is small, we need to make use of everyone. If you exclude women, then the figure becomes 6.5 million men including the youth of course.

I have less faith in men than in women. I have found that men are invariably lazy while women work hard. So, their contribution, in terms of numbers, is about the same as the men, because

in any human society, you may have noticed that the numbers of men and women are about 50-50. You may not have noticed then, but I have studied figures of population, and I found that there are invariably fewer men than women, but there is never a situation where you have 20 percent men and 80 percent women. It will never happen anywhere, even after a war. Perhaps in those days during the wars, they killed the men so the women were left without prospective husbands; the numbers of women were increased [relatively], which is the reason why we [Muslim men] are allowed to many more than one.

When the numbers of men and women are unequal, if there are fewer men and more women, you can marry more than one; but if you can not be fair to them, please marry only one, that's what the Quran says. I want to point out to you that if the numbers of men and women are about the same, and if one man takes more than one wife, there would be another who would not have a wife. It is a mathematical calculation. Now, if a man takes four wives; for every man who does that, there will be three without a wife. That will create social problems. See, the Quran does not ask us to take four wives; it is only under certain and very specific circumstances that you may marry two, three or four. But if we cannot be fair to them, marry only one, and it goes on to say that men cannot be fair to women; therefore, it is quite obvious that the Quran is telling us to marry only one. I'm saying this because I have one wife. But the people who teach religion, they are keen on having more than one wife, and they will tell you that it is alright to do so. It is self interest, really.

I have diverged from the subject, and I would like to go back to the question of numbers. We cannot do without women simply because it will reduce our numbers. When we had 13 million people, if you exclude the women, then the total workforce of men will be 6.5 million and of course not all are able-bodied; therefore, only about 40 to 50 percent would be able to work. So, only 40 percent of 6.5 million would contribute to the work force of the country. We cannot afford that. Thus, we must bring the women

into the work force; we cannot bring the youth in because we have passed laws that say children cannot work, that we cannot employ children. So, the women are very important because of their capacity to contribute. Even in male dominant societies, the women's contribution cannot be discounted. If we look anywhere in this world, you'll find that the women work more than the men. If you go to Kelantan, only the women are working. If you go to *pasar malam* (night market) or to the day market you will see only women there. Do you see any men there? Of course; they are busy in coffee shops discussing politics. So, without the women, the men would not have any income at all. Men think that if they marry four wives, then they can have the income of four people to support them; but eventually they will find life very difficult. So, women contribute a lot to society and keeping them out means that we are halving our strength, our capacity to do work.

Before this, the women's contributions were only in the kitchen and other places in the house; but, nowadays, we find that when given chances, they have the capacity to acquire skills, perhaps much faster than men. This is the impression that I get, but I didn't do any studies, just my observations. In the universities now, the women outnumber the men. During my time, there was only one girl to choose from; but nowadays, men have a field day with so many women to choose from. We see that women are really making efforts to be useful, not just in the house but also elsewhere. The men, however, are not making much effort. For example, in Malaysia, who are *Mat Rempits*? Why the term used is *Mat* and not *Rohana* or *Fatimah*? We should have *Mat* and *Mah Rempit*; but this is not so. A few misguided women may be part of this group; but the majorities, who do not take life seriously and are not being responsible, are the men. In the case of drug users, for example, 80 percent is made up of men but only 20 percent are women.

I can cite other cases where women contribute much more than men, to the extent that men think that they are better off now because they have women to do their jobs. Others say that since

women are now better educated than men, outnumber men, this can cause marital problems. Men used to complain that their wives were uneducated; today, the wives complain that their husbands are uneducated. The men generally, are quite happy as there are fewer of them at the same level of education. But there will be a shift in the balance of authority or power wielded by both sexes; when we allow other people to do our work, they do it so well that you become dependent upon them, and that is happening to the men who are no longer independent. The people who are independent are the women because they earn the money, they have the skills, and they support the family, including the men. If we allow this trend to go on, eventually, women will dominate society ~ if they haven't already ~ and men will lose their position of authority. When this happens, the women will tell the men to get out of the house; and this is going to happen, believe me.

I am very concerned because, people who can but is not bothered to work, let other people to do his work, will become dependent on others and lose their independence. In this country, if we do not work and allow foreigners to work, they will eventually take over the country. As an example, the Turks, the Uthmaniah people, built up their great country through their fighting prowess and bravery, as well as their education and intelligence. This Turkish Empire included most of the Eastern European countries including Albania, Yugoslavia and others. They became very rich and lived in luxury, but they became reluctant to sacrifice their lives to safeguard what they had. They thought why should they fight and die when they have the resources to employ people to do their fighting for them. At the time. Christian children, separated from their parents were brought up as Muslims. They learned to speak Turkish and were brought up as Turks, given education and training, and became known as *Janissaries* or *Yeniceries*. Together with people of other races, they made up the bulk of the armed forces and became very powerful. They of course eventually seized power. In Egypt, the *Fathibeas*, largely of Albanians descents and other Eastern European Muslims seized the country from the Uthmanian Caliph.

So, when you become reliant and dependent on other people, eventually they would seize the power from you. This phenomenon happened not only in Turkey, but also in many places in the Arab world today. They don't want to work and have become dependent upon others; they are going to face difficulties when those who provide the services would demand more authority for themselves and would eventually seize power. So, when men think that it is a good thing that they don't have to work and leave everything to women; it is actually not. They are gradually losing their independence and becoming dependent on women. It will not take place during my time, thank God, but it will take place.

It has been proven that women are as good as men; certainly, in the universities, but also in the business sectors. We see many companies now headed by women because they have the capacity to do so. We have never given much thought to this before, but the women who are placed in the government services have become the heads in ministries. For example, there are a number of women who were appointed as the Secretaries to Ministries, and I suspect that if their performance evaluations are done fairly, all the ministries would be headed by women. This idea is not farfetched, as men do not want to exert themselves anymore; they are more relaxed and are no longer keen in applying as much energy toward their work as they should. So, this is what we are seeing; that women besides their numbers, are becoming better educated, and they possess more skills than men. This trend is expected to continue and there's no stopping them.

It is so nice to have other people to do our work for us. In the good old days, the women were just cooks in the kitchen and that's what they specialized in. But if you go to the hotel, the chefs are all men; somehow or rather the thinking is that the women could not cook as well as men; but this of course, is not true. Women cook better than men and this is from my own experience. Today, women are not only confined to the kitchen. they have done extremely well for themselves; they have provided intellectual input into the development of this country, much more

than the numbers indicate. Women are everywhere and in every activity; even in the armed forces. I was very proud to tell Arab women ~ when they asked me about the position of women in the Malaysia ~ that they can do anything that the men can; some have even become fighter pilots. I think that sort of shocked the Arab women; that Malaysian women can become fighter pilots and fight in other countries. You see, this is not something that I cannot prove, that in our armed forces, women reached the level of a major general.

So, you can see up to this point, that the contribution of the women toward the development and management of this country is indeed great. Management and administration play big roles in development, and more and more women are involved in administration at high levels. They have proven that they can deliver and their roles have increased over time. It is not something that I really like, because I think that men are just as capable as women; they have shown that they can cook as well as women (in the hotels, most cooks are men). However, we need their contribution as well, because we are really short of people.

We are only 27 million. When I first became prime minister, I said that this country should have a population of 70 million, and people were shocked. People were complaining that while they were being told to keep down the numbers of children, to go for family planning, etc., the new Prime Minister was advocating a population of 70 million! What they failed to hear was that I had said 70 million by the year of 2100. At the rate that we were growing then, we would have achieved 70 million by the year 2050; we were growing at 2.3 percent or 23 children per thousand. I do not know why they [the planners] had projected the figure, but we would be growing at the very fast rate and would have achieved 70 million very quickly. The idea slowed down a bit so we can steadily reach 70 million by the year 2100. We want to slow down a bit so that the country's wealth can grow with the population. Obviously, if the population grows too fast without the corresponding growth in wealth, people will become

poorer. So, we need to work out the appropriate rate of growth as we also need to be able to feed them, get jobs for them.

When we advocated a population of 70 million, some people said that Dr. Mahathir is asking them to marry four, which is stupid and untrue. You see, if one man marries four women, the rate of production is not going to be the same as a woman marrying four men; one cannot be sure that the production rate would be just as good. However, any excuse works for some people. I get blamed for everything of course. If we achieved 70 million, but they are incapable or do not want to work, it is not good for us. We want the 70 million women and men to contribute toward the development of this country, which would be much faster. We also need a big population to create a big domestic market, so that when we sell our produce domestically and export the surplus to the rest of the world.

If the men work as hard as the women, the growth of this country would be much faster. If not, then it is because the contribution of men has become less. What is the contribution of drug addicts who subsequently contract HIV and Aids? Nothing, in fact, they pose a burden to society. *Mat Rempit* is not contributing anything to the country. Yet, the women are working hard, and we should not discourage women from working. They should work and acquire even more skills. Although physical work may not be suitable for women, they are well suited for intellectual work and that requiring skills. For example, I was operated on by a male surgeon, but there were female doctors who were responsible for anesthetics, and they performed very well.

Eventually, if the men refuse to study, work or learn; most of the specialists in hospitals would be made up of women. If you go to this eye specialist hospital, almost all the doctors were women. I went to a specialist hospital with my wife one day, and it was most uncomfortable because there were so many women around me. When I was younger I would appreciate it more, but now that I'm old, I don't appreciate it as much. I still enjoy their company

because you can engage in intellectual discourse with them, but with men, they talk about things that are at times quite irrelevant. Anyway, what I'm trying to say is that women are as capable as men.

What about the Youth? Yes, when we talk about them, we include the girls as well, not just the boys. Youth demands that they be heard and be given authority. However, some of the youth (this does not include the girls) are good in demanding but not so good in implementing. I have every respect for the modern youth because they are very intelligent, they are certainly far better educated than the youth during my time, but still they need to have a little patience, because making demands is one thing, doing is another matter altogether. Although they insist that the voting age should be lower and lower, we have to admit that in life, experience counts. An experienced person will be much more capable compared to a young person of inadequate experience. Such a person should confine himself to get the necessary qualifications.

Youth should try to acquire as much knowledge and skills as possible. Even if they do that, they will still not be able to wield power, although they can contribute ideas. Without doubt there are many youths who are very intelligent, but to say that they are better than older people, I find that difficult to agree with; to presume that youth know better than older people, I do not think there is a basis for it. I was a youth at one time; difficult to remember now because it has been such a long time ago.

While I had the ideas that older people did not have, I realized that I did not have sufficient skills to accomplish things, or the acceptability of a credible leader. In order to have people listen to me, I first had to acquire an education at the university level. I wanted to be a lawyer because I like to argue with people; unfortunately, in those days whatever scholarships you were given you took, and I was given a scholarship to study medicine. It was not what I wanted, but it serves the purpose of making

me a much more credible person in the eyes of the community. So, the youth must spend their time developing credentials. They must acquire more knowledge and skills, and on the side they can give opinions and views.

So, the role of youth, whether boys or girls, is to acquire as much knowledge and skills as possible. The girls are doing that but the boys are not. The male youth in this country dominates the leadership, but their ability is not comparable with that of the girls, because they make no effort to acquire knowledge or skills. It is obvious; if we go to any universities in Malaysia, you will see the number of boys is less than the girls. In other words, the boys are not preparing themselves for their roles when they become older. They are very impatient because they want to do everything immediately, but they have neither the experience nor the knowledge, and they make no effort to acquire knowledge. I am not saying all of them are like that, but by far, the majority of them are not really intellectuals who are capable of leading.

They can lead the youth but not society. Leading the youth would be a kind of a training period for you for when you get older. But you have to spend more time on acquiring knowledge and skills. When I was the Minister of Education, some people, led by one person whom I shall not name, got the university students to demonstrate. He assumed that somebody in Baling died of starvation; so, they demonstrated against the government. That was kind of immature, because even though they demonstrated, they did not achieve very much. On the other hand, they wasted their time not studying. This is especially bad when you consider that these students had been given an opportunity to acquire university education through other people's money, even if this had come from the Government.

One must remember that the Government handles the people money, although sometimes it does print money. It collects money through taxes and must spend the money wisely. Realizing that we need skilled manpower, we improve the education facilities in

this country. In my time, there was no university in the whole of Malaysia and Singapore. When I studied medicine in Singapore, the number of students was small, just 77. Out of that, 7 were Malays, 1 girl and 6 boys; one tenth of the students' population. Obviously, we need to create more opportunities for youths to get their education. Malaysia is one of the countries that spend almost a quarter of its allocation of funds for development on education.

We wanted our youth to be trained, to have the skills and knowledge that would allow them to contribute toward the development of the country, so we were willing to spend money on them. But think of the waste when instead of studying and equipping themselves with knowledge, they spend their time demonstrating. Of course they did not do well, like Arshad, the ITM student leader; his excuse for not being able to pass his English test was because he was busy with the student union. We don't send students to the university to do union work. So that was a waste of public money which we could not afford, because we could have used the money for something else, like building a road in the kampung.

They had wasted money by demonstrating against the government over fictitious issues. Nobody died in Baling of starvation. Our society in the village, would not allow anyone to starve; whatever little food they have, they would share with people who have none; people will not die from starvation. To say that a young boy had died of starvation in the *kampung* (village) is an obscenity. When we investigated, we found the boy living at home, which was stocked with food. He was not dying of starvation. It was an issue brought up by our good friend who is now trying to become the Prime Minister of Malaysia. He said that the Government had allowed people to starve to death. He has a way of convincing his fellow students. By spending their time demonstrating, they showed a lack of responsibility. This is quite often found among youth. I can say this because I am no longer with the Government. The Government is careful not to say this because of the fear of

antagonizing the youth. They can make themselves a nuisance and campaign for the opposition, for example. But I would like to offer this advice to the youth: you must study very hard because I believe that you have the capacity to do so. Even though you have a brilliant mind, if it is not used, it doesn't benefit you. I believe most of the youth are quite brilliant. But I find that they do not like to study. Places in universities have been reserved for Malay youth, and they do not want anybody else to take these places. In a multiracial country like ours, it is not fair that we should reserve places for these young men who are busy playing politics. That is why we introduced requirements that they must qualify and have certain merits before they can be admitted into the university. I mean, I am a Malay nationalist to the core, but even I cannot keep defending reserving places for Malay students and denying the non-Malays, while Malay students are playing politics. That is wrong.

The sense of responsibility among the boys is less than among the girls, who are much more responsible than the boys. You cannot give the excuse that, sorry I am busy being *Mat Rempit*, but you cannot take my place away. If I have my way — I know there is a woman who has been bad and consumed alcohol, and had to be whipped 82 times ~ I would like to have these *Mat Rempit* whipped too, good and proper whipping. You have been given a job to develop the country, and what are you doing? You are riding motorcycles: Is this *your* contribution to society, to the development of the country? Have you forgotten that the opportunity to own that motorcycle is because other people developed this country so that your father can work and earn enough *income* to buy you a motorcycle? You owe it to the government and to society.

So, among the youth, I think the girls are quite capable contributing much more to development than the boys, because of this lack of sense of responsibility. Of course we should also blame the parents. I saw a show on FTTM called "*Kenali Anak Kita*," where the parents are blamed for not properly bringing up

their children. Today, most parents are working, and their children have to take care of themselves. So, they do not get to grow up with the right values in order to become responsible citizens who make sacrifices for the development of the country. You know, even in asking you to make sacrifices, the Government is giving you money to have an education to acquire skills, so that you can work and earn to support yourselves. In so doing you would be contributing toward the development of this country.

So, between the youth and the women, I would deal with the women separately because they are matured, and they contribute much more. The men, I think, are not contributing enough, and they should become more responsible. The youths are still not yet at the stage where they know how to be responsible. They are wasting public money by not making use of facilities provided by the people, to gain an education and skills to contribute toward the development of the nation. That, in brief, is my view of the roles played by women and youth.



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QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

VOVIANAZULKIFLI

Assalamualaikum Tun. My name is Voviana from UiTM. I have actually been saving this question, which I did not get to ask before. However, this question is relevant to the topic that we have today. Allow me to quote you from your book, *Malays Forget Easily*, where you asked, do Malays really emphasize the acquisition of knowledge, or are they lacking far behind in the acquisition of knowledge that is a catalyst in the industrialization process? In your opinion, to what extent have the two situations improved among our youth from the time you wrote this? Thank you.

TUN DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD

I suspected that among the youth, the acquisition of knowledge is really deteriorating. I still remember the youth during the time when I was a student leader in my school; we were the ones who agitated against the Malayan Union, but today, youths agitated against the government, not because the government is not doing the right thing in developing the country, but because they feel that they should be given more say in matters, tolerated more, and be allowed to do what they like. I think we have not really tried to change. We need to change our value system if we want to succeed. We have to learn to work harder. You know, people who work hard will rule the country; people who are resting and does nothing, they will have no knowledge, no skills and no ability to rule the country. Once you keep on letting other people do the job that you should be doing, that person will take over from you eventually. So, it is important that we take our work seriously, and youth must be trained to be serious about acquiring knowledge. To be responsible; that quality, it seems, is not there.

In my time, there was no *Mat Rempit*, maybe because in those days they could not afford motorcycles; they were poor. But now, I have been told that some people give their children a hundred dollars a day. I worked as a clerk for sixty dollars a month, and when I

hear people giving their children so much money, I was shocked. Parents too must not spoil their children; parents must teach children the right values so that they feel that they owe to society and must give something back. Today, we talk about corporate citizenship; companies that make money must give some of that money back to society. By the same token, when you received support from society to get an education, you should give back by working very hard. When you are given money to study, you must spend your time learning, but I'm afraid scholarships and other things come too easily now. I remember a friend of mine, Eric Chia, who was charged with embezzling money but was acquitted; he used to tell me, "*Anak saya tak minum air longkang; saya minum air longkang.*" What he meant was that he was born poor, but he worked very hard. He realized that his son was not working as hard as him. And yet, his son actually worked harder than most people, but in the estimation of the father, his son was not as responsible as he was, because his son never knew the difficulties and challenges of life that he knew.

In the context of Malaysian society, we are richer now than we were during my time. I used to get two cents pocket money from my parents, it was four cents at first; but my father was a pensioner, his pension was ninety dollars per month until he died. He reduced my pocket money from four cents to two cents, but I did not think of complaining. Today, the pocket money that children get is far too much and that does not create a sense of responsibility in them. I know it is a difficult situation because I also faced the same problem in my family.

IZZA IZELAN

Assalamualaikum and hello to everyone. I am Izza Izelan, a student from UiTM. I am both a woman and a youth; therefore, I represent both categories that are our focus today. More often than not, we have been pushed aside and not heard enough, especially the youth. We are often regarded as aggressive, rebellious, impulsive, lacking in knowledge, and to quote Tun, "good at demanding but not good at implementing." In my humble opinion, I do not

think that we are just good at "demanding," it is that we feel a need to speak up when decisions are made on our behalf, as we have rights as human beings. Therefore, looking on the brighter side, it is actually a positive thing that we have all these good traits: risk-taking, passionate, fearless, etc. My question is, with all this potential and drive, what is expected of us? We have the motivation and the drive, but we do not really know where to go. Nobody is telling us what they are expecting from us. Thank you.

TUN DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD

Well, you are at the stage when you are equipping yourself with knowledge and skills, so the drive must be applied to the acquisition of knowledge and skills, so that you will shine and become the pride of the nation because of your ability. When you are being tasked to acquire knowledge and skills, you should not be telling your elders that what they are doing is wrong, it is not very productive. One has to remember that one becomes old, and when the time comes, you would not like to be told that you do not know much and that your children know better than you. I think you will resent that. I know some do.

I am not saying that this applies to everyone, but in any community, we see bad acts being committed, and when these acts reached a certain level, it gives the impression that the whole community is bad. So while I understand that you feel rebellious that things are handled wrongly, you have time to make things right. When you grow up fully equipped, knowledgeable and qualified, then you can attend to the wrong things in society. Until such time, I think your job, really, is to acquire knowledge and skills; and when you are older you will be in a better position to take over from these "fuddy-duddy" and old people, who you claimed not to know anything. I believe many of our youths have the drive to focus on the knowledge and skills that they have to acquire, to the point that they would be able to perform brilliantly.

Of course we will have to see whether you will succeed or not. However, if you are fully equipped with knowledge and skills,

your ability to do the things that the older people have not done, would be much greater. So, we need to apportion our obligations according to our time: first, when we were young and later when we grow old. Before, when I was younger, I was like you, very unhappy when older people accepted the Malayan Union just like that. But I realized one thing, that if I were to be believed and if people were to accept me as somebody who was qualified to talk, then I must acquire a university education. So, for six years I had to stay away from politics, almost completely, to the MBBS. And when I came back and talked to people they were more respectful. That is my view. Thank you.

FERIZ OMAR

Assalamualaikum. My name is Feriz Omar; I am a permanent scholar of Yayasan Kepimpinan Perdana, a resident columnist for Utusan Malaysia, President of Pertubuhan Profesional Melayu and Bangsa (PROWARIS), and now a Government Officer. I am the Special Officer to the Deputy Prime Minister, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin. Sir, you have mentioned that brilliant minds must be fully utilized toward national development, but what is your view of the rejection of brilliant young minds by UMNO? If we focus on UMNO and its culture where the old guards are reluctant to let go of their positions, at the grass-root level, there is talk of experienced professionals with qualifications, who have been labelled as, "*Tak pandai mengembek masuk kandang kambing, tak pandai menguak masuk kandang lembu.*" Whether this is an actual allegation or not, I believe that both parties should stop wasting time and start working together toward the development of the nation. By the way, UMNO is not really *kandang kambing* or *kandang lembu*.

TUN DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD

If you come with qualifications (Ph.D., Masters, etc.) to join UMNO at the branch level, the incumbent leader fears for his position. So, it is in his interest to keep the new guy out and not let him in. That is the failure and abuse of the system. The system itself is not bad; people at the branch level actually understand that in

order to win, UMNO must have good and educated leaders and more members, but branch leaders are anxious to keep people with university qualifications out and limit the branch members to about 20 or so, which he will be able to dominate (more members mean more mouths to feed). He can pay *saguhati* to the few, to ensure continued support for him as a branch leader. For obvious reasons, he is more intelligent than his deputy or supporters, and when he dies, retires or can no longer become a branch chairman, the people who succeed him are typically not much more intelligent or capable than he. Eventually, you will have branches filled with incapable members, from which, you have to choose your leaders. It is not because the system is wrong, it is because the system is abused. UMNO should find a way to enable people who are qualified to join UMNO. I must tell you that even my son could not join UMNO in my constituency because he poses a threat to a lot of people. So UMNO will have less people and who would be less intelligent.

FUZIAH HASAN ABDULLAH

Assalamualaikum. I am Fuziah Hassan Abdullah, an Alumnus of UiTM. I am currently an M.Phil, student at UKM, working at UCSI University. My question is in 3 parts: One is about the workforce, the second is about skills, education and training for youth and women; and the third is about the upbringing of our future generation.

The first question is about the workforce. It seems that we have experienced the flooding of immigrant workers, legally or illegally, into our country because employers are looking at maximizing their profits. They take these workers in their employment and marginalized their own people. What is your view regarding this? Secondly, there has been a mismatch in the country's education planning that requires the retraining of workers (education and knowledge in the hands of people who does not know how to use them would not be useful). Not only are education and knowledge important, but creativity, critical thinking, innovation and pragmatism are also important. What are your views?

Thirdly, regarding the upbringing of our future generations, I find that most parents are too busy with their work to spend quality time with their children. The children are being left in the care of domestic workers or amahs, who are Indonesians and Filipinos. Are the activities of these workers and how they spend their time monitored?

Apart from *Mat Rempits*, etc., we also have other social problems such as congestions in urban areas such as in the towns. I think we should develop rural areas as well and not just concentrate development in towns. Of course, rural areas also have their share of social problems. So, national development, nation-building should be looked at as a whole and in an integrated manner. Thank you.

TUN DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD

Why are the foreign workers here? Employers want to employ foreign workers because they are cheaper, let's be frank about this. Is it always true that our workers do not want to work? How many Malays do you see working as construction workers? We taught them how to make bricks, fix plumbing, etc., but they do not want to work because it involves too much effort. Most of them do not even want to work as restaurant waiters. They are looking for something easy and convenient. I mean, if they are given an air-conditioned place to work, that is where they would want to work. Because of that we have no choice but to bring in foreign workers.

Malays never learn, or they easily forget the reason why our country is multiracial. I'm not rejecting other races, but look at our history. Look at the history of migration of foreigners into Malaysia. Why did they come? They came to work. The Europeans and the British developed rubber estates and tin mines, but we preferred not to work at those places. So, they brought in Indians and Chinese, and these people worked much harder than us; therefore, economically, they kept on expanding while we kept on losing ground. You may not know this, but there was a point in our history, when the population of the Malays

was actually less than that of the immigrants. If it were not for the great depression of 1930's when the Chinese and Indians returned to their country of origin, Malaysia today would be like Singapore, where the majority would be non-Malays. Who would rule this country then? Of course the non-Malays would have the right to rule. We, the Malays, are ruling this country because we are in the majority. But supposing we allow other people to come in and become citizens, then we are going to lose our position of being in the majority.

During my time, I have tried to make new towns like Puchong or Seri Kembangan less dominated by Chinese; not because I am anti Chinese, but because I feel that our towns should have a fair proportion of Malays, Chinese and Indians. How do we bring in Malays to the city? I thought that if we start some small businesses for them, they would work and own shop houses in the city. The best business for them would be the franchise where all the problems are already worked out and resolved, and they would only need to follow instructions, e.g., how to fry the chicken or cook the hamburger; you do not have to do anything else. You can be ignorant of the business, yet you can make money if you just follow the instructions given by the franchiser. 3,000 people responding to our invitation to take up franchise businesses in the city, 300 turned up for the interview, and after vetting the applicants, we had 3 people who showed real interests in going into this business. I am sorry to say that they did not do very well.

As a result, what do we have? If you go to Puchong, Seri Kembangan or any other new towns in Malaysia, you would not see any Malay businesses there. Is it because the Chinese is keeping them out and not allowing them in? The Malays choose not to take up retail businesses because it takes a long of time to become millionaires. If you get an AP [approval permit to import cars] for free and sell it for RM80, 000, you will become a millionaire much faster. So, the fault is with us, yet, we do not want to admit our fault, instead we point to other people. Other

people are not going to correct their ways in order to serve us; we have to know and correct our faults. Insyah Allah, we will overcome this problem.

If you ask in any mamak shop why they bring in Indians and not employ Malays, the response is Malays do not want to work, "*Adalah dua tiga orang,*" (only two or three are willing); you see, they might work in big hotels, but not in the small shops. So, the foreign workers come in because we do not want to work. Of course there are other factors like our emphasis on labor-intensive industries. We have run short of labor, so they have to come in. So, to say that the reason for the influx of migrant workers is because the *majikan* (employer) wants to make more money is only partly true; the most important reason is you cannot get local workers. You also cannot get Chinese workers (they have fewer problems), but it is the Malay workers who do not want to work.

About the mismatch, yes it is true. It occurs because we choose not to study subjects that are useful to us. In particular, we refuse to learn English, and when we are interviewed in English, we ask the interviewer, "Can you ask in Malay?" of course we do not get employed. So, the mismatch is there, and you can correct it if you like, but our people must be willing to move from something that they consider to be "nice and cushy," to something that will require a little more effort on their part, to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills.

With regard to upbringing, yes, I admit that more middle-class Malays, both fathers and mothers, have little time for their children, and they must learn to find time. Otherwise, we are going to find all our children speaking Filipino and Indonesian. Of course, this is not good at all but how we are going to manage this, I really do not know. Parents must find the time to be with their children, sometime during the day must be set aside for quality time with the children. If you do not, you cannot influence their values, or they will acquire the wrong values from their peers or their friends, and they will get involved in unproductive activities. Thank you.

NASREEN NIZAM

Assalamualaikum, I am Nasreen from *Sisters in Islam*. As we all are aware, the role of women has changed not only in public space but also in private life. However, we still have laws that discriminate against women, that don't show relationships of partnership, instead relationships of dominance, in marriages. These laws should be changed, should be amended to reflect reality. What is your opinion?

TUN DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD

I agree with you, but first you have to study the law. For the Malaysian community, you know there are Islamic injunctions that we have to know, to determine whether they are truly Islamic or not, these laws which discriminate against women. Fortunately, in this country, this is not too bad; in Afghanistan, you do not get to go to school at all, you do not wear fashionable things, because everything is black from top to bottom. Here, we are free; if you like to you can wear the *tudung*, if you do not, we do not accuse people of not being good Muslims. The degree of freedom of women in this country is far greater than in many Islamic countries, and in some instances even in non-Islamic countries. But I agree with you that we should study the laws and make sure that women are not in any way discriminated against.

FRANCISKA

Good morning, Tun. I am very impressed by what you have said about the youth, especially where you have stressed on the skills, training and education. In your wisdom, do you think that formation of good conscience, to know right from wrong, would also help young people to develop a holistic foundation in the "University of Life"? Thank you.

TUN DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD

As I have said just now, if you want the youth to develop a conscience, you must have certain values that they can respect and adhere to. However, at the moment we are having problems because parents cannot find quality time to spend with the

children, to inculcate in them good values. This is a problem that we have not really found the answer to. We have a lot of educated women, and even when they are married and have children, they still continue to work. It will be a waste if they become a trained specialist doctor, for example, and not work (as they are married). They must continue to work; as must their husband, for their self-respect. So time for the children is not there. Of course, we do not have too many urban children. I have 7 children, but that's different as I am not very urban; I am rural. But if you only have 2 children per family, there is no excuse for not spending time and looking after your children. You have to bring them up with the right set of values. I believe that anybody can succeed or fail depending on the value systems that they believe in and practice. Thank you.

PANELIST SESSION

Ms Zuraidah Haji Musib
Associate Professor Saliha Hassan
YM Tengku Zafrul Aziz
Ms Dina Zaman

MS ZURAIDAH HAJI MUSIB

Assalamualaikum and welcome ladies and gentlemen, to the last Perdana discourse for the year, entitled *The Role of Women and Youth in National Development*. Before I begin, let me just invite to the stage our three panelists for this morning's discussion. I call upon Associate Professor Saliha Hassan. She is from the *Sains Politik* Program; *Pusat Pengajian Sejarah, Politik dan Strategi*; Social Science and Humanities Faculty, UKM. You will find her Biodata in the discussion pamphlet with you. Next is *Yang Mulia* Tengku Zafrul Aziz, the Group Director of KNM Kenanga Holdings Berhad. Although the issue is on women, I think a man's perspective is just as important, and last but not least, the columnist Ms. Dina Zaman.

Yang Amat Berbahagia Tun Dr. Siti Hasmah, ladies and gentlemen. We had quite an interesting talk, a keynote address given by *Yang Amat Berbahagia* Tun, on the role of women and youth in national development, and I believe that what is actually required of us is an honest introspection of the situation that we have right now, with the women and youth in this country. This can later be translated into workable policies, programs and regulations, etc. that can be instituted for the good of all.

First of all, I would like to invite Associate Professor Saliha Hassan. We're known each other for quite a while; we worked together in

a committee in UMNO, a little bureau chaired by one of the EXCO ladies. I know her to be a very accomplished academician, and I believe she will have a lot of good things for us this morning. I will allow 15 minutes to each speaker, after which I will invite questions from the floor. Will that be all right?

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR SALIHA HASSAN

Thank you very much Zuraidah, for such a kind and warm introduction. I am very privileged that she still remembers me, because I am sure that, always the busy activist, she actually meets thousands of people over the week's event. So I am very flattered that she recognizes me when we met. Thank you to the distinguished panelist, and with very great respect, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah; ladies and gentlemen, and *saudara-saudari*, who have managed to secure a seat in this august hall, to hear us discuss on *The Role of Women and Youth in National Development*.

My task is to talk about women's role in national development, so I will do my best. I have a power point presentation ready. I was not sure whether all of us will be given the presentation handout, but I have asked copies to be made for anyone who wants to use it in the *bengkel* later. If no one wants it, it's still alright.

How do we look at the role of women and youth in national development? I have actually highlighted pictures of some youth in parliament because I thought it is symbolic of the kind of role that we expect the youth to play. Taking a point from the keynote speech of *Yang Amat Berbahagia* Tun this morning; one of the main roles of youth that our generation comes to expect, is to become the successor (*pelapis*) to the current leaders, and lead this country to even greater heights in the future. So, I thought that, with my political science background, I do think that getting to the critical systems: structure, roles, aims and objectives, and the regulations of government, are the things that the youth or anyone, for that matter, citizens of this country, should internalize and understand.

I have a couple of books published, edited by Jamilah Ariffin, a very well respected academician, and the wife of the Johor Menteri Besar. Together with her academic friends, she has also worked on two volumes that detailed out the highest achievements of women from 1970s to 2008. This book was published earlier this year (2009). So in response to the aim or objective of this discourse, to look at the developments for women achieved during the last premiership of our nation, these two volumes provide the best source of information. The book details the contributions of women in the different sectors that *Yang Amat Berbahagia Tun* alluded to, this morning.

As discussed during our "tea and breakfast" this morning, national development is not just about women and youth, but about men as well. However, I will try to focus on women; in terms of their role in national development, there are different players or different aspects that we can look at, one of which is as an agent of national development. *Yang Amat Berbahagia Tun*, this morning, had picked up and very clearly and succinctly discussed this point. The point was repeated in many different ways this morning; including the aspect of the beneficiaries of national development. Pretty much the discussion among the women activists, now, is the issue of beneficiaries that commensurate with the contributions that women are making in various fields. The contributions have been acknowledged in many different ways, but in terms of benefits derived from national development, at the grass root level; I think that is where the issue is,- the focus of this afternoon.

The other aspect that received very detailed treatment by *Yang Amat Berbahagia Tun* this morning was the question of empowerment. To be an agent of national development, you would want to have a say in the direction of development; type and dimension to be prioritized; and it involves the issue of empowerment. How empowered are we? In terms of education, it's been shown statistically, that women have benefited from education. But empowerment is not just about education,

especially when you want to be involved in things or areas involving the public. You need to have, for example, financial empowerment and networking, which constitute some of the weaker aspects of women's involvement in public.

Yang Amat Berbahagia Tun, this morning, had talked in such a gracious manner, about how women had come out of the private realm and on to the public spheres; coming face-to-face with so many challenges and obstacles, issues ranging from culture to religion, opportunities, the '*glass ceiling*', etc., When we talk about glass ceilings, that takes us to the level of decision-making and planning that we benefit from the different experiences as we climb up the corporate ladder. But in the first place, are women a part of the planning and the decision-making process? Or, is it because in terms of qualification or personality, because she exceeds other candidates that happened to be men, that she by fluke or by chance and not necessarily by choice, becomes part of the equation? So in terms of decision-making and planning, I think there is still a lot of talk among women activists about this.

There is also the issue of globalization, which impacts us in many different ways. One, of course, is in terms of ideas; and in that sense, I would like us to focus on the question posed in today's discourse: the factors that influence women to participate in national development, significant events that have great impacts on the role of women, the strategies the government should adopt for closing the gap between practices and policies (and we have very good policies, especially if you refer to the National Women Policy); and there is also the National Women Action Plan.

If you have a chance to get a copy of my presentation, I have tried to list out the different steps or significant events that have taken place that had actually helped to propel or push forward women's presence in national development. The longest list of achievements in terms of putting women on the map in national development is during the premiership of *Yang Amat Berbahagia* Tun. The latest input, which I think would answer questions four

and five, is a paper published by the National Council of Women Organization in January, 2009. It is a kind of women's wish list; the most interesting point that may attract some of your attention is their first concern: to develop the "One Malaysia" concept. I really do not know whether the inspiration for the national concept comes from this paper, but it definitely provides details of the concept, and the Council has suggested to the government to have that as a slogan. Perhaps some of you in the audience who are more familiar with this could enlighten the rest of us.

Of course the awareness must be there first, and then the opportunities, for the women or whomever, to participate in national development. The capacity for action is related to empowerment, and you must also have a sense of efficacy. The sense of efficacy, I do not mean to be so verbose, but in political science, we use this term to mean how efficient or how effective you feel you are. I feel I am empowered; I probably have most of the qualifications to be part of this national development, but, do I have a sense of efficacy? Do I feel that I'm effective? If I don't feel that, no matter how empowered I am, I will remain in my private sphere, at home where I feel most effective.

So then we have to look at the reasons that make women feel ineffective, unable to participate? Many women refuse to come forward to help or to be active. They say, "Not me, I have good ideas, but no, I do not want to participate," this attitude is in contrast with that of the youth, according to *Yang Amat Berbahagia* Tun. But I know some of you objected to the perception: that although you don't demand, at the same time you don't participate. This perhaps, applies more to my generation than to yours, the younger ones. In terms of our ideas, our sense of efficacy, of being able to do stuffs, for example, is also influenced by what we know from the rest of the world: ideas coming from across the borders, through the internet and the media; that make us reevaluate our position in terms of growth, decision-making, our power structure, gender equality, feminization, of everything. Of course, some people would dismiss this as being "westernized,"

and thus irrelevant to our society, but some of the good ideas can actually help us in our current situation and future direction. I think it's quite useful, given that we showed confidence in our own values, frame work, in the way we want to contribute, so those things would be of help.

Then there is the question of cooperation between government and NGOs, and I am very much for; the cooperation between government and civil society in many different ways has proven to be beneficial. I would like to refer especially, to the role of the National Council of Women's Organization, an organization big enough to encompass most of us, women, a collection of the various active women organizations. It had proposed the women's priority list of 2009, a very interesting document to me. The list is quite readily available in the university, so I don't think it's a restricted paper, but I hope I am not doing it an injustice or worst, contravene some injunctions, by saying that it's not a very good document. Compiled in January using a focused group, it outlines future expectations, the ten priority areas of concern, critical steps and strategies for immediate action, which I thought was wonderful.

There are three future expectations. The first one is the crystallization of "One Malaysia," part of the wish list of women; good governance towards gender equality, which is understandable, and personal empowerment towards social well being. "One Malaysia" is a concept of unity. This morning Yang *Amat Berbahagia* Tun said that the perennially hot question in Malaysia is national unity, and sure enough these priority areas have unity on top of their list, and the concept, the wish and the dream of this list is dependent on the person of the prime minister. That is the way it is documented. The prime minister should be the person of ability and people-oriented (not the inclusion policy of the government), meaning that the role of leaders in democratic Malaysia is very important.

The second priority in their list is good governance and gender equality. Most of us are familiar with this issue, also the issue of personal empowerment. An interesting thought concerns the economy, the 10th priority. This document provided practical recommendations on the second stimulus package, making women a major target to help in reviving the economy; by directing the banks and other financial institutions to finance women-owned and run businesses, emphasizing monitoring by the Bank Negara Malaysia and promoting research and development. Tan Sri Bhupalan used to say that women are trying to see things in a more holistic and comprehensive manner. So in a sense, the question posed in today's discourse, could be addressed by this document.

There are other issues like the role of the convergence of the operations between the government and the private sectors, in this particular case of civil society. I think that while the government or the national leaders can provide policies, the blue print for the different policies, in terms of implementation, is becoming complex and big. So that it can be quite difficult for government agencies actually to implement those policies without the backing and cooperation from the ground, and I think this is where the positive energies of women and other welfare organizations can be of help.

There is none that I have said which has not already been addressed in the keynote speech this morning. I wish I have the style to convey these in a more effective manner that would bring the issues home to us. It's not just about language and the style of communications that prevents us from connecting with the ideas being brought forth.

In my power point presentation, I highlighted some of the activities on the ground by women NGOs, in particular the NCWO; both at the domestic as well as regional levels, with the ASEAN women activities. Malaysia was represented by *Yang Amat Berbahagia* Tun Siti Hasmah. We have been involved in many aspects of

global development for women at not only the grass root but also at the leadership levels. In terms of guidelines, the Convention of Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which I am sure many of you would also be touching on in the convention, and the Beijing platform, is something that we can look at, revise, review and revisit. Thank you.

MS ZURAIDAH HAJI MUSIB

Associate Professor Saliha brought up some very interesting issues. The question of honest introspection is something that we really need to address here as she brought up one question that asks why women do not feel effective enough to participate. Here we have forums after forums; seminars after seminars that actually give a lot of credence to women; and people including *Yang Amat Berbahagia* Tun himself has put women in such high esteem as to their contribution to national development, yet we are still addressing this issue as though something is amiss. Perhaps it is a general sense of non-control over our selves us and the environment; therefore, this issue of "glass ceiling" keeps coming up again and again; we say it does not exist, but women say it does,- people say there's no discrimination and yet, somehow, somewhere it [non-discrimination] is not happening as much as you think it should be. Thank you Professor Saliha. I am sure there will be questions right after this. Now I would like to invite *Yang Mulia* Tengku Zafrul Aziz for his session.

YM TENGKU ZAFRUL AZIZ

Yang Amat Berbahagia Tun Dr. Siti Hasmah, moderator Puan Zuraidah Haji Musib, my fellow panel speakers. Assalamualaikum and a very good afternoon to all. My two fellow panelists have spoken about women, so being the only youth on this panel; I will be focusing more on youth. But before that let me define what the term "youth" means.

What is "youth"? The common definition for "youth" in Malaysia, is people within the ages of 15 to 40 (Akta Pembangunan dan

Pertubuhan Belia 2007), Malaysia (the common definition for youth in other countries tend to be people of ages up to 25) and I think this is in line with UMNO's definition. This segment accounts for about 42% of our population based on the latest statistics. We are a nation of 28 million people, so we have about 14 million people who are under the age of 40. With this statistics, I think the youth in Malaysia should play, and has played, the major role in national development, not just recently, but I would say since before independence.

What I am presenting today is just a simple study, I will be addressing the five questions that were posed to me. These are very difficult questions.

The first one is, "What are the factors that influence youth to engage actively in national development?" In my view, their education background definitely affects the outlook for the youth. This is most prevalent when we consider the level of education for graduates, SPM, etc. What we can be proud of, as all of you probably know, is the very high level of literacy in Malaysia. The latest statistics showed our literacy level at about 90%, thanks to the education policy which makes it compulsory for us to go to school. Literacy rate among 19 to 24 year olds is at 98%, primary school enrolment is 100% and the primary school survival rate (after UPSR) is 99%. At the tertiary level, which most of you are now at, gross enrolment rate is about 28%, which means one in three Malaysians go on to tertiary-level education. This percentage is above the regional benchmark, which currently stands at 25%. So we are moving in the right direction, in terms of education for youth.

So we have the basis or foundation to be active in national development. However, there are other factors, but given the time constraint, I will just touch on one other issue: the proper channels or the platforms available to youth. The pertinent question here is, "Are there enough platform that would allow the

youth to participate in national development?" If we can, imagine that our country, Malaysia, is divided into three pillars: the state, the economy and civil society. The national platform that we as Malaysians are usually engaged in, tend to be in government, state or federal, but we also participate in the economy, in the shape of our employment.

When we talk about participating in civil society, we don't have that many people involved. The third pillar is arguably the most important, and unfortunately this area of youth's involvement is lacking now in our country, as compared to other developed countries. I have records from the Registrar of Society, which show that there are 7,914 youth organizations registered in Malaysia. But as you all know, most remained inactive or dormant. I was also informed that most active youth organizations are not actually registered; youth organizations of private colleges, youth organizations of loose grouping and forums, and they represent the more active ones. Another thing that is worth highlighting is that these organizations are mostly headed and managed by those above the age of 40, although some are below their 40's.

What I am getting at here is, so many of these platforms remained irrelevant to the youth, and they are seeking for alternative platforms. As we know in this day and age there are also other online platforms such as Facebook, Friendster, MySpace, twitter and personal blogs. People tend to move to the platform, which they think they can relate to. So, in answering the first question, it is important that these platforms that connect the youth immediately and directly to the government must be refocused and revived; this is something that needs to be highlighted. In conclusion, there are two factors: education background and platforms. We have the capacity but we are not meeting our true potentials. We must address this issue, as I mentioned earlier, our youth constitutes the majority of our population.

The second question is, "What significant events had made a great impact in shaping the role of youth in national development?" In

recent times, the 2008 General Election had a huge impact -- maybe the politicians have not realized it yet - but youth under the age of 35, accounted for half of the Malaysian electorate. In the next General Election, about 4 million youth voters are expected to vote, assuming they all register; youth will constitute a huge voting block that must be attended to. The youth of today does not attach to the baggage of the pasts, as our earlier generation did. The current generation of youth is not afraid to reject a government that under performs - Barisan, PKR or whatever government of the day. We do not fear change, and are more inclined toward national issues such as rejection of corruption, advocating good governance and upholding the sanctity of law; and they are very much aware of what's happening in the economy. Today's youth is seen to transcend racial thinking within the politics that we are so accustomed to; we are obviously more idealistic in that sense.

The youth's role in performing this "check and balance," bode well for the future of the country. Significant events in the past have also supported this thinking. On my way to the Perdana Leadership Foundation, I was told that under Tun Sardon, Pemuda UMNO aggressively fought for independence in 1957. In 1951, he pushed for a change of the slogan from *Hidup Melayu* to *Merdeka*. In some small ways, this bears some semblance to the current push for "One Malaysia," - to get everyone involved - that was the thinking of the UMNO youth then. It was recorded that the Pemuda even "squared off" with party president, Dato' Onn Ja'afar. Their intentions were noble; they were fighting for the good of the country. So, both examples are given as proof that youth has an important role to play in our national development.

The third question is, "What are the strategies that the government should adopt to close the gap between policies and practices on issues pertaining to youth." Needless to say, there is a clear gap between some of the policies and practices. The government has shown its readiness to provide grants and funding to youth groups, but, are these groups meeting the expectations of the

youth? That's the question. Some probably are, but many are not. An example I pointed out earlier: out of the 7,149 youth organizations registered, most are actually dormant. People in this room are probably accustomed to what they read; about the political "youth" leaders who are not even youth, and "youth" NGOs whose members are not from the youth segment of the population. I'm not sure if any of you know this; the President and Executive Members of the Malaysian Youth Council are all above the age of youth. In this manner, you are depriving the youth from engaging in and exerting their influence in the national development because of the status quo. That's why such organizations have become a bit more irrelevant today.

The structure and guidelines for the funding and awarding of grants to youth organizations are not clearly outlined by the government. The involvement of ministries is limited to the Ministry of Youth and Sport. Other ministries should be more involved given that youth can play much bigger roles to the country than just contributing in sports and attending youth conferences.

Embracing technology and being technically savvy is also an important criterion. I am sure most of you use Facebook and other technological gadgetry. UMNO leaders have finally embraced technology, although a bit late in the game, at least they have started. Among those who are on Facebook, blogs, or Twitter is our YAB Dato' Prime Minister; YB Dato' Shahrizat, YB Datuk Nong Chik and Saifuddin. This is a step in the right direction.

The fourth question is, "What are the recommendations offered to address issues and challenges faced by youth in sustaining national development?" Youth must be continuously consulted and not indoctrinated. I think gone are the days when youths are treated as "feeding machines;" probably true twenty or thirty years ago, but surely not now. I think education must continue to be a priority; spending on the right need is the most important factor. Funding definitely is an issue, so I think we need more private sectors' involvement with public institutions for the necessary

funding, to engage the youth and also some of the causes that we raised today.

Channels for the youth to express themselves should be provided. Investments, as small as a sporting complex or multipurpose playground, located in a low-income area, will make so much difference. Perhaps we should have more "One Malaysia" sporting complexes, "One Malaysia" futsal centers, facilities that will keep the youth occupied. The other thing I would like to mention is the venture capital industry in Malaysia. Agencies have been set up, but I think we need to have angel investors play a more active role in supporting youth entrepreneurs. When you graduate from a university, you do not have the money to start a new business, the necessary assets to back loans. If you study youth entrepreneurs, one must admit that many breakthrough ideas actually come from them. One example is Facebook; founded by Mark Zuckerberg, this service was initially just for Harvard University, but now they have about 300 million active users worldwide. Facebook is the number one website in Malaysia; followed by MySpace, the second most visited website in Malaysia. Anyway, if we continue to fund youth's involvement in business, we are not only fueling the economy but an important segment of the economy, i.e. youth enterprises. We can encourage innovation as a business culture among the youth, and definitely as I mention earlier, the reason why we are investing in continuity.

To conclude, Madam Moderator, the youth must acquire knowledge beyond the domestic issues, and as a member of the society, I would like to see "global youth" discussing everything from local politics to the emergence of economic powers such as India and China. Our youth, hopefully, will be able to speak many languages. I have noticed that in all the countries that I have visited, language is one of the core subjects in the education curriculum. Our youth must inculcate the good values: integrity, respect for one another and honesty, in the pursuit of life. Currently, in my line of work, I have to go through many business proposals and provide fair evaluations of investments

on a regular basis. So I believe that youth is one of the most valuable commodities that the country can have. It is energetic and has tremendous potentials, but like any other commodities, we must do more to realize its potentials, and add value to it. Only then will the youth of Malaysia possess the capability to back our vision and inspiration. Thank you very much.

MS ZURAIDAH HAJI MUSIB

Thank you, Tengku. Your presentation is well within the allotted time, you must have a lot of practice. I am particularly interested in a word you mentioned, "Involvement;" the involvement of youth is what we are actually looking for. I just want to share this with you, the audience. A while back, I was given the opportunity to moderate a session, a talk given by Scott Goodstein; if you are technically savvy, you may be familiar with him. Mr. Scott Goodstein, a young guy and owner of his own PR Company, is the on-line advisor to Barrack Obama. He's the person responsible for developing the system that allowed Obama to network and be in contact with the young people of America. He prescribed a facility where the President could interact directly with the common public, especially the youth. This could very well be the next step towards working and engaging our youth in public forums and debates.

I would like to thank Tengku Zafrul for his presentation and invite Miss Dina Zaman up to the rostrum.

MS DINA ZAMAN

Assalamualaikum w.t.h., a very good afternoon to *Yang Amat Berbahagia* Tun Dr. Siti Hasmah, distinguished guests, fellow panelists, ladies and gentlemen. First of all, I would like all of you to forgive me. This is my first public speaking engagement I usually write, I do not go out and talk to people. So I am a bit nervous and on the way to Perdana Leadership Foundation (PLF) I had a little car accident. So bear with me. I will do my very

best to give you a good presentation, that is if I do not faint. I was briefed and wrote a sixteen-page academic paper for this engagement, but then PLF said I am to speak on the subject. So I will just read from the paper, but I have all of this in soft copy. I will email this to PLF so that you can look at some nice slides relating to two campaigns that we are working on. Unfortunately, for now you will just have to use your imagination.

Today's presentation is about the roles of youth and women in nation building, how we strengthen the nation and make it better. The two groups represent potential voters, leaders and active citizens. The women in Malaysia are a very privileged lot; we occupy top positions in corporations and in the Government. But whenever we meet for forums such as this, meet for girlie gossips or meet with old friends, we often hear women say this, "We feel that we are under-represented when it comes to our rights in civil and Syariah law, healthcare, maternity leave, just to name a few." When it comes to Malaysian youth, all the corporations, advertisers go to them because they see youth as a commodity. They spent a lot of money, a little of this and a little of that, but we don't really understand what the motive is.

Nation-building is an on-going process, and changes are needed as the country faces globalization, inter-cultural experiences, evolving economies and technologies, and it is highly dependent on resilient and intelligent people. Another thing about nation-building that we tend to forget about is the behavioral change. We can have all these policies, campaigns, CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) programs, etc., but if the behavior doesn't change, if we don't go back to the very values that make us human, none of this will come true to fruition.

So allow me to speak a little about the current situation that women are facing right now, and about the youth. As I mentioned earlier, Malaysian women are privileged. We have a good number of homemakers pursuing small businesses from home, many women are employed, we are active in politics and social work,

and we keep abreast of the latest in entertainment, fashion, shopping and so forth. Unlike what most western media had said about Muslim women, I really believe that we are a very privileged community. We enjoy personal freedom that a lot of Muslim women in other countries do not; we have a right to education, if we want to we can work, if you want to divorce our husband, we can. That did not come up right, sorry. But the fact is Muslim women in Malaysia have really nothing to worry about. Of course, there are issues; problems that we have to face when we talk about the administration of Syariah law.

Some of the issues that we still face are: one, we are bound by the typical thinking, that men are bom to make decision and women are not, even though there are many women who are far more experienced, better educated and more capable than men in various fields; Oil & Gas industries, engineering, medical, banking. Two, the work-life balance — you can be a *keropok lekor* seller in Terengganu or a vice president in a bank; when you come home, you are supposed to be a wife, daughter-in-law, mother-in-law, lover, mother, everything. I mean if we do not have that support system: domestic workers or supportive mother-in-law in the family to help you care for your children, what do you have? You do not have much. Three, the "invisible woman" syndrome ~ you can be pretty, you can have a Ph.D., but you are a woman, so we shall ignore you.

Lastly, even though we are active in politics, we are still under-represented. That is not good and we really need to work on that. Malaysian women make up 8% of the Representatives in the State Assemblies, 27.3% in the Dewan Negara and 10.4% in the Dewan Rakyat. Of the 68 ministers and deputy ministers' posts, just 14.7% are held by women. Now, compare these numbers with women's representation in the Parliament or Legislative Houses of other countries such as Sweden, Finland and Argentina; African countries: Mozambique 34.8%, Uganda 30.7% and Burundi 30.5%; and countries that are closer to home: Singapore 24.5% and the Philippines. It is also interesting to note

that in other Muslim countries, women are relatively active, if they are not Heads of State; they're in positions of authority.

Now if you look at the youth, the kids from the Felda Schemes or the *kampung*, right down to the kids in urban areas; Damansara Height or at the shopping malls; they have that prerequisite hand phone, shoes, clothes, so superficially, they are fine. These kids are not poor, they have no problems. But if you dig deeper into the issues facing many Malaysian youths (apart from being a writer, I do a lot of NGO work), there are a lot of things they are not happy about this country. They would say, "We feel displaced, we don't feel that we have a future here." The Merdeka Center, together with the Asia Foundation, conducted a National Youth Survey in 2008, and some of their findings may be clues to the country's well-being.

The youth feel politically disconnected with the government. When we talk about that demographic, something that Tengku Zafrul spoke about, we were referring to "professional youth" with education and background. But for these *kampung* youth and others who do not have the privilege of education, what do they have? They, typically would say, "I've got to get married, or I've got to work, whatever happens to this country does not concern me." 74% of youth say that they have a low and moderate level of self-efficacy. Although the perceived impact of government on their daily lives increased from 72% in 2007, to 77% in 2008, the confidence of youth in elections declined by 16%; 80% of youth in 2007 said their votes could make some difference compared to 64% in 2008.

Young Malaysians have very mixed views on political pluralism; 56% of the youth said they could accept a female prime minister, and 57% could accept a non-Malay Muslim as prime minister. As for the idea of having a non-Muslim as prime minister, the level of acceptance declined to 45%; that's a "no-go" where Malaysian youth is concerned. Religious identity is also very important; among the Malay youth in peninsular Malaysia, 62% chose to be

identified as Muslim first while the rest of Bumiputras from East Malaysia preferred to be identified as Malaysians; so what does that say about national patriotism? Alhamdulillah, if you know you are secured as Muslim that's brilliant. When we talk about being Malaysian, feeling for your country, how does that go? No one has really explored that situation yet.

When it comes to news and technology, 43% of youth polled said that they have very little access to the internet. For those who have access to the internet, newspapers or radio, they tend to go for entertainment news, gossips, porn, and things like that, and you can't blame them. When you come from a certain background, you are not given exposures to things that are better, so what do you look for? Even for me, after work I go to the gossip columns TMZ dot com, e-Britney Spears, etc. The survey also shows that youths are not into the idea of engaging themselves in the community simply because they feel that they can't make a difference.

So what are the solutions? One is nation-building; in essence, it refers to the process of constructing or structuring a national identity using the power of the state. It aims at unification of the people using propaganda or major infrastructure development to foster social harmony and economic growth. How are we going to get the women and the youth to be part of nation-building? One, we have to look at influences and persuasive tools, which can be use on these two groups to strengthen their national identities. Two, we need to focus on empowering ourselves; to focus on the economy, the intellectual, and everything else at the same time would be futile and meaningless. It is highly suggested that we focus all the CSR programs at home, among friends. We focus on re-instating values in women and youths, in our race to be successful, to feed and clothe our family, even to be popular. We have forgotten the very values which make us human. We need to be reminded of them.

Nation-building is similar to team-building. You need to stimulate the minds to accept, embrace, nurture & develop good behaviors. One way you can do that is to find among the two groups, women and youth, commonalities. What are the shared values that you can build with? Three topics come to mind, which may be shared by all Malaysian women: sexual reproductive health (SRH), family law (Civil and Syariah) and financial rights. To accomplish the above, women will need mentors who are willing to risk all, as these subjects are deemed to be sensitive. Malaysia may have women leaders in the corporate world, but when it comes to SRH, family and financial rights, it is left to columnists, NGO activists and feminists, to champion the cause. However, their voices are heard only when an issue is raised in the public domain.



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Q&A PANEUST SESSION

FIKAR

Assalamualaikum. My name is Fikar. I have a question regarding women, "Why do women find it an obstacle to run the government, and what is the cause for wanting to run the government? In the world today, we have a lady, who is running a government, but in this country, the people and the women do not have the freedom to speak, to express their views; why?"

MS DINA ZAMAN

You asked, "Why are more women not involved in government?" I think I actually asked that very question a few weeks back. It is a lot of things to a lot of women. One, when you are married, your responsibilities and your priorities are elsewhere, to your husband, children, etc., so it is difficult. Let's not talk about the government; but for the NGOs, your whole life is about that cause; how many women are willing to give that up, at the expense of their personal relationship, their careers? Two, I think a lot of women are not willing to stick their necks out because some of the issues that they will have to deal with are controversial; I don't blame them. If you've been working for 15-20 years, like me, you'd be used to it. But for a lot of women, to be pushed into the spotlight where their personal space may be invaded, how many women or even men are ready for that? I don't blame them if they are not. As for me, I am, and it has not been easy.

Are you talking about women getting money to join the government? I am not too clear.

FIKAR

Oh no. It's about women expressing their views to the government, especially that of developing nations. Women have been given the chance and opportunity to express their views, but they find obstacles? What's stopping them?

MS DINA ZAMAN

I think it's because of fear and other things. I interviewed my old.

classmate a month ago at Rasta, and she brought up issues about Islam in Malaysia (they want an Islamic state), but the way they have done it is not the way it should be. If you have all these issues, why don't you write to the newspaper? They say they don't want to be published. I think women also have themselves to blame, they don't want to push themselves. My friends have told me, you know what Dina, we have you, so you take all that complaints, and you write. I said very well, I'm the one who gets bashed all the time, but you're the ones complaining. But I think in that sense I wouldn't say that women are timid, maybe our priorities are just different.

FIKAR

Maybe we can provide something better for them now especially for *kampung* women, they do not know much about nation-building, maybe they are busy selling *kuih*.

MS DINA AZMAN

I think we have to. You know, we have a lot of NGOs for women. When we talk about the NGO situation, we are strapped of resources: money and time. We have the people but they don't have the skills, they are people with good intentions and want to help us out. But when we talk about training, how many people are skilled in training? There are trainers but they cost a "bomb." So how do you built up within the NGO? We have to learn communication skills; we're trying to do that, my friend and I. It's not easy and a person can only do so much. But that's an idea to think about. Something that we, NGOs need to remember it's not just about saving the world, it's also empowering ourselves so that we can empower other people. Thanks.

MELLY CHRISTINE

I am Melly Christine. I am the Executive Trustee for Kasim Chan Humanity Foundation. I applaud what Dina is doing. Our foundation currently takes care of 200 children, and yes, there are a lot of issues involved. We have a lot of single mothers, with

4 to 5 children (on the average) in a family. The center that we run in Puchong is a concentration of 6 huge blocks of government flats. This is where the problem is: gangsterism. But you find that children have no where to go, that is the only place they know.

We run a *tadika* (kindergarten), a community service center where we take care of 150 children, from standard one right up to form five. After form five they have nothing as they are not equipped to do anything at all. We've been operating for the past three years, and we've lost about six kids to *Mat Rempit* and to gangsterism. This is the reality. We can talk about it, but when there is no food, and there is peer pressure for them to join *Mat Rempit* or gangster groups, there's nothing you can do.

This question is for Dina. Let's talk about this foundation; this organization that we're having, how do you change their attitudes? I know that we have to start from the root, with the single mothers, but they are hardly around. How do we go forward in that situation? You said one can only do so much, and we can't do more than that. But how do we get all the youth to be part of this program? Thanks.

MS DINA ZAMAN

You really should be talking to Dr Hartini Zainuddin about this. As I've said I was a volunteer. Even for us, it's not easy How are we going to change ourselves for the better? You know what? You just have to work at it. You have to work with Jabatan Kebajikan Malaysia; you have to work with, everyone who's involved with children, single mothers, anyone, for that matter.

One, we should give them life skills; teach them basic subjects like Mathematics, *Bahasa* and Religion. You'll be surprised that some are not even able to recite the simple *Al-Fatihah*. So, teaching skills like this would be enough to empower them to the next level. Another thing is sex education. I and my volunteers deal with disadvantaged children who know a lot more about sex [than us] because of the environment in which they are in. You can't say it is right or wrong because for them, when you have a

sex worker for a mother, they'd probably think that's the way to live. You've got to teach them the appropriate solutions, the right way of looking at things, you have to guide them.

We are working with the basic stuffs right now. That's why we decided to come out with the National Conference of Children because we want the kids to tell us. This is what we want. We want to go to school, but we don't have identity card or birth certificate. We want to learn to write but nobody is helping us." One of the things that we want to do is become the audience, the pupils while the kids become the teachers. We can only hope that this project is successful; we have it all in the newspapers but executing it is going to be quite a nightmare. We'll see how this thing goes, next year.

MS ZURAI DAH HAJI MUSIB

I'd just like to add something to what Dina has mentioned about connectivity. I believe all of us feel that way because a lot of young people that we speak to, have no connection with what's happening in the nation. They know there is a change of premiership and general stuff like that, but the feeling of belonging, the feeling of being a part of the entire nation's construct is just not there.

Just to share with you, I remember the days, when my parents at our dinner table were always talking about the war, *masa Jepun* (Japanese occupation), what they had to eat and those sorts of things. I didn't see it at first; but my parents constant drumming and talking about things during this period somehow made a connection with me and the realisation that I've got to be thankful for what's on the table.

I think it's crucial that, the parents are now, making that connection with their young ones. It's not just charity that begins at home. Your sense of belonging loyalty and patriotism has its seed at home too. As *Yang Amat Berbahagia* Tun mentioned just now,

you have to make time for the children because they do have something to say, they do have an opinion and their opinions matter. I just want to ask Tengku Zafrul to say something about the youth and their contribution to this issue.

YM TENGKU ZAFRUL AZIZ

Like Dina Zaman said, if you look at tertiary education, only 30% actually go to universities or colleges. The other 70% don't, but they tend to read non mainstream media. So that makes it worse in terms of understanding what's happening. They're more interested in gossips; more interested than even sports, like you said all the things that we are not used to when we were in the university, because we were occupied [with something else]. Having said that, even university leavers are more and more inclined towards money, looking at job security, starting a family, rather than talk about the regional or domestic political issue. Thank you.

MS ZURAI DAH HAJI MUSIB

We also need to look at influence of the media. I really applaud the efforts done by Dina and friends; and I'm sure there are many more out there like them that have their own mission in trying to get this kind of issues addressed. Awhile back, one of the things I was involved in was to come up with TV programs with local content. What we are doing right now is showing programs such as Sesame Street, Playhouse Disney channels with contexts that are not our own. So we need to come up with something closer to home, something with our values, and something that they can share and really make connections. On the social study platform. Associate Professor Saliha might also have something to say about that as the programs" are not connecting. We're complaining and we're talking about nation-building, but we are not making the connection.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR SALIHA HASSAN

I do not think I have very much more to add to that. I think judging from the mood in the hall, whatever had been said by the

panelists actually touched us quite directly and deeply, perhaps we are all aware of the problems, and it would seem that we generally agreed that this is definitely a problem. But recognizing the problems I think is just one step. The next one is of course thinking about what we can do about it, and I don't think that it is the responsibility of any particular group. It's got to be a common effort. It's not just about women and youth, although in many seminars, conferences, dialogues, topics, etc., women and youth are usually lumped together, as if we are separate from the rest of society. It is actually a together project, men, women and youth. So, in terms of attitudes, this could also be another example of stereotyping, where this issue is described as a "women's thing."

But as we know from the panelists, many serious issues are talked about that affect society. Some quarters in our society even blame the problems on women, for example, for not being home, etc. I think there are reasons why now more women are outside in the public sphere, while having to cope with whatever is going on at home. But it's much more than just a "women's thing," or a "mother's thing." Some of the views expressed here, have indicated that it is a "together thing" that we have to deal with. I know perhaps there are more concrete suggestions as to what each of us can do, at the individual and the organizational levels, to deal with some of these problems. We won't be able to deal with all the major issues, but at least that small step is still a progress compared to just, staying at square one and whining about what's going on.

VEENA RAMANAN

My name is Veena Ramanan. I am from the Foreigners' House Support Group. So much has been said about foreigners; let me just say that we are a large group of foreign spouses, male and female. We number over a hundred thousand right now and probably about 20 to 25 thousands have PR status. We are kind of left out or marginalized because many of us, thousands, are waiting for our PR (Permanent Resident) status, without which

we cannot work. Some (non-working spouses) cannot even hold individual, bank accounts. We are in a way discriminated against; our daily lives are a challenge. But we are stakeholders to the national development, our children and our families are Malaysian. Our children face difficulty in getting into national schools, those that are born outside the country. We'd like the break-out groups to look at this aspect in terms of policy change as well as the laws for citizenship. Thank you.

JONATHAN

Good morning, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, *Tuan-tuan dan Puan-puan*, honorable speakers and madam moderator. Hello, my name is Jonathan. Before anything else I would like to apologize for being late, and for missing the welcoming speech by Tan Sri Azman. I would also like to say thanks to Tun Dr. Mahathir for his inspiring speech this morning.

I would like to seek the permission of the honorable speakers and Madam Moderator to share some of my views on women and youth. Number one, I think women are too engrossed in building their career that they do not want to get married. After all, the perception is that all men and youth are responsible; the women can stand on their own and do not need men. We have to slow down and compromise with this perception. Men make decision and women work, so women get upset. Men understand that and we work harder to win your heart.

The second thing; I think that youths are trying too hard to remain as youth forever. Youth should start doing things to assist their seniors instead of just talking about leadership roles. The third thing is about priority. I understand that everyone has their own priorities. Senior citizen, women, youth and government all have their priorities. This is just a suggestion; I feel that the priorities of the government should also be the priorities of senior citizen, women and youth, and the priority of senior citizen, women and youth (especially the youth), should be the government's priority. Only by aligning our priorities together, can we be assured of

continuous, harmonious and prudent relationship among all. As an example, the LRT, ERL, KL Monorail and KTM are all aligned toward certain directions. We need all the colors of the rainbow to make a rainbow. There's no question from me, just these thoughts. Thank you very much.

MS ZURAIDAH HAJI MUSIB

Thank you very much Jonathan. Thank you ladies and gentlemen. I'm going to close this session. We will have the group discussions after lunch. You may all expand on the issues raised then. But for now, I'd like to say thank you very much to *Yang Amat Berbahagia* Tun Siti Hasmah, to our distinguished guest, panelists, to all the ladies and gentlemen who are present here today, to all the youth. Please stay around because we look forward to hearing your views and your opinions, after lunch.

APPENDIX 1

PROFILE OF KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

TUN DR MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD

Tun Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad is the fourth Prime Minister of Malaysia. His 22 year tenure has made him Malaysia's longest serving Prime Minister. Tun Dr Mahathir obtained his early and secondary education in his hometown of Alor Setar. In 1947, he gained admission into the Edward VII College of Medicine in Singapore. Upon graduation, he joined the Malaysian government service as a Medical Officer.

Tun Dr Mahathir has been active in politics since 1945. He has been a member of the United Malay National Organization (UMNO) since its inception in 1946. He was appointed Chairman of the first Higher Education Council in 1968, and was a member of the Higher Education Advisory Council in 1972. He became a member of the University Court and University of Malaya Council, and was Chairman of the National University Council in 1974. In 1973, Tun Dr Mahathir was appointed a Senator but later stepped down in order to contest in the 1974 General Elections. Following the election. Tun Dr Mahathir was appointed the Minister of Education. On 16th July 1981, he became Malaysia's Prime Minister.

He was the man behind Malaysia's Vision 2020 that set the direction, and instilled a sense of unified purpose and common shared values for the nation. One of his dreams was to see

the multiracial and multiethnic society transformed into a truly Malaysian race with its rich sub-culture inheritances, by the second decade of the 21st century. He has charted Malaysia onto the world map with the successful organizing and staging of world events like the CHOGM (Commonwealth Head of Government Meeting), the 1998 Commonwealth Games, the APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Caucus) Summit, the NAM (Non-Aligned Member Nation) Summit and the 10th (Organisation of Islamic Countries) Summit. Tun Dr Mahathir ended his premiership on 31st October 2003 on a high-note, willing the nation to continue its achievements in all areas: socially, economically, politically, technologically and environmentally.

APPENDIX II

PROFILE OF PANEL DISCUSSANTS

Zuraidah Haji Musib holds a Master of Arts degree in TESL (Applied Linguistics) from Georgetown University, Washington DC, USA. She also possesses a Bachelors degree in Education & Human Development from the George Washington University (GWU) also in Washington DC, USA and a Diploma in Public Administration from the then Mara Institute of Technology, Shah Alam, Malaysia. She was first active in the education domain as far back as 1983 when she first became a Lecturer in the United States Information Agency (USIA), Washington DC and since then has embarked in various fields including corporate and multimedia training, conducting various communication courses in the English language for both the government and private sector. She was a pioneer lecturer in English language instruction via Video conferencing while holding the position of Coordinator of Languages at the Centre of Distance Learning, Mara Institute of Technology, Shah Alam, Selangor, and acquired vast management experience in the academia as Director of Academics at the Ocean Institute of Audio Technology, Kuala Lumpur as well as Executive Secretary for the Harvard Business School Alumni Club of Malaysia.

She has had a colorful and extensive career with the Government when she became the Political Secretary to the Minister of National Unity and Community Development after which she was made the Chief Executive Officer of the Malaysian Children TV Programme

Foundation (MCTF). At MCTF *she* concentrated on producing TV programmes for Malaysian children with an emphasis on local content. It was through MCTF that she spearheaded the cause of protecting children in cyberspace with a significant number of children-based NGOs in collaboration with the Ministry of Science, Technology and Information (MOSTI), Malaysia.

Her forte includes communication and public speaking, executive grooming, conducting meetings, language competency training via computer-based instruction designed to hone the 21st century students' learning skills i.e. critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, communication and technology skills and academic prose. As a dynamic, resourceful and competent professional who contributes greatly to the strength of her self-founded language training module with a genuine interest acquiring knowledge, she combines strong passion in teaching with her media prowess to motivate and inspire staff and colleagues in creating a creative and challenging work environment.

Zuraidah is presently the Vice President for Corporate Communications in the Professional Services Development Corporation, a company wholly owned by the Minister of Finance Inc. and placed as an agency under the Ministry of Works, Malaysia responsible to accelerate the capacity of Malaysian professional service providers (architects, engineers, quantity surveyors, to name a few) in the face of the challenges of liberalization and globalization.

Dina Zaman works for a media company and volunteers at Rumah Nursalam. She has been in the media and public relations industries for over 15 years, and writes about social issues. She is piqued by Malaysiana and all her foibles and successes, and these have been translated into her columns. She has written for the NST, The Star, Malaysiakini.com and now The Malaysian Insider

Her pet causes are HIV/AIDs issues with a focus on young professionals and youth, and child advocacy She is passionate and curious about these issues as they transcend race, faith, politics and class structures.

Dina used to do a lot of outdoor sports. Now, she stays home and reads!

Saliha Hassan is an Associate Professor at the Program Sains Politik, Pusat Pengajian Sejarah, Politik dan Strategi, Fakulti Sains Sosial dan Kemanusiaan, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). Her teaching courses include Political Philosophy and Ideology, Women in Malaysian Politics, and Democracy and Civil Society. Her research interests are based within political development with specific focus on women in politics and general process of democratization in Malaysia.

She has presented and participated in both national and international conferences with themes relating to those research foci. She has published a co-edited book with Meredith Weiss, *Social Movements in Malaysia. From moral communities to NGOs* (London & New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003). Other publications are articles and chapters on similarly related topics in various edited publications, the latest being "Women and Political Development in Malaysia: New Millennium, New Politics" written together with Assoc Prof Dr Rashila Ramli, published in Jamilah Ariffin, *Readings on Women and Development in Malaysia. A Sequel. Tracing Four decades of Change* (Petaling Jaya: MPH, 2009).

Saliha has participated also in international exchange programmes beginning with the American Field Service Student Exchange Program (1967-68), followed later with the US sponsored International Visitors Program (1996), lecturer exchange programme at the Political Science Department, Stockholm University, Stockholm (2003), visiting lecturer at El Colegio de

Mexico, Mexico City (2008) and recently at the Hildesheim Open University, Hildesheim (2009).

She has a website at www.salihassan.com.

Tengku Zafrul Aziz is currently employed as the Group Director of K & N Kenanga Holdings Berhad. His role is to oversee Kenanga Group's activities particularly its joint ventures in various parts of the world and ensure that all joint ventures, business partners and subsidiaries work cohesively. He will also initiate cross selling between subsidiaries, divisions and departments as well as with joint venture companies, business and affiliates.

He was also chief executive officer and is a substantial shareholder of Tune Money Sdn Bhd. Previously, Zafrul, a highly respected member of the Malaysian financial community, was Head of Investment Banking in Citigroup Malaysia. Before that, he was Group Managing Director of Avenue Capital Resources (now ECM Avenue) a listed company specializing in financial services - investment banking and fund management. He was also Chief Executive Officer of Avenue Securities and Avenue Asset Management Chairman.

Zafml, who graduated from University of Bristol, UK (BSc (Hons) Economics and Accounting and did his masters at University of Exeter, UK, started out as corporate finance executive in AM Investment Bank. He then joined Credit Agricole as an investment analyst, moving up quickly to director within a few years. After this, he became the Advisor to the President of one of Malaysia's largest companies, Tenaga Nasional. From here, he moved into investment banking at CIMB.

As a leading light of the new generation of CEOs, Zafrul, who is Chairman of Leaders for Tomorrow and Deputy President of the Kuala Lumpur Business Club, has already won the APEA 2008 Most Promising Entrepreneurship Award by Enterprise Asia and the Technology Business Review Asean CEO Award 2008.

He is also a director of the Federation of Investment Managers Malaysia (FIMM) and Chairman of Compliance and Disciplinary Council of FIMM.

The avid sportsman also finds time in his tight schedule to participate in triathlons, play futsal, squash and golf. He is the chairman of Xterra Malaysia and he comments on trends and social issues through his column in local dailies. New Straits Times and The Star.



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APPENDIX III

LIST OF GROUP PARTICIPANTS

GROUP 1

Group Leader

Abdul Fattah Bin Abd. Ghani

Facilitator

Puan Rohaya Abdul Wahab

Scriber

Nur Nadiah Rozali

Group Members

- **Viqar Ahmed Bin Mohammad Sarbat**
- **Fouzia Hassan Abdullah**
- **Syazniezai Binti Mohd Zamri**
- **Nurbaizura Binti Ahmad Kahar**
- **Marini Othman**
- **Nur Rasyidah Binti Rahmat**
- **Nor Shila Binti Yasin**
- **Siti Masayu**
- **Nor Juliana Binti Jusri**
- **Jamilah Binti Ismail**
- **Mohd Zulfadzli Bin Mohd Ridzwan**
- **Mohamad Fadhliy Bin Ibrahim**
- **Shaileen Binti Mohd Jarjis**
- **The Guan Thiam**
- **Mohd Khairulfaidz Shamsudin**
- **Teh Zureena Kalsom Binti Ahmad Zabidi**

- Najlaa' Nasuha Binti Mohd Radin
- Dr. Mohd Noor Azman Othman

GROUP 2

Group Leader

Syarifah Norrasyidah Binti Syed Mohri

Facilitator

Puan Sarimah Ismail

Scriber

Aemi Ruzanna Binti Abu Hassim

Group Members

- Mohamad Isamuddin Bin Mohamad Isa
- Raihan Binti Aziz
- Aemi Ruzanna Binti Abu Hassim
- Ismi Safia Adila Ibrahim
- Ivy M.Karangkas
- Hafizah Binti Samsir
- Pamela Munga Balang
- Dona Stanley
- Amir Bin Kamarul Zaman
- FaizalAlias
- Mohammad Abdullah Bin Ariff
- Muhd Rrdaus Bin Zahari
- Nur Fatin Najwa Bt Mohd. Khalid
- Nooryuhanis Binti Hashim
- Nur Rawaidah Binti Rossli
- Nur Aishah Binti Zainal

GROUP 3

Group Leader

Mohd Ezwan Hussein Bin Husni

Facilitator

Encik Mustaffa Hj Darimi

Scriber

Nur Hidayatulshima Omar

Group Members

- **Marina Md. Din**
- **Eliyas Bin Sulaiman Mohandas**
- **izza Izelan**
- **Aminah Binti Mat**
- **Elleen Mariana Zu Binti Yakob**
- **Rohana Ngah**
- **Nadiyah Hj. Thanthawi Jauhari**
- **Dr. Norazlin Mokhtar**
- **Fhazwani Affim Bin Redzuan**
- **Nuriiana Binti Abdul Rahman**
- **Nur Fazleen Badrul Zaman**
- **Muhani Missnan**
- **Nur Amanina Rohaila Binti Mohd Bakri**
- **Siti Noraihana Binti Nasir**
- **Nuzha Binti Noordin**
- **Franciska Marina Savarimuthu**
- **Muhd Mukhlis Bin Ahmad Badiozzaman**
- **Saliha Hassan**
- **Nursahaza Farah Binti Md Sharif**

GROUP 4

Group Leader

Sharifah Mumtazah Syed Ahmad

Facilitator

Dr. Noor Ida Ramli

Scriber

Marina Binti Mohamed Zahidi

Group Members

- Asha Singh
- Datin Noor Sheena
- Sarina Binti Abd Hamid
- Tengku Hazazah Tengku Awang
- Sharina Maamor
- Nor Afizah Binti Haji Omar
- Nurzahirah Binti Zubir
- Mohammad Azarul Zaman Bin Mazlan
- Mohd Khairull Bin Ab Ghani
- Nursyaidatul Kamar Binti Md Shah
- Nor Masheera Abdul Manat
- Sahaniza Harun
- Ruzman Ariffin
- Rohani Othman
- Rahmah Binti Tahir
- Nur'Aisyah Binti Shukor
- Ahmad Faizal Hafis Bin Mohd Nawi
- Nur Izzarti Anuar

GROUP 5

Group Leader

Mohd Zafi Zakaria

Facilltator

Puan Hassnah Wee

Scriber

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- Bina Ramanand
- Syarifatul Adibah
- Ruhani Mat Nuri
- Nik Mastura Nik Ismail Azlan
- Nazreen Nilam

- **Nurliyana Hanim**
- **Yvonne Jain**
- **Zahid Mohd. Zaini**
- **Norita Abd. Razak**
- **Nor Faridah Junaidi**
- **Nadia Mohd. Dani**
- **Hjh. Habibah Hj. Abd. Rahman**
- **Siti Nur Afiqah Aman**
- **Fashihatul Mumtazah Imam Sarkowi**
- **Suhaila Haron**
- **Mohd. Ariff Mohd. Jali**
- **Siti Mariyahtun Sazali**
- **Jaidi Abd. Gani**
- **Mohd. Ikhmal Zulkefli**
- **Intan Yuzranisha Abd. Rahim**
- **Nomati Din**
- **Kamsina Abu Bakar**
- **Tuan Daim Tuan Mohd. Noor**
- **Mohd. Hafiz Jalil**

GROUP 6

Group Leader

NorAfni Binti Md Yusuff

Facilitator

Puan Suzana Hamzah

Puan Nordiana Binti Mohd Nordin

Scriber

Mas Anom Abdul Rashid

Group Members

- **Nor Afni Md Yusuff**
- **Mas Anom Abdul Rashid**
- **Nurul Asma Binti Mamat**
- **Muhamad Faizal Bin Md Shalleh**
- **Mohamad Ruhul Amin Bin Mohd Zulkefli**

- **Siti Norhasibah Binti Arifin**
- **Norliana Binti Alias**
- **Tek Binti Mohamad Noor**
- **Siti Nazirah Binti Mohamad Adham**
- **Siti Nurfateha Binti Mat Jusoh**
- **Farah Hani Natasha Binti Norazhar**
- **Nor Mazura Binti Mohd Razul**
- **Rozita ismail**
- **Asmah Jailani**
- **Nurul Zaimah Binti Noor Zamry**
- **Raja Sharuddin Bin Raja Hamzan**
- **Ling Jing Kuen**
- **Nur Nadia Naim**
- **Mohamad Dhiyauddin Bin Zanalabidin**
- **Azu Farhana Anuar**
- **Shahrul Aina Binti Omar**

APPENDIX IV

GROUP SUMMARY

Realizing that women has always been regarded as second fiddle to men and not given as much recognition nor opportunity as expected as men, strategies and policies has been set to reform such inequalities. Youth and women must be educated well enough to know their rights, guidelines for proper national policies to be adopted at every level to accommodate for youth and women as well as for their training. The leadership qualities of women should also be utilized by providing parallel opportunities for qualified women at every level to be appointed head of departments respectively

The country should realize the importance of women and youth to the development of our nation. We should continuously give opportunity and provide equality in various fields to women and youth. As such, women should be given equal opportunities either government or private sectors. Likewise, youth should be made aware of more opportunities by way of direct media information to all. Direct engagement also niay avoid third party elements that may dissuade youths into misguided information.

Opportunity to better education or further studies should also be made available to youths who qualifies and provide guidance for those who require assistance in enhancing their studies.

Women and Youth in Malaysia have various problems due to their origin of ethnicity. However, one thing is clear that they should be

empowered. Empowerment in the sense that they should be given a proper platform to polish their potentials imbued in them.

Globalization has different impact on both Women and Youth accordingly. The advent of information technology has brought us all closer and thus changes must be done to correct what social and economic imbalances has caused thus far to both women and Youth of the country.

Globalization also brought along with not only positive but also negative issues. Thus Youths are exposed to all sorts of foreign cultures and ills from everywhere. Policies should be formulated to comprehend such situation and to focus on dealing with present problems locally.

This group emphasizes on the need for good governance in the government of the day over its citizen. Issues like basic Human rights, right to education, religion, right to be heard, freedom of press etc. They believe that a good government is one that addresses these issues on Women and Youth in particular as they will be the next generation of leaders of the country.

Women have been given much prominence but still more could be done. Whereas Youth request Government be more Youth friendly (willing to listen) like Obama style of engaging young voters in USA. As for Youth who likes to form their own version of youth societies, this should be encouraged and supported. NGOs should remain as NGOs concentrating on welfare work to help the people and the government and avoid to be politically influenced by any quarters.

This group emphasised more on Women than youth. As such the core of its conclusion is to promote gender equality. It demand that women should be given proper recognition in terms of jobs and social perception. Media should also be more sensitive to women issues when reporting and highlights their plights

instead. In passing, they call for more voice of Youths to be heard in making policies, activities or laws that affects them

Call to evaluate Youth movements and their focus over the millennium in nation building during the time all the PMs. Role of Youths and their associations changes with time and such the budget required to sustain their activities also varies. Regarded as human capital hence more investment in Youths should be made in the sense of more training, leadership, skills and education for all ethnic groups and both male as well as female. Again, Women demands that any policies or laws to be formulated should include women so as to empower them in such decision making process. Qualified and able women should be given the same opportunity to assume high government offices as well as in the industry.



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APPENDIX V

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

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Project Director

Assoc. Prof. Radiah Mohamed Ghouse

Moderator

Puan Zuraidah Haji Musib

**Vice President for Corporate Communications,
Professional Services Development Corporation**

Facilitators

Puan Rohaya Wahab

Puan Hassnah Wee

Dr Norshidah Nordin

Dr Noor ida Ramli

Puan Nordiana Mohd Nordin

Encik Mustaffa Hj. Darimi

Puan Suzana Hamzah

Secretariat

Puan Azliah Othman

Puan Hanizan Abdul Samat

Puan Hairina Ahmad Bakri

Puan Syamseeziana Nuruddin

Encik Mohd Hafidz Ab Satar @ Ahmad Sabri

Encik Zulkifli A. Rahman

Encik Nik Rosali Hassan

Encik Zanjabil Mat Janum

**Encik Irwin Shah Sulaiman
Puan Shariffah Murshidah Syed Aripin**

Perdana Leadership Foundation

**Zarina Abu Bakar
Hj. Shaarani Abdul Rahman
Maznah Bahari
Hjh. Laila Jaafar
Rosmawatie Abdul Halim - Emcee
Noor Insunfatima Abu Bakar
Maizatul Kartini Kamaruddin
Mardziah Ahmad
Adnan Haris
Hidayati Haron
Abdul Halim Ismail
Suhana Mat Tehor
Mazuin Zulkapli
Siti Suliana Abdul Halim
Suriyana Mohd. Noor
Datin Latifah Hj. Ismail
Hasniza Hashim
Musyri Mohd. Zin
Azhar Shaari
Mohd Khairue Mat Anan
Siti Murshidah Mat Riffin
Rabiatul Adilah Saad
Ruzaini Ramli
Nur Fara Melissa Mohd Mujab
Nuraida Ibrahim
Mohd Aizat Abdul Halim
Nurzahidah Yaacob
Mohd Suhairi Ismail
Asharudin Mohd Jan
Sani Abdullah
Asrul Hisham Sabarudin**



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