

SPEECH BY DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
AND
MINISTER AND MINISTER OF WOMEN, COMMUNITY AND FAMILY
DEVELOPMENT MALAYSIA
YAB DATO' SERI DR WAN AZIZAH DR WAN ISMAIL
AT THE RECEPTION DINNER
IN CONJUNCTION WITH
THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN MARITIME ASIA

REGIONAL REFERENCE ON WOMEN IN MARITIME ASIA

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Venue: INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL KUALA LUMPUR

SALUTATION

Yang Berhormat Tuan Anthony Loke Siew Fook
Minister of Transport Malaysia

Your Excellencies, High Commissioners and Ambassadors of Malaysia

Yang Berbahagia Datuk Mohd Khairul Adib Abd Rahman
Secretary General, Ministry of Transport

Yang Berbahagia Dato' Baharin Hj. Abdul Hamid
Director General of Marine Department Malaysia

Yang Berusaha Tuan Mohamad Halim Ahmed
Undersecretary Maritime Division, Ministry of Transport

Ms Josephine Uranza
IMO Regional Coordinator, Regional Presence for Technical Cooperation
in East Asia

YBrs. Dr Yasmin Mohd Hasni,
President of the Malaysian Chapter of WIMA or MyWIMA

Excellencies High Commissioners and Ambassadors to Malaysia

Distinguished Speakers and Participants

Ladies and Gentlemen

Assalamualaikum w.b.t dan Salam Sejahtera

Saya bersyukur ke hadrat Allah S.W.T kerana dengan limpah kurnia dan keizinanNya dapat kita bersama-sama berkumpul pada majlis malam ini.

Memandangkan terdapat ramai tetamu antarabangsa pada malam ini, izinkan saya meneruskan ucapan dalam Bahasa Inggeris.

1. It gives me great pleasure to be here tonight at this Reception Dinner hosted by Malaysia for members of the International Maritime Organisation, or the IMO, in conjunction with the Regional Conference on Women in Maritime Asia.

I am pleased to see so many women leaders in the maritime sector from Malaysia as well as from other regions present here today.

2. I am pleased to note that the IMO Council has chosen “Empowering Women in the Maritime Community” as its theme for 2019.

3. IMO’s aim is in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Number 5, which is “to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”.

This is something Malaysia is working towards.

We believe in gender equity, in fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs, which may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.

At the same time, we believe women and girls need to be empowered.

4. Towards this end, the Women’s Development Department at the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry, has implemented a Capacity Building Programme for Women through the concept of Pusat Aktiviti Cakna Bangun Ekonomi (PACBE) (Centre for Community Based Enterprise) to empower women in the B40 group, with a target of 30% comprising single mothers who register with the iWanita system.

Distinguished members of the audience

5. I believe this conference is timely and well placed.

It has brought participants from the Asia region together with speakers from other regions to discuss issues and challenges, to share experiences and to draft an action plan to strengthen their roles and framework, through the participation of women in the maritime sector.

6. As a member of the IMO Council for several consecutive terms now, Malaysia is committed towards realising IMO's aspirations for women empowerment.

At the national level, this would entail specific measures to incorporate gender dimensions to grow the maritime workforce and transform diversity through strategic planning as encapsulated in the Malaysia Shipping Master Plan, or the MSMP.

7. The National Shipping and Port Council which was formed in October 2018, will oversee the implementation of the MSMP.

8. It coordinates the collaboration between the government and the industry, with an emphasis on delivery.

This synergistic partnership is poised to transform strategy into action by providing the direction and vision to ensure that Malaysia achieves its full potential in this sector in the coming decades, while at the same time observing Malaysia's obligations to international conventions.

9. I would like to commend both the Ministry of Transport and the Marine Department Malaysia for their initiatives and support for Women in Maritime Association, Malaysia or MyWIMA which was established in December 2017.

This is in response to, and support of, IMO's commitment to assist its member states address gender imbalances and to empower women and girls through the empowerment of women in the maritime community.

10. I am pleased to inform that, to date, Malaysia has adopted numerous measures to mainstream gender perspectives into the development process including formulating relevant policies for the advancement of women in all sectors, reviewing laws affecting women, improving the national machinery for incorporating women's perspectives into the development process, improving access to education, enhancing training and upgrading healthcare.

11. The Malaysia National Policy on Women 2009 specifies its main objective as to provide a conducive environment for women to enable them to achieve their full potential and to inculcate gender equity policies among all levels of society in all sectors.

12. A conducive environment for women would also mean employers providing an environment that allows women to achieve a work life balance.

13. This, to me, is in line with the campaign theme for International Women's Day 2019, "Balance for Better."

"Balance for better" should mean better gender balance in income equality, in leadership, in safety and health, in education and all areas of life, including a balance between time spent at work and with family.

14. While work is important, family is even more so. A woman can only reach her full potential if she knows her family is safe and taken care of.

This is where child-care centres at workplaces and flexible working arrangements must come into play.

The government has allocated RM10 million to increase the number of day care centres (taska) at government buildings.

As of now, all government ministries, except 3, have day care centres at their premises.

15. A conducive working environment for women also means an environment where women are safe, free from sexual harassment, bullying and other crimes.

16. This is also why the Women's Ministry is in the midst of coming up with a Sexual Harassment Act to provide better protection for women in both the workplace and public spheres.

17. Women's roles are also acknowledged in the Government Transformation Programme, the New Economic Model and the 5-year Malaysia Plan.

18. I am further informed that there is an absence of a concrete data on Malaysian women in the maritime sector and that in itself, is a loss of 50% of the potential talent pool.

However, I am happy to learn that MyWIMA is working on a study to determine the levels women are employed at in the maritime sector, roles assigned to them, and whether women-friendly policies are in place.

19. We made a head-start in gathering such data when Malaysia participated in a pilot project under the APEC Women in Transport or APEC WiT platform which established some baseline data in June 2016 for the port sector in Malaysia.

As you know, ports in Malaysia are regulated by port authorities and operated by port operators.

20. The baseline data showed that, among the major port operators in Malaysia, women made up 6% of their Board of Directors, 18% of their Senior Management and 19% of their Management levels.

Among the seven port authorities in Malaysia, which oversee the port operators, the female composition for the three components stood at 7.5%, 15.1% and 29.6% respectively.

21. Thus, we can see that these statistics are well below the government target of having 30% of women involvement at these levels.

Of course, this is a target and not a quota, which must be filled by women based on merit, and not just to fulfil numbers. I understand that the findings will be further refined when a full analysis for the specific transport sub-sectors is conducted.

Respected members of the audience

22. Shipping is a major contributor and component of not just the Malaysian but also the global economy.

Of the total trade of RM1.88 trillion in 2018 in Malaysia, 98.4% was carried by sea.

Yet, women seafarers account for only 2% worldwide and they form just a third of all shore-based maritime positions.

This represents a tremendous loss of opportunities for women and the maritime sector.

It is widely acknowledged that such a discrepancy in recruitment and retention can be addressed by education and training, as well as

improved policies that support and protect the positions of women at sea and on shore.

23. The Regional Conference on Women in Maritime Asia reaffirms our knowledge that shipping and the maritime sector are largely seen as a male-dominated industry.

24. Changing this scenario will contribute to even greater dynamism and enhancements to this sector.

25. According to news reports, only half of the world's women are employed compared to three-quarters of the world's men.

26. In most developing countries, female employment is even lower, at around 25 percent.

27. Yet, women spend two and a half times more time and effort than men on unpaid care work and household responsibilities.

As Nobel Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai said: "No struggle can ever succeed without women participating side by side with men. There are two powers in the world; one is the sword and the other is the pen. There is a third power stronger than both, that of women."

Respected members of the audience

28. I am pleased this conference has laid the foundation for identifying and working on the small wins first, and creating inroads with specific goals and initiatives for greater opportunities and impactful participation of women in the sector.

This must come with the full commitment and support from both the industry and the government.

29. I feel that this conference has provided a good opportunity for sharing best practices on maintaining gender balances and capacity-building programmes to acquire the high-level competency that the maritime industry demands.

30. I envisage a fair share of strife and toil on the path ahead to mainstreaming gender participation in the maritime sector.

A possible model is to adopt mentoring as an effective step forward with coaching and sponsorship programmes.

We can also reach out to women by showcasing role models in the field.

And we have seen even from this conference alone that we are certainly not short of role models in maritime Malaysia: from women in maritime governance and enforcement; the maritime industry including shipping, ports, logistics; the huge oil and gas sector; shipyards; and the ancillary services including maritime legal, finance, marine insurance, ship surveyors and brokering.

31. We need a meaningful commitment for access to maritime careers and maritime business opportunities, to address the challenges facing women in the maritime sector, and policies, strategies and action plans to promote women's participation in the maritime sector.

Only then can the IMO's goals in empowering women be on the right path to success.

32. It is with such commitment and intention, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, that Malaysia is seeking re-election as the IMO Council member in Category C for the next biennium of 2020-2021.

We firmly believe that our continued presence in the Council will further enhance our contributions to IMO's good work.

Thus, we look forward to having your support for our re-election to the IMO Council.

Ladies and gentlemen

33. I am glad to note that today's conference has addressed substantial issues as we work towards enhancing the participation of women in this extremely important sector.

We certainly look forward to seeing the maritime industry move beyond intent and into action to create employment opportunities and to take practical steps to achieve better gender balance in this sector.

34. On that note, I would like to thank everyone here for your presence and support for Malaysia at the IMO Council.

I hope you enjoy the sumptuous dinner spread before you and the entertainment that we have put together for you.

Bon appetit!

Thank you.

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