

Rosmah: Marriage, Motherhood Should Not Work Against Women's Advancement In Workplace
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PETALING JAYA, Sept 19 (Bernama) -- Marriage and motherhood should not work against women's advancement in the workplace, said Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor.

If a woman was capable, competent and had the desire to work, there was no reason why she should be denied the opportunity to contribute to the well-being and economic growth of the nation, noted the prime minister's wife.

"We need to shift the thinking of both men and women to acknowledge that marriage and motherhood should not work against women's advancement in the workplace, and was compatible with women's economic participation.

"In this context, companies need to provide women-friendly facilities, such as childcare centres, flexible working hours and adjustable career path.

"Tearing away culture, legal and practical obstacles prohibiting women from generating economic rewards is imperative.

"When this happens, it will inevitably raise their standard of living which will then benefit families, communities and contribute to the country's economic growth," she said in her keynote address at the World Women Economic Forum which began here Monday.

The two-day forum, themed 'Strengthening Economic Empowerment for Women: A Blueprint for Success', is organised by the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (ASLI) and attended by more than 250 delegates from 26 countries, included Belgium, Brazil, Argentina, Romania and China.

In her speech titled, 'Advancing Economic Opportunities for Women: The Way Forward', Rosmah said there was a need to set up a re-entry programme for skills upgrading and retraining should be made available for women who had taken time off to raise their children.

For women past the retirement age and still able to contribute, special initiatives to tap their talent and expertise should be seriously considered, she added.

"Another pivotal factor for advancing economic opportunities for women is through entrepreneurship, (whereby) many countries have promoted this initiative as a critical strategy for advancing economic opportunities for women," she said.

Rosmah said, in order to be successful entrepreneurs, women should develop their business plan or strategy with a clear vision, mission and target, and also have essential skills such as business planning, financial management and assessment of market conditions.

She said there was a need for funding to be made easily available for women to successfully participate in the economy, such as micro-finance which was essential in helping to start small enterprise.

These small enterprises should be expanded into large-scale and high growth companies, she said, adding that the women should also create networks among themselves to assist and build up each other's expertise, as well as develop strategic business plans.

"The best business network for women entrepreneurs is one mentored by other successful businesswomen, which includes training programmes and other technical support modules.

"Women should not just concentrate on female-centric products but should be bold enough to go into new ventures that were once considered 'inappropriate' for them, such as oil and gas, construction, security, engineering, shipping and telecommunication."

The prime minister's wife said the country should fully tap its human resources, otherwise it was running only at half its capacity.

The empowerment of women was indeed, very critical for a nation to address at this seemingly critical juncture, she added.

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