

Companies compelled to include gender index, says PM

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The Securities Commission has launched a new initiative compelling companies to include gender index in their annual report to monitor gender diversity in their organisations.

Prime Minister Najib Razak said the initiative was part of the country's policy to raise the number of women in decision-making positions in public and private sectors, to 30 percent by next year.

"By next year, we will know the composition of women of each company board members, managerial (level) and employees," he said in his speech at the opening of the Asean Conference on Women in Politics (Asean WIP KL2015).

He said, to boost the country's efforts in formulating policies and legislation specific to women, the government had also established a Women's Advisory and Consultative Council.

"The council will act as a think tank, monitoring and appraising the efficiency and effectiveness of government policies and programmes related to women and will play an important role in line with our National Policy on Women and the Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women.

"These initiatives followed the inclusion of 'Upholding the Role of Women' as one of the main strategies in our last budget - which outlined plans to improve access to the job market for all women," he said.

Najib also stressed that Malaysia had a proud tradition of giving rise to strong women.

"It is this tradition that we hope to strengthen for the future, increasing the number of empowered female leaders we have in our midst today, and ensuring that all women - across our region - have the same opportunities to succeed tomorrow," he said.

He added, women had an equal, indeed a crucial, role to play in matters of politics, governance and leadership.

"We must challenge and overcome the social conventions that say a woman's role is only in the household. Both genders, men and women, must understand that these are shared responsibilities and men must share in them.

"Only then, having changed this mind-set, can women go beyond, and become true equals in the workplace," he said.

Political network for women

Meanwhile, on the Asean WIP KL2015, Najib said this conference helped, as it aimed to create a political network for Asean women involved in politics and, by extension, encouraged greater participation of women in decision making positions and in the electoral processes.

"This is only the beginning of what I hope will be a growing trend of cooperation and sharing amongst the Asean nations today.

"We must encourage and support the exchange of ideas across our borders, and then create an environment where those ideas can be implemented. Let us learn from one another and, in doing so, strengthen ourselves and each other," he said.

He said Malaysia was proud to support this channel and platform where women leaders could share their opinions and ideas towards further female representation in politics.

Najib said he looked forward to establishing a secretariat for Women in Politics in Kuala Lumpur to ensure that this dialogue and cooperation became an annual occurrence.

The Asean WIP KL2015 is the international conference organised by Wanita Barisan Nasional (BN), concerning women in politics, being held for the first time, with over 121 delegations from 24 political parties around the region in attendance.

- Bernama

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