

Penyampai : DATIN SERI DR. SITI HASMAH BINTI HAJI MOHD. ALI
Tajuk : MAJLIS MAKAN MALAM ANJURAN NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMAN
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Dif-Dif Kehormat; Tuan-tuan dan puan-puan sekalian.

Saya berterima kasih kepada Majlis Kebangsaan Pertubuhan-Pertubuhan Wanita, atau NCWO kerana menjemput saya ke majlis jamuan makan malam ini. Saya juga berbangga kerana dapat berucap di majlis yang mulia ini.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

2. It gives me great pleasure to be with you at this dinner organised by the National Council of Women's Organisations (NCWO), Malaysia, the Malaysian constituent affiliate of the ASEAN Confederation of Women's Organisations or ACWO. I am honoured to be invited by NCWO and ACWO to be one of the Partrons of ACWO which was formally inaugurated in Jakarta, Indonesia in November, 1981. I could hardly refuse such an honour.

3. It is with pride and pleasure to note that the NCWO Malaysia, took the initiative to organise a Seminar on the theme "Women In The Period of Change" as part of the U.N.

Representative from all the other four ASEAN countries were invited to this Seminar. This was the first official meeting of representatives from Women's NGO's of Indonesia, Philippine, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia.

4. I am informed that this April 1975 NCWO Seminar, led to a call for a special ASEAN section for women's affairs.

This was well received and with further representations by the women's groups of ASEAN countries finally led to the formation of the vital ASEAN Women's PROGRAMME which has become such an essential part of the total development of ASEAN.

5. NCWO also played a significant part in the formation of the co-ordination body of NGO's of ASEAN Women's Organisations which having been established, is now known as ASEAN Confederation of Women's Organisations.

6. I have studied with interest ACWO's Constitution. The Confederation has certain basic and vital concepts in its preamble to the constitution which I feel need to be re-emphasised to remind all women's organisations and the NCWO Malaysia of the important part they have to play in over-all national, regional and international affairs. I refer particularly to the ASEAN Declaration of 1967 wherein as individuals and groups we must constantly and consistently be: "MINDFUL of the objectives of the ASEAN Declaration of 1967 to achieve regional peace and prosperity by securing a better quality of life for the peoples of the member countries of ASEAN;" and "AWARE that the member countries of ASEAN have committed themselves in the Declaration of ASEAN concord of 1976 signed in Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia, to give support to all sectors and levels of the ASEAN communities, particularly the women, in the development efforts;"

7. The objectives of ACWO state the need for co-ordination to secure "all such reforms" as are necessary to give full meaning to equality in human rights, status and opportunities."

8. Further ACWO's objectives" urges women of the member countries of ASEAN to realize and accept their responsibilities in the exercise of their rights and influence in public and private life" and "ensure respect for human dignity without distinction as to sex, race, creed or station in life; as well as promote peace and understanding, and increase mutual support among women through international contacts".

9. These concepts and principles so clearly enunciated must never be permitted to become mere phrases and statements on paper, to be circulated periodically at important meetings. NCWO, Malaysia, as the constituent Malaysian organisation in ACWO must continue to pursue a programme which will enable even greater and more positive participation of women in their partnership roles at national, regional and international levels.

10. As, one of the Patrons of ACWO, I feel it is my duty to remind NCWO, its Affiliates and all other women's organisations to forge ahead in their programmes to reach women at grass roots level so that a larger number of our women may be better equipped to take on the multiple roles and the consequential responsibilities expected of them.

The challenges facing women at all levels of life are many.

Our responsibility is to help women to be able to meet these challenges with success.

11. I note yet again with great interest that ACWO did wisely select for its First General Assembly's Conference early this year, the theme, "Maximising and Equalizing Women's Familial, Political and Civic Responsibilities". I feel confident that NCWO and its Affiliates will address itself to at least a few of the recommendations arising from this General Assembly's meeting.

12. I would at this juncture like to take this opportunity of wishing ACWO every success for the heavy responsibilities it must shoulder. I am confident that NCWO and its Affiliates will continue to even more dynamically and positively engage in work for the progress and well being of women and family, as well as for greater unity among our people and increased prosperity and real peace for our nation even as for the ASEAN region and the world.

13. Para hadirin yang dihormati, sekali lagi saya ucapkan setinggi-tinggi terima kasih atas penghormatan yang diberi kepada saya malam ini dan berharap semoga Allah Subhanahu Wataala akan mencucuri taufik dan hidayahNya supaya usaha-usaha kita mendapat kejayaan bersama serantau Negara-negara ASEAN dan Dunia.

Terima kasih.