Goal 5: Gender Equality

On gender equality, realising the role of women in community and economic development, the Government of Malaysia has consistently shown its commitment in achieving gender equality and promoting women’s and girls’ rights in the country. The National Policy on Women (1989) and Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women (1997) were reviewed and approved by the Government in 2009. The National Policy on Women accords women equality of status and the same fundamental rights accorded to men, as enshrined in the Constitution. The Plan of Action (PoA) for the Advancement of Women was formulated to operationalise the National Policy on Women and it has resulted in more coherent and focused programmes to integrated women in development and further alleviates their status in society. Malaysia also a signatory to several international agreements such as the Cairo Programme of Action 1994 and the Beijing Platform for Action 1995 and has ratified two very important human rights documents, specifically, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), albeit with a few reservations. In the 11th Malaysia Plan (2016-2020), emphasis was placed on enhancing inclusion by ensuring women’s and girls’ needs are addressed at the private and public domain. Notably, it focused on strengthening the family institution and enhancing the role of women in development by creating a more conducive working environment and increasing the number of women in decision-making positions.

Various measures have been taken such as implement the minimum wage of RM1,000 for peninsular Malaysia and RM920 for Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan beginning 1 July 2016, introduce incentives to encourage the establishment of child care centres at the work place, allocate more than RM200,000 to any ministry or agency to establish child care centres at the work place and extend maternity leave (fully paid) starting 2010 for civil servants from 60 days to 90 days. Malaysia also committed in implementing at least 30 per cent participation of women in decision making in the public sector.

One of the programmes to support the target in achieving higher percentage of the female labour participation rate is by having a portal named Flexworklife.my. This Portal aims to build a network of employers
and talents to optimise work-life integration while maximising work efficiency and enhancing employee engagement and also serves as repository of the best ideas and practices in flexible working arrangements as well as family-friendly facilities. To provide opportunities for women to return to work, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development together with Talent Corporation Malaysia (Talent Corp) have launched a Career Comeback Programme, to encourage women to return to the job market. The Career Comeback Grant was launched to provide financial incentives for employers to implement programmes to recruit and retain women who have been on career breaks.

The Government has also implemented an innovative strategy that incorporate the NGO, philanthropy foundation, social purpose organizations and individuals as strategic partners to assist in delivering and providing excellent quality of service to the target group. For example, MAMACARE Programme for the low income households to increase their monthly income and Home Managers Programme, a professional training in the field of household management to enable women for more job opportunities and thus secure higher income.

In addition to that, Malaysia has recently made strides in relation to harmful practices especially towards children. Recently, at the national level, there have been plans to introduce an anti-grooming law and already the Child Act has been amended, under the Child Act (Amendment) 2016, which included the establishment of a registry of convicted perpetrators. Child protection officers employed by the Welfare Department to be professionally qualified social workers as envisioned in the Child Act currently being amended and the proposed Social Work Act. Extend the work of the inter-agency teams dealing with abuse (SCAN) so they cover more of the State and also provide an effective review system.