

**TIMBALAN PERDANA MENTERI**

**YAB DATO' SERI DR WAN AZIZAH BINTI WAN ISMAIL**

OPENING SPEECH INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SECURITY CONFERENCE 2018 & SURI INCENTIVE (EPF FOR HOUSEWIFE)

**Tarikh:**

Tuesday, August/28/2018

Assalāmu'alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh.

Salam Sejahtera.

Saya meminta izin untuk menyampaikan ucapan saya dalam Bahasa Inggeris disebabkan majlis ini dihadiri tetamu antarabangsa.

Selamat Datang and Warmth Greetings from Malaysia.

1. It gives me great pleasure to be here today to witness the International Social Security Conference 2018 with the theme "A Better Tomorrow". I am especially happy to see all the attendees from various countries, international institutions, ministries, agencies as well as those from other organisations.
2. I wish to congratulate the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) of Malaysia for organising this gathering that will provide a platform to exchange ideas and best practices as well as foster greater cooperation with the different agencies in the government, international institutions and partners in the future.
3. I am pleased to see the EPF, together with international partners, making headway in bringing the topics of social protection to the forefront.
4. On behalf of the Government, I would like to thank the EPF for giving us the opportunity to use this platform today to launch the much anticipated Suri Incentive.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. Malaysia is a fast growing nation with great ambitions of joining the league of high income nations. This transformation will see major trends, such as the increasing role of women in the workforce, major shift towards urbanisation, increasing life expectancy and prevalence of the nuclear family structures, becoming a common phenomenon in Malaysia and our region.

6. These trends will bring its own set of social and demographic challenges as Malaysia is expected to achieve an aged population status as early as 2030. It took France 115 years to reach there and Malaysia will only take 25 years to reach this state. This would translate to an increasing number of years spent in retirement, with the challenge of inadequate savings, compounded with the increase in cost of living.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. The voice of the Malaysian people is strong as seen by the outcome of the last general election. The people want a government that cares not only about their wellbeing, but also one that facilitates citizen empowerment through both economic and social means for a better Malaysia that is productive and progressive.

8. The Government is committed to eradicating poverty through various workable means. We seek to establish greater collaboration within government agencies and statutory bodies that will help to unlock income potential, increase household productivity as well as create a more productive workforce.

9. Notwithstanding our efforts, there will still be groups in need of extra support from the Government. Though they make up less than 1% of Malaysian households, there are people who still live in extreme poverty. This group remains particularly vulnerable to economic and social distress in trying to make ends meet as well as increasing financial obligations.

10. To generate higher income and improve their standard of living, this vulnerable group must be given every opportunity to participate in the labour market and other economic activities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. Social security is important to all Malaysians, but it is especially crucial to enable the financial wellbeing of women. Firstly, women tend to live longer than men. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia, women outlive men by about 4.7 years, with the average man living until age 72.7 while women live until age 77.4. These additional years of longevity increase the risk that women may outlive their savings and that their pensions may lose their purchasing power.

12. Further, I am sure everyone will agree with me that women deserve an adequate retirement income, regardless whether the woman's work life is spent unpaid in the home, in the paid workforce, or a combination of the two. In fact, housewives who need to work long hours, without leave and who are unpaid, should be the first to be entitled for pensions from the family.

13. The Government is committed to recognise and safeguard the value of women, especially those with the greatest need and will implement an initiative to help address the financial wellbeing of the Malaysian woman and which will improve equity between spouses. Hence, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development is extremely pleased to collaborate with the EPF on this initiative to enable housewives the opportunity to gain access to quality social security and enhanced income security, which is currently enjoyed by EPF members.

14. The Suri Incentive will be implemented in three phases.

15. For Phase One, Suri members may save a minimum of RM5 monthly into their EPF account, upon which the Government will then contribute RM40 monthly. As a start, the target group for Phase One consists of housewives to the Head of Household or *Ketua Isi Rumah*, in short KIR. Targetted KIR are married men (for their respective wives), single mothers and widows registered in e-Kasih. For your information, e-Kasih is a database system established at the national level to support the planning, implementation and monitoring of the poverty programme for those in bottom 40 (B40) category.

16. The government is keen to ensure the wellbeing of the people. However, every citizen should also show the determination to raise their standards of living. A minimum contribution of RM5 per month in this programme represents that commitment from the people and at the same time inculcates the nature of saving for their future.

17. The Government's contribution will be raised to RM50 in Phase Two, where in addition to the RM40 contribution to EPF, a sum of RM10 will be disbursed for protection under the Social Security Organisation, or SOCSO. This means that those who have registered under Phase One will have an extended benefit. However, as protection under SOCSO is currently not extended to housewives, there is a need to make necessary legislation changes to make Phase Two possible. We hope to be able to launch this phase early next year.

18. The programme will then progress to Phase Three where 2% of the husband's EPF contribution will go to their housewives' account. To arrive to this Phase Three will take some time as this will require amendments to be made to the EPF Act 1991. We are still exploring the various options for this, taking into consideration several financial and non-financial factors. We hope to be able to launch this phase in early 2020.

19. Today marks the soft launch of this programme, and it will start next Tuesday, 15th of August 2018.

Ladies and gentlemen,

20. I am proud to announce that The Suri Incentive is part of **Pakatan Harapan's 10 Promises in 100 days** (EPF Scheme for Housewives) and, Alhamdulillah, we managed to fulfil the promise within this period.

21. Through this strategic partnership with the EPF and SOCSO, we hope to see more women in this country receive the social protection and income security that they deserve and to ensure that they are able to live with dignity throughout their golden years.

22. Contribution to EPF is not only important to protect those in the formal sector but even more so for those who work in the informal sector. Having an individual account in the EPF is the first step for better security.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

23. All countries have their own unique response to facilitate its citizens' economic and social wellbeing, and Malaysia has to do what is right for itself, that is to find sustainable solutions through strong consolidation of efforts from all parties.

24. What is crucial is to learn from past mistakes and introduce effective policies that respond to economic conditions, addressing not only vulnerabilities caused by current conditions but also to strengthen preparedness for the future.

25. In conclusion, socio-economic security is key to the social well-being of the country and its population. It provides a sense of security for people to ensure their lives and the lives of their loved ones are well taken care of.

26. It is the Government's priority to enable that all Malaysians will be able enjoy the opportunities available to them. We commend EPF, who has worked tirelessly and gone beyond its mandate to enable Malaysians from all walks of life, the opportunity to gain access to quality social security and enhanced income security.

27. EPF has compiled interesting articles for the *INSIGHT* Magazine, which has provided us with useful information and data about ageing, spending behaviour, rising household debt and social well-being in general. The magazine has also shared different perspectives of things that we have taken for granted, such as healthcare, financial security and savings adequacy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

28. It is my sincere hope that this conference will not only serve as a platform for participants to discuss a system-based approach and its application but also practical experiences and learning with regards to current issues on social security. I hope that the outcome of this Conference will enable us to learn best practices and share best knowledge to create a better tomorrow.

29. I wish you all a successful and meaningful Conference. I would like to say my thanks to all Sponsors, Exhibitors, volunteers, Media, invited speakers, panelists, moderators, rapporteurs and all those who have contributed towards the success of this event.

30. On this note, dengan lafaz bismillah and *in the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate*, it is with great pleasure that I declare open the International Social Security Conference 2018 and the launch of the Suri Incentive.

*Wabillahi Taufik Walhidayah,*

*Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.*

Thank you.

**© Hak Cipta © 2018, Jabatan Perdana Menteri**

Source: <http://tpm.jpm.gov.my/tpm/ms/node/56>