

**Rosmah makes strong case for continued empowerment of women**  
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Women should continue to be empowered to enable them to speak up and develop their sense of self worth besides realising their full potential, said Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor.

The wife of the prime minister said empowering women meant giving them knowledge and thinking skills to make informed decisions and giving them courage to break free from limiting belief patterns, societal conditioning or misinterpretation of religious texts that had held women back.

"When women are empowered, their invaluable talents could directly improve the growth, prosperity, competitiveness and progress of their countries.

"A society where men and women have their say would be more balanced as it incorporates the diversity of perspectives that both could bring to any discourse," she said.

Rosmah said this in her keynote address on 'Empowering Women For a Better Future' and who later opened the 11th Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) Area Conference for Southeast Asia and the Far East, in Shah Alam today.

Rosmah told the audience that Malaysia placed an invaluable premium on the development of women in the belief that without their equal development, the country could not realise its fullest potential for growth.

As a result of the concerted empowering efforts undertaken by the government and non-governmental organisations, she noted that Malaysian women had made considerable inroads and achieved success in many areas.

"Today, our women are helming various organisations and institutions, indeed, we have successfully transformed women to be effective partners in nation building," she said.

Rosmah highlighted education and health as among important factors that contributed to Malaysia's success in empowering women.

She also described entrepreneurship as a pivotal factor for advancing sustainable economic opportunities for women and facilitating their contribution to the economy.

Rosmah said women-owned businesses now constituted 19% of total business establishments in Malaysia where some of these businesses had graduated from SMEs to large enterprises encompassing areas like stockbroking, food and beverage, trading, finance, plantation, fishery, construction, oil and gas as well as information and communication technology.

"This only shows that given equal opportunity as well as the necessary support and assistance, women could prove their worth in the business world," she said.

Rosmah further said that NGOs played a key role in providing platforms and information for specific networks which could facilitate and enhance women's economic activities.

In facing the ever-increasing challenges of empowering women today, she said they had no choice but to work together and support each other.

"Let's banish the saying 'Women are their worst enemies'. Women should stop the habit of shutting other women out because of rivalry in trivial matters such as age, beauty, marital status, educational attainment, job success and so on.

"Instead, we should reach out and help other women to succeed. If all women mentor and promote other women, we'll have a generation of talented women moving not only themselves but the nation and the world," she added. – Bernama, October 19, 2015.

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