

**Malaysia Needs To Focus On Women Talent Pool To Become Developed Nation**  
**Bernama**  
**February 21, 2013**

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 21 (Bernama) -- Malaysia cannot achieve its ambition of emerging as a developed nation by 2020, if unable to fully unlock the potential of half its population, that is, the talent pool of women, said Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop.

"Whether we succeed in optimising our women talent will, in large, depend on corporate Malaysia," he said in his keynote address at the launch of the ACCA Malaysia Sustainability Reporting Awards (MaSRA) 2013 here Thursday.

His comments came on the heels of a report, "Retaining Women in the Workforce", compiled by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) and Talent Corporation Malaysia (TalentCorp) released here today.

The report seeks to understand the reasons behind Malaysian women's low participation in the labour force. It is the result of a survey done in mid-2012 on the state of female employment and retention in Malaysia.

The report was released at the launch of the MaSRA 2013.

In a statement ACCA and TalentCorp said to gain a better insight into the issue, ACCA and TalentCorp mooted a joint survey to analyse the factors behind the scarcity of women in the Malaysian workforce.

According to the World Bank - Malaysian Economic Monitor, November 2012 report, it falls short at 46 per cent, compared to Asean countries like Singapore (60 per cent) and Thailand (70 per cent).

"The survey revealed that 93 per cent of female respondents on a career break had considered re-entering the workforce. However, 63 per cent find it difficult to do so.

"The study also found that only 30 per cent of the respondents' employers have flexible work arrangements policy, coupled with only seven per cent having a childcare support facility policy in place," it added.

The report also highlights that while there are some within corporate Malaysia who champion gender diversity and inclusion programmes, the fact remains that this is currently not in wide practice among Malaysian employers.

This survey is a critical element in the ACCA and TalentCorp's initiatives to promote gender diversity and inclusion through sustainability reporting via the ACCA MaSRA 2013, which recognises the best practices in sustainability reporting within Corporate Malaysia.

TalentCorp was established on Jan 1, 2011 under the Prime Minister's Department to formulate and facilitate initiatives to attract, retain and nurture talents in support of the country's Economic Transformation Programme (ETP).

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