



MINISTRY OF WOMEN, FAMILY AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**BEIJING DECLARATION AND
PLATFORM FOR ACTION**

**MALAYSIA
PROGRESS
REPORT
2014 - 2019**

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List of Acronyms

1MS4HW	1Malaysia Support for Housewives
1MWISE	1Malaysia Women's Initiative and Self-Empowerment
1MM13	Social Visit Pass
11MP	Eleventh Malaysia Plan
AGC	Attorney General Chambers
ASFR	Age-Specific Fertility Rate
ATIPSOM	Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007
BPfA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
B40	Bottom 40% of Household
CAC	Child Activity Centres
CBE	Clinical Breast Exam
CCP	Career Comeback Programme
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CMA	Communications and Multimedia Act
CMCF	Communications and Multimedia Content Forum
CPT	Child Protection Teams
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
CSI	Corporate Smart Internship
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CUP	Change Product Upgrade Program
CWCM	Central Welfare Council of Malaysia
CWT	Child Welfare Team
DOL	Department of Labour
DOSH	Department of Safety and Health
DOSM	Department of Statistic Malaysia
DVA	Domestic Violence Act
DWD	Department of Women's Development
DSD	Department of Skill Development
DSW	Department of Social Welfare

EIS	Employment Insurance System
EPF	Employees Provident Fund
EPO	Emergency Protection Order
EVAW	Eliminate Violence Against Women
FC	Federal Constitution
FMC	Family Mobile Centres
FLFPR	Female Labour Force Participation Rate
FRIM	Forest Research Institute of Malaysia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GGGI	Global Gender Gap Index
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GLCs	Government-Linked Company
GLICs	Government-Linked Investment Company
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
GSB	Global Shepherds Berhad
HEARTS	Housewives Enhancement and Reactive Talent Scheme
HIP	High Impact Product Program
HPV	Human Papilloma Virus
IHL	Institutions of Higher Learning
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILKAP	Judicial and Legal Training Institute
ISTIC	International Science, Technology and Innovation Centre for South South Cooperation
i-Suri	Incentive Suri
IUI	Intra Uterine Insemination
IVF	In Vitro Fertilization
JAKIM	Department of Islamic Development
JAKOA	Department of Orang Asli Development
KEMAS	Department of Community Development
<i>KDB</i>	<i>Klik Dengan Bijak® or "Click Wisely</i>
KKMM	Ministry of Communications and Multimedia Malaysia
LFPR	Labour Force Participation Rate
LMI	Labour Market Information

LLL	Life-long Learning
LPPKN	National Population and Family Development Board
MARA	Council of Trust
MCMC	Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission
MEB	Malaysia Education Blueprint
MED	Ministry of Entrepreneur Development
MESTECC	Ministry of Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change
MDEC	Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation
MFLS	Malaysia Future Leaders School
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MPKK	Village Community Management Council
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-based Industry
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MOHR	Ministry of Human Resources
MRD	Ministry of Rural Development
MWFCD	Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
MYC	Malaysian Youth Council
MGGI	Malaysian Gender Gap Index
MYP	Malaysian Youth Parliament
MYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
MyWiN	Malaysian Women Innovation Academy
NAP	National Agro-food Policy
NBOS	National Blue Ocean Strategy
NFPB	National Family Planning Board
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NHMS	National Health Morbidity Survey
NIEW	NAM Institute for the Empowerment for Women
NPFDB	National Population and Family Development Board
NSAP	National Strategies and Action Plan
NSP	National Strategic Plan

NSPEA	National Strategic Plan for Ending AIDS
NUR Alert	National Urgent Response Alert
OSCC	One-Stop Crisis Centres
PACBE	Development of the Economic Growth Activity
<i>Pasar Tani</i>	Farmer's Market
PC	Panel Code
PEERS	Health, Reproductive and Social Education
PFAA	Perdana Fellows Alumni Association
PKPMP	Office of The Chief Registrar Federal Court of Malaysia
PLKN	National Service Training Programme
PPSEAWA	Pan Pacific and Southeast Asian Women's Association
PPSMS	Temporary Settlement for Syrian Migrants Programme
PTCOP	Plan of Action on Child Online Protection
PWID	People with injecting drug
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
RMP	Royal Malaysian Police
SG	Secretary General
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMEs	Small Medium Enterprises
SOCISO	Social Security Organization
SOEs	State Owned Enterprises
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SPED	Rural Economy Financial Scheme
SRH	Sexual Reproductive Health
SS4W	Survivor Skills for Women
SUHAKAM	Human Rights Commission of Malaysia
STI	Science, Technology and Innovation
SWD	Social Welfare Department
TalentCorp	Talent Corporation Malaysia Berhad
<i>TEKUN</i>	<i>Tabung Ekonomi Kumpulan Usaha Niaga</i>
TKPM	Permanent Food Production Park
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UN	United Nations

UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
VAW	Violence Against Women
WAJA	Women's Anti-Crime Seminar
WEF	World Economic Forum
WISE	Economic Inspiration for Women
WHO	World Health Organisation
WLPs	Work-Life Practices

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Government of Malaysia continues to stand by our commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Since Malaysia submitted the last report in 2014, a lot of progress has taken place in advancing of the agenda for women. The current report updates not only actions taken for the advancement of women under the BPfA, but also includes initiatives taken towards realising the 2030 Agenda.

2. This Report has incorporated data from the Gender Gap Report 2018 and the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) as well as input from the respective ministries and government agencies. Relevant progress reported in Malaysia's Combined Third to Fifth Periodic Report for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Malaysia's Third Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Report have also been included in this. As a signatory to the CEDAW and pledges made in the BPfA, Malaysia is committed to the empowerment of women and to ensuring that women's rights are protected.

SECTION ONE: PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS

3. As of December 2018, women currently make up 48.5% (15.7 million) of the total population of Malaysia (32.4 million). Out of the total number of women, 24% are aged between 0 – 14 years old, 65.6% are aged between 15 – 59 and 10.5% are aged 60 and above¹. Women are undoubtedly important contributors to Malaysia's socio-economic development. Malaysia believes that the agenda of gender equality should be achieved as enshrined in Article 8 of the Federal Constitution (FC), the National Principles (*Rukun Negara*) and the National Social Policy. Malaysia acknowledges that gender equality and the empowerment of women through social, educational, economic and political status are vital for full sustainable development in all spheres. Gender equality and the empowerment of women will provide substantial impetus to economic growth and propel Malaysia towards its goal of becoming a developed nation by 2025 (as announced by the Prime Minister of Malaysia).

I - Key Achievements for Women in Malaysia

4. Malaysia has been making strides to reduce gender inequalities since 1995 by proactively organising and implementing various initiatives to strengthen equality and non-discrimination provisions in the legislation and in practice. In Malaysia, the achievements of women are seen in areas such as **education, health, economy, politics and decision making**.

¹ Department of Statistics, Malaysia 2019

5. Malaysia has continued to make remarkable progress in terms of access to education. At primary and secondary level, the enrolment ratio of girls is almost equal to boys. For the period 2014 to 2017, there has been a steady increase in the enrolment rate of female students at these levels. As of 2017, it stands at 97.6% for male and 98.2% for female at primary level; 94.6% for male and 88.5% for female at secondary level; and 38.2% for male and 48.3% for female at tertiary level. Literacy rate has increased to 97.3% for male and 96.3% for female, as compared to 96.2% for male and 92.7% for female in 2014.² Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Malaysia attracts more male students. However, the number of full time female students in Polytechnics and Community Colleges are not far behind from the male counterpart. Female students make up 48% of the total enrolment at Polytechnics, and 44% at Community Colleges. Most of the teaching staff in Polytechnics and Community Colleges are female. There are 59% female teaching staff/lecturers at Polytechnics and 60.8% at Community Colleges. Life-long Learning (LLL) programmes in Community Colleges gives training and learning opportunities to more than 51% female participants. Among those who have benefitted from the LLL programmes are single mothers, youth, senior citizens and members of the *Orang Asli* (indigenous people) communities.

6. In healthcare, the Government is committed to ensure that the services provided are affordable and accessible without compromising the quality of service. Life expectancy for both Malaysian men and women have increased over the years. In 2014, the life expectancy was 72.4 years for men and 77 years for women. In 2017, the life expectancy was 72.3 years for men and had risen to 77.2 years for women. The Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) 2018 had reported that the health and survival rate in Malaysia has almost reached gender parity with the score 0.974 on the index. Maternal mortality ratio has declined from more than 40 per 100,000 live births in 1991 to 29.1 per 100,000 live births in 2016.³

7. The Government continues to take appropriate measures to ensure that women and men enjoy equal right to work and employment. Statistics have shown that the number of women employed has increased from 5.2 million in 2014 to 5.6 million in 2017. Malaysia scored at 0.656 on the GGGI in 2018, an increase from 0.617 in 2014.

8. Women's leadership in Malaysia has evolved for over 60 years but has accelerated lately especially as empowerment of women and girls is an important priority. The Government announced the policy of at least 30 percent women in decision making in the public sector in August 2004. The policy aims to reduce gender imbalance at the decision-making level in the public sector. Initiatives to produce more women leaders in the public sector have shown great progress with women accounting for 36.10% of top management positions in 2018 as compared to 35.1% in 2014, beyond the 30% target.

9. For the private sector, efforts will be mobilised to achieve the target of at least 30% participation of women in the board of directors of State Owned Enterprises (SOEs), statutory bodies and public listed companies by 2020. Women's representation at the boardrooms of

² Department of Statistics Malaysia 2018

³ Department of Statistics Malaysia 2018

the Top 100 public listed companies is 24.4% as of 2018 as compared to only 19.2% in 2017⁴.

10. Political empowerment in Malaysia is scored at 0.072 as reported by the GGI 2018. Presently as of June 2018, there are 30 women (13.5%) out of 222 members in the House of Representatives and 13 women (19.1%) out of 68 in the Senate. Out of the 30 elected women from the House of Representatives, there are 5 women Ministers (17.86%) out of 28 Ministers and 4 women Deputy Ministers (14.81%) out of 27 Deputy Ministers. Meanwhile, there are 68 women (11.6%) out of 587 members in the State Legislative Assemblies⁵.

11. In the public sector, the Secretary General (SG) is the administrative Head of each Ministry. Currently, there are five women holding the SG post amounting to 20.8% of the 24 SGs.

II - Challenges and Setbacks

12. Since the previous report, two out of four key challenges highlighted have been addressed which were to increase women's labour force participation rate, and to increase the number of women in politics and decision making. The achievements are as highlighted in paragraphs 235 to 238 of Section Two of this report. However, there is room for more improvement as Malaysia is still working towards achieving the target of 30% women in decision making position in the private sector. The two challenges which still need to be addressed since the previous report are work-life balance strategies and mainstreaming gender equality. Key strategies and programmes to overcome these challenges are elaborated in Section Two of this report.

13. The Department of Women's Development (DWD) have also found that challenges still remain in ensuring that women of various levels of society in the country are developed economically, socially and politically. Single mothers, housewives in particular, as well as women in general need to be empowered by formulating and implementing strategies that create a comprehensive support system in order to enable these groups to help their family economy without worrying about the safety of children and family members.

14. Another challenge is in addressing the low level of economic empowerment for women in the Bottom 40% of Households (B40) group which earn below RM3,860. The high cost of living poses a challenge to these women, in particular single mothers who are trying to raise and educate their children, especially if they are young and require care and protection. Women in the B40 group need to be given more attention and society needs to support the Government's initiatives in empowering this group of women.

⁴ Bursa Malaysia

⁵ Parliament Malaysia

III - Priorities for Accelerating Progress for Women and Girls (2014 – 2019)

15. In accelerating progress for women and girls in Malaysia for the past five years, the Government has given focused attention and priority to the following areas:

- equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice;
- eliminating violence against women and girls;
- access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights;
- women's political participation and representation; and
- encouraging development of women's entrepreneurship and women's enterprises.

Equality and Non-Discrimination Under the Law and Access to Justice

16. The principle of gender equality and non-discrimination against women continues to be observed in Malaysia by means of constitutional guarantees as articulated in the FC, the supreme law of Malaysia. Article 8(2) of the FC provides the necessary guarantee related to the issue of elimination of discrimination on the ground of gender and it sets the tone for legislative measures and judicial decisions in Malaysia. Progressive implementations and measures to eliminate discrimination are being undertaken and are evident from the legislative, judicial and administrative measures taken by Malaysia to implement the principle of gender equality and non-discrimination against women in Malaysia.

17. Malaysia's Domestic Violence Act (DVA) (Amendment) Act 2017 was passed to improve protection for domestic violence. Sections under the Penal Code (PC) have also been amended to ensure that the rights of women are upheld and they are protected from harm. For the protection of girls, the Sexual Offences Against Children Act 2017 that came into force on 10 July 2017 provides for certain sexual offences against children and their punishment in addition to other sexual offences against children and their punishment in other written laws.

Eliminating Violence Against Women and Girls

18. Violence against women (VAW) and girls is defined by the United Nations (UN) as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women and girls, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life".⁶

19. The level of VAW (especially domestic violence) and the girl child (child sexual abuse) is of concern in Malaysia. As a signatory to CEDAW, Malaysia is also obliged to follow UN General Recommendation 195 on violence against women and adhere to due diligence principles i.e. the state must act to:

- prevent acts of violence against women;
- protect the victims/survivors;
- prosecute and investigate the incidents of violence;
- punish and rehabilitate the perpetrators; and

⁶ General Assembly Resolution 48/104 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1993

- provide redress to the victim/survivors for the harm suffered.

20. Measures taken to address these issues are further discussed in paragraphs 170 to 226 of Section Two of the report.

Access to Healthcare, Including Sexual and Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights

21. In Malaysia, reproductive health services including family planning are provided by the National Population and Family Development Board (NPFDB). From 2014 to 2018, more than 1.2 million family members have received various reproductive health services such as family planning, subfertility services, mammogram screening, breast clinical examination, human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination and pap smear. These services can be accessed through 49 Nur Sejahtera clinics all over Malaysia as well as 15 family mobile centres (FMC) to reach out to target groups, especially in rural areas.

22. FMC is a mobile bus that provides reproductive health services as well as family development services such as:

- wellness screening;
- family planning;
- mammograms registration;
- HPV vaccination;
- pap smear examination;
- breast clinical examination;
- psychometric tests;
- family counselling services;
- stress therapy; and
- parenting education.

23. A total of RM20 million has been allocated through the 2019 Budget to provide free mammogram screening, HPV vaccinations, as well as pap smear tests, to benefit up to 70,000 women.

24. In strengthening the Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) services for adolescents, the Government developed a National Guideline on Management of Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health Problems at primary health care facilities. This Guideline takes into consideration the legal and ethical rights, as well as sociocultural and religious perspectives. The areas covered are management of teenage pregnancy and request for abortion, management of abuse, sexually transmitted infections and contraceptive services. The trend of new antenatal cases among adolescents registered at government primary health care facilities have decreased from 18,652 (2011) to 9,617 (2017).

25. Maternal mortality ratio in Malaysia stands at 25.0 per 100,000 live births as of 2017. Confidential enquiry into maternal death showed an increasing trend of deaths due to existing medical associated conditions. Based on this finding, pre-pregnancy care is implemented as

an early intervention for women with medical conditions and significant obstetric complications in previous pregnancies.

26. Malaysia continues to improve access and quality of care for maternal and child health services by expanding health care facilities in rural and urban areas. Number of Public Healthcare Facilities as of August 2019 is presented in Table 1 of the report. In addition to hospitals and static clinics, there are also mobile health services meant for outpatients. These initiatives have made it possible for access to professional care during pregnancy and childbirth as well as access to quality family planning services and information. Efforts are also being taken to strengthen pre-pregnancy care services by educating women with chronic diseases to optimise their health before embarking on pregnancy and ensuring more choices of family planning methods are made available.

Political Participation and Representation

27. Based on the GGGI 2018, Malaysia ranks 101 out of 149 countries for political empowerment. Malaysia's position for this score will increase dramatically as Malaysia has for the first time appointed a woman as Deputy Prime Minister. This is the highest position ever held by Malaysian women in politics. Various initiatives have been carried out to train young leaders especially women to prepare them for leadership positions including in politics. These are elaborated in paragraphs 231 to 234 of Section Two of this report.

Women's Entrepreneurship and Women's Enterprises

28. To encourage and facilitate entrepreneurial activity among women, several financial schemes have been set up for Malaysian female entrepreneurs, including collateral-free sharia-compliant loans under the BizWanita Financing for Women Entrepreneurs Scheme and the Women Entrepreneurs Financing Programme of the government-owned SME Bank Malaysia.⁷ In addition, training and coaching programmes are available for female entrepreneurs to further develop their entrepreneurial and management skills. The Malaysian Women Innovation (MyWiN) Academy, for example, offers a six-month Entrepreneur Track programme for existing women entrepreneurs (aged 25-40) focusing on leadership and innovation. The programme consists of four 3-day "innovation boot camp" workshops and access to mentors with the aim of accelerating growth through innovation.⁸

29. Under the productive welfare approach, the Government has implemented programmes aimed at creating self-reliant entrepreneurs and sustainable social enterprise among women groups. These programmes have been elaborated in Section Two, paragraphs 95 to 127 of the report.

⁷ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Report 2017

⁸ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Report 2017

IV – Women in Vulnerable Groups

Women Living in Remote and Rural Areas

30. Taking cognizance that rural women continue to be socially and economically disadvantaged due to their limited access to economic resources and opportunities, the Government has introduced income-generating programmes for the advancement of women especially in challenging circumstances. These women have been given education, training and entrepreneurship skills to enhance their capacity and capability in order to raise living standards of low-income households. Programmes implemented to empower rural women have been highlighted in Section Two, paragraphs 96 to 97 of this report.

Indigenous Women

31. Many initiatives have been introduced by the Department of *Orang Asli* Development (JAKOA) to improve the quality of life for *Orang Asli* women, especially in promoting their participation in public life and decision making. This has been elaborated in Section Two, paragraph 230 of this report.

V - Humanitarian Crises and the Implementation of BPfA

32. Although Malaysia is not affected by humanitarian crises, those occurring in other countries have led to an influx of refugees in Malaysia. Malaysia's former Prime Minister, during his speech at the 70th UN General Assembly on the 1 October 2015, had pledged to receive 3,000 Syrian refugees in three years, starting 2015 until 2018, to ease the refugee crisis.

33. A special programme was initiated by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) called the Temporary Relocation Programme for Syrian Migrants (PPSMS). Under this programme, Syrians who are victims of war conflict have been given the opportunity to live in Malaysia until the conflict in their country is over. For registration purposes, Syrian migrants must undergo security and health screenings conducted collaboratively by the Royal Malaysian Police (RMP), the Department of Immigration, and the Ministry of Health (MOH). The screening is to ensure that refugees who join PPSMS will not negatively affect public safety and order.

34. In carrying out this programme, the Government has worked together with nine Syrian Humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that manages the education, health and welfare of the Syrian migrants who join the programme. To date, a total of 2,334 Syrian migrants have successfully participated in PPSMS and have been given the Social Visit Pass (IMM13) for a period of 12 months, of which can then be renewed from time to time for free.

35. Statistics of Syrian Migrants in the PPSMS Programme is presented in Table 2 of the Annex of this report.

36. The facilities and privileges given to Syrian migrants under this programme are similar to those received by other foreigners who are legally registered in Malaysia under existing laws, including the requirement to possess appropriate immigration passes to be employed professionally or to study.

37. The rate of charge for medical treatment/surgery/consultation/medication/outpatient treatment imposed on registered Syrian migrants under this programme is 50% of the rate for foreign workers as stated in the Fees (Medical) (Cost of Services 2014) of the Federal Government Gazette, whereas the rate for maternity and medical/surgical deposits is 50% of the rate charged to foreigners. Reduced charges for medical treatment is valid as long as the Syrian migrant is registered under the PPSMS programme.

VI - Malaysia's Priorities for the Progress of Women and Girls for the Next 5 Years (2020 – 2025)

38. Malaysia will continue to empower the rights of women and girls in Malaysia and efforts will be undertaken with priorities given to the following areas:

- equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice;
- eliminating violence against women and girls;
- political participation and representation;
- right to work and rights at work;
- women's entrepreneurship and women's enterprises;
- unpaid care and domestic work/work-family conciliation.

Equality and Non-Discrimination under the Law and Access to Justice

39. The Government is currently in the midst of drafting a bill that focuses on women's empowerment and non-discrimination to achieve gender equality as an investment for the country for a brighter future, especially for women and girls. The creation of the legislation also aims to address issues related to women such as women's involvement as decision-makers as well as the empowerment of women in the economy and labour force. A Special Project Team has been set up to ensure laws relating to gender equality and anti-discrimination are formed with consideration given to all parties.

40. The Government through concerted efforts of various Ministries and Agencies are also in the process of making amendments to the law to address the challenges and issues faced by women in Malaysia. Most recently, the Ministry of Human Resources is refining the amendments to the Employment Act 1955 to address issues faced by women at work.

Eliminating Violence Against Women and Girls

41. DWD has outlined many agenda which includes addressing VAW, as well as raising awareness about the importance of respecting and appreciating women. In order to achieve

this agenda, DWD has and will continue to strengthen its advocacy programmes such as Eliminate Violence Against Women (EVAW) Campaign, Women's Anti-Crime Seminar (WAJA), Legal Clinic and Destress Clinic.

42. In addition, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD) through DWD is currently preparing and drafting effective legal requirements to prevent and address sexual harassment. Campaigns and programmes to raise public awareness on sexual harassment and the adverse effects of such treatment will be implemented at all levels which includes preschool, primary and secondary school, institutions of higher learning, as well as families and communities. To be able to advocate these programmes effectively, DWD has and will continue to work closely with various agencies including RMP, Attorney General's Chambers (AGC), the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD).

43. The Government is also focused on eliminating violence against girls and has recently embarked on the following initiatives:

- appointment of a Children's Commissioner, to be attached to the existing Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM);
- development of a new National Child Policy and National Children Well-Being Roadmap which consolidates all existing policies on children;
- development of a Registry System for Sexual Offenders against Children (eDKK) database; and
- piloting Family Based Care in the state of Negeri Sembilan for children in need of care and protection.

Political Participation and Representation

- **Women Fellowship Programme**

44. *Program Felo Wanita Muda* (Young Women Fellowship Programme) and *Felo Wanita Politik* (Women in Politics Fellowship) are two programmes which have recently been introduced and designed for young women to be exposed to the elements of leadership and politics. The programmes provide opportunities for young women to become interns at government agencies, corporations, and work with women politicians to have a better understanding on leadership aspect in the government and private sector. It will also provide a platform for young women to understand and experience politics. The programmes focus on women ages 35 and below. These programmes will help young women become well-equipped with the understanding of the government, private sector and political structures to help them take progressive action in starting their career.

Right to Work and Rights at Work

45. The Mid Term Review of the Eleventh Malaysia Plan (11MP) stated that female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) has been significantly lower than the male, despite the higher enrolment of females in public universities. In 2017, the male workforce participation in

Malaysia is already at 80.1% and female at 54.7%, with a significant difference in participation rate among the gender and there has been a slow increase for female workforce participation from 54.3% in 2016. Therefore, in the Mid Term Review of the 11MP, a revised female LFPR was set at a target of 56.5% for 2020. Significant measures will be taken through the implementation of flexible working arrangements and expansion of minimum maternity leave as well as providing better childcare facilities.⁹

Women's Entrepreneurship and Women's Enterprises

46. In boosting the level of entrepreneurship, the Ministry of Entrepreneur Development (MED) has been re-established to spearhead comprehensive and integrated entrepreneurship development programmes, including for women. These programmes include special training for the B40 households to explore online business opportunities, which involve the use of social media platforms and easy banking mechanisms as ways of promoting e-entrepreneurs. In addition, training on proper book keeping and documentation will be emphasised to enable B40 entrepreneurs keep better records of business transactions, which is important to secure credit from financial institutions. Mind set change will also be incorporated in all entrepreneur training programmes to build independent character and enterprising trait.

47. More marketing space will also be provided through one-stop centres and temporary trading venues such as farmer's market or locally known as *pasar tani*, as well as mobile facilities which include agro-caravans and food trucks. Concurrently, sharing economy and social entrepreneurship will be further promoted, especially in areas where job opportunities are scarce.

Unpaid Care and Domestic Work/ Work-Family Conciliation

48. Currently, FLFPR remains low due to high cost and lack of childcare facilities as well as limited provision of flexible working arrangements. In 2015, 60% of women gave "housework" as reason for not seeking work¹⁰. Therefore, measures will focus on improving FLFPR through the implementation of flexible working arrangements as well as expansion of minimum maternity leave and providing better childcare facilities. As the current labour law allows the implementation of flexible working arrangements, this will be further encouraged in both the private and public sectors. The Employment Act 1955 will be amended to increase the minimum maternity leave from 60 to 90 days in the private sector to further support working mothers and fathers by including allowance for paternity leave. In addition, regulations on childcare facilities will be reviewed to better facilitate employers to establish childcare centres at the workplace or within the vicinity of the workplace.

⁹ Mid-Term Review of the 11th Malaysia Plan 2016-2020

¹⁰ Department of Statistics Malaysia 2015

Gender-responsive Social Protection

49. The Government is committed in providing social protection for women, especially housewives in order to ensure that they have protection and savings for retirement or in the event of a sudden change in the household. A recent initiative is the introduction of the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) Voluntary Contribution Scheme with Special Government Incentive for Housewives known as *Insentif Suri* (i-Suri). In this regard, EPF was chosen as the implementing agency as EPF primarily provides retirement benefits for the private sector for pensionable employees in Malaysia. Over the years, the EPF has proven to be a responsible and efficient custodian of its members' retirement savings, playing a significant role in the society by providing a majority of Malaysians or their beneficiaries with a measure of financial protection which enables members to have a means during retirement, death or disability.

50. The implementation of the i-Suri scheme is based on three main objectives namely:

- Short-term: to promote voluntary savings;
- Medium-term: to implement mandatory EPF contribution from the husband to the housewife; and
- Long-term: to provide comprehensive social security protection to all Malaysians.

51. The first phase of i-Suri was launched on 8 August 2018 and came into effect and opened for registration on 15 August 2018. The first phase is only applicable to women and housewives that fulfil the following criteria:

- Malaysian citizen;
- above 18 years old and has not attained the age of 60 on the date of application; and
- registered with eKasih until 30th November 2018 which includes all wives of the head of household and all female heads of household.

52. This scheme is further mentioned in Section Two, paragraph 121 of this report.

SECTION TWO: PROGRESS ACROSS THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION (2014 – 2019)

I - Inclusive Development, Shared Prosperity and Decent Work

(Critical areas of concern: A. Women and Poverty, F. Women and The Economy, I. Human Rights of Women, & L. The Girl Child)

Laws and Workplace Policies and Practises

53. Empowering women has been an integral part of the National Malaysia Plan since the early 80s. In the 10MP (2011-2015), women continued to be one of the focus areas particularly in economic development with regards to increasing FLFPR, as well as to

increase the number of women in key decision making positions. The objective in increasing FLFPR to the targeted 56.5% by 2020 is continued in the 11MP (2016-2020). Women were also highlighted in the first strategic thrusts under the 11MP.

54. Budget 2018 introduced measures to increase FLFPR by extending the duration of maternity leave for the private sector from 60 days to 90 days to match the public sector; setting a target of 30% participation of women in boards for Government-linked companies (GLCs) and Government-linked investment companies (GLICs) by end 2018; and personal income tax exemption for a maximum 12 months salary for women on career breaks.

55. Laws and regulations with regard to employment include but are not limited to:

- Employment Act, 1955;
- Children and Young Persons (Employment) Act 1966;
- Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994;
- Minimum Wages Order 2016;
- Factories and Machinery Act 1967;
- Minimum Retirement Age Act 2012;
- Employment Insurance System Act 2017;
- Employees' Social Security Act 1969; and
- Employees Provident Fund Act 1991.

56. Currently, the Ministry of Human Resources (MOHR) is in the midst of drafting the amendment of the Employment Act 1955 whereby a specific clause to prevent discrimination has been proposed to be added. Generally, the substance of the clause is to prevent any sort of discrimination on the basis of religion, gender, race and others in term of employment. The consultation process for the draft amendment was conducted through online public engagement as well as tripartite consultation with the employees, employers and their respective representatives.

57. Malaysia also has ratified the Convention 100 of International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1997 which relates to equal remuneration. As such, the country is obliged to ensure equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value.

58. In relation to rights at work, the Employment Act 1955 applies to all workers regardless of gender. As long as the workers fall under the definition of First Schedule Employment Act 1955, the rights are equal to both women and men workers. Wages as defined in section 2 of the Employment Act 1955 refer to any cash received by the employee for his/her work done.

59. The National Wages Consultative Council Act 2011 was enacted to provide minimum wage to workers regardless foreign and local employees as well as gender. Throughout the years of its implementation, it has been increased from RM900 to the current RM1,100.

60. Besides the Employment Act 1955, MOHR through the Department of Safety and Health (DOSH) covers specific issues for women under the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994 where generally, legislative provisions are enforced to provide equal rights for both male or female employees, local workers or foreign workers in terms of legal protection accorded to them.

61. Section 9 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994 stipulates that the number of memberships to the National Council for Occupational Safety and Health should be three or more persons, of whom at least one shall be a woman.

62. Section 11 of the Act states the exercise of Council's powers and functions, it shall also investigate, make reports and recommendations on the specific issues pertaining to the safety, health and welfare of women's work, disabled persons and other groups in society.

63. Further, other legislations under MOHR's purview that protect the rights at work, such as the Trade Unions Act 1959, the Industrial Relations Act 1967, the Workers' Minimum Standard of Housing and Amenities Act 1992; all of which apply to all workers without discrimination nor distinction to gender.

64. MOHR through the Department of Skills Development has organized Survivor Skills for Women (SS4W) Programme in 2015 and 2016. The SS4W programme is one of the initiatives introduced by the Government under the National Blue Ocean Strategy 7 (NBOS7) - 1Malaysia Support for Housewives (1MS4HW). The implementation of the SS4W programme is based on the Malaysia Skills Certification System through the Earlier Achievement Recognition process conducted by the Department of Skills Development (DSD). In 2015, 437 women have been certified, involving 11 job sectors. In 2016, 436 women have been certified from 10 job sectors.

65. In the Public Sector, Malaysia has no legislation concerning employment discrimination, although the FC does state that discrimination shall not be committed against citizens on the ground of religion, race, descent, place of birth or gender. Employment in the public sector ensures equal opportunity based on eligibility and merit. Women's official entry into the Malaysian public service is based on their academic qualifications and their performance during the selection interview. Under normal circumstances, a basic degree will earn them managerial or professional positions. Thus, having a higher level of education would certainly help in being promoted to the next level. The age at which women hold top positions are mostly between 40 to 60 years old. The gender trend of public servant (2013-2017) is presented in Table 3 of the Annex of this report.

66. Among the principles applied in forming salary schemes in the Malaysian Public Service are qualification and training. These principles are contained in the Report of the Cabinet Committee on the Remuneration in the Malaysian Public Service 1976. Employees are paid according to the job scope which are duties and responsibilities attached to it. Gender has never been a factor in determining the salary for employees working in the public sector as the Government adheres to the principle of equal pay for equal work under the ILO's Convention 100, the Equal Remuneration Convention.

67. Malaysian civil service provides equal opportunities for career development such as access to professional exposure inside and outside the workplace, opportunities for in-service training, access to scholarship, opportunity for promotion, and equal opportunities to assume demanding new challenges that contribute to professional development. Professional programmes have been designed and offered to women focusing on organizational analysis, policy and skill, and includes issues associated with gender sensitivity within the organization, good governance and effective administrative process. Besides this, specifically designed management training and development programmes are also being offered. Women development programmes provide a safe and supportive environment for improving self-confidence, learning new skills, and learning from the experiences of successful role models. They are a useful addition to other strategies designed to increase the number of women in senior positions.

Measures to Prevent Sexual Harassment at the Workplace

68. Currently, Part XVA of the Employment Act 1995 [Act 265] has specific provisions on sexual harassment including the interpretation and process on making a complaint of sexual harassment that occurs in a workplace. The new amendment of Employment Act 1955 being considered is to strengthen the mechanism for the inquiry process. To create awareness, the Labour Department conducted several awareness programmes through social dialogue with tripartite partners (employers, workers and trade unions).

69. In the public sector, Service Circular No. 5 Year 2018 titled 'Guideline for Handling Sexual Harassment Case at the Workplace' was amended and it came into effect on 12 December 2018. The guideline highlights the role of Psychology Officers, Organisational Counsellors, Integrity or Human Resource Officers and Head of Department in managing sexual harassment complaints. A series of awareness and prevention programmes have also been carried out by the Public Service Department since 18 January 2019 at Federal and State agencies.

Land Rights and Tenure Security

70. The Land (Group Settlement Areas) Act 1960 (Revised 1994) which was amended in 2002, provides wives of settlers a joint stake in the land awarded to their husbands. Before that, only husbands were recognized as sole owners of the settlement whereby an agreement is established between the Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) and the settlers and after a certain extent, settlers will receive ownership of the land cultivated. The amendment in 2002 included Section 15 (2a) of the Act where wives of settlers are given joint stake in the land awarded to their husbands.

Financial Inclusion and Access to Credit

71. Malaysia's latest initiative to empower women economically is by way of micro-franchising. The franchise industry in Malaysia contributed RM24.6 billion to the national

gross domestic product (GDP) in 2014 and rose to RM27 billion in 2017. The franchise industry is projected to contribute RM35 billion to the national GDP in the next two years.

72. To ensure the franchise industry remains competitive, the Government of Malaysia has introduced the Micro Franchise Financing Scheme in 2011 to assist franchise entrepreneurs. The objective of the microfinancing scheme is to encourage all Malaysians, from fresh graduates to the disabled, single parents, ex-servicemen, women and those from the lower and middle income groups to become entrepreneurs.

73. Under the Pillar VI of the 11MP: Strengthening Economic Growth in the Priority Area A: Strengthening Sectoral Growth and Structural Reforms, Government financing mechanisms are available in the form of grants and soft loans to support all categories of Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) including SMEs owned by women entrepreneurs. Various ministries and agencies are involved in SMEs development ecosystem to form a partnership and support the aspiration of creating successful entrepreneurs.

74. Malaysia has provided assistance to existing and would-be entrepreneurs through improving access to knowledge, finance and skills needed for success in business. Meanwhile, access to credit and financing facilities made available to women include micro credit financing schemes such as the *Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia* (AIM), the Rural Economy Financial Scheme (SPED) and the *Tabung Ekonomi Kumpulan Usaha Niaga* (TEKUN *Nasional*).

75. The Government of Malaysia has forged a strategic partnership with AIM, a large microcredit organisation in Malaysia. AIM provides financial assistance to poor households to enable them to undertake viable economic activities and hence increase their household income. Training and advisory services are also provided to participants, mainly to assist targeted groups such as women as well as poor and low-income households.

76. In June 2017, a total of 342,887 women entrepreneurs, most of whom are housewives, had received microcredit financing under AIM. This programme has been a success due to the strong commitment of participants, of which 99% of the applicants for the microcredit facilities offered by AIM are women.

77. Meanwhile, TEKUN *Nasional* has set a policy to allocate at least 50% of its funding for women entrepreneurs. A special programme known as *TemaNita* was introduced to help female entrepreneurs obtain financing more easily, quickly and efficiently for business purposes.

78. In 2017, the Council of Trust (MARA), an agency under the Ministry of Rural Development has introduced a specific financing programme for women entrepreneurs called Dananita. The objective of this scheme is to encourage women participation in entrepreneurship as well as to increase competitiveness of women entrepreneurs by providing straight forward financing up to RM50,000. As at 31 December 2018, MARA has assisted more than 500 women through the Dananita programme. Similarly, 11,682 women

entrepreneurs were being facilitated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-based Industry (MOA) until 31 December 2018.

Transition from Informal to Formal Work

79. A 12-month income tax exemption for women who re-enter the workforce after a break of at least two years is given as an incentive for women to return to work. This incentive is available for women who return to the workforce between the years of assessment 2018 to 2020.

80. In addition to the legislation under the law, MOHR through Talent Corporation Malaysia Berhad (TalentCorp) established the Career Comeback Programme (CCP) in 2015. The CCP facilitates women to return to the workforce after taking a career break. As of 2019, the CCP has evolved into an upskilling and/or reskilling programme to facilitate women who are on a career break to return to the workforce (professional jobs). TalentCorp facilitates employers in conducting reskilling or upskilling programmes. Between 2015 to April 2019, a total of 1,136 women registered for CCP. Out of these, 820 women were recruited.

81. Besides CCP, Work-Life Practices (WLPs) Advisory Services by TalentCorp is one of the initiatives to promote women to join the labour market. TalentCorp works with organizations to implement WLPs at their workplace by providing advisory services, for example:

- flexible working arrangements;
- benefits such as extended maternity leave and paternity leave; and
- facilities such as nursing rooms and childcare centres at the office.

82. Many of these WLPs cater towards women talents, especially mothers with young children. Some of the more progressive Malaysian companies now offer up to six months paid maternity leave, or one month paid paternity leave. Nursing rooms are also increasingly more common amongst large Malaysian firms. In 2019, TalentCorp is extending the outreach to SMEs.

Recognising Unpaid Care and Work-Family Conciliation

83. The Malaysian Government has put into place financial incentives to encourage employers to provide on-site childcare facilities for children of employees. For example, in 2018, the Government has allocated RM10 million for setting up 50 childcare centres, while private sector employers can benefit from a double tax deduction for costs of providing and maintaining childcare centres at the workplace. At the same time, a 10% Industrial Building Allowance is available for buildings used as childcare centres.

84. To help parents pay for childcare services, tax reduction and subsidies have been introduced. Employees receive a double deduction on childcare allowances, and subsidies are available for low-income families that use public sector workplace childcare centres or

private registered child care centres. In the public sector, monthly child care fee subsidy of RM180 for each child is provided for household income below RM5,000.

85. The Department of Community Development (KEMAS), an agency under the MRD has established 10,345 kindergarten classes (for children ages 4 to 6 years old) and 509 nurseries (for children ages 2 to 4 years old) all around Malaysia. Approximately 71% of the kindergartens and nurseries are located in the rural areas. The Government provides per capita grant of RM100 for each child as well as meal subsidy between RM2 to RM3 per child per day for children attending KEMAS nursery/kindergarten. Parent's contribution is determined by their monthly income, ranging from RM5 to RM25 monthly for nursery and RM50 to RM150 for kindergarten.

86. Meanwhile, the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) is committed in providing services including rehabilitation, care and protection by establishing institutions for older persons. There are three types of institution for older persons under the DSW which are *Rumah Seri Kenangan* (Homes for Older Persons), *Rumah Ehsan* (Home for Chronically ill) and *Desa Bina Diri* (Homes for Destitute).

- **Rumah Seri Kenangan (Homes for Older Persons)**

Among the services provided by this institution are care and protection, counselling and guidance, recreational activities, medical care, occupational therapy and physiotherapy.

- **Rumah Ehsan (Homes for the Chronically Ill)**

Homes for the Chronically Ill was set up to provide care, treatment and protection to older persons who are sick, powerless and without next of kin with a comfortable and peaceful environment.

- **Desa Bina Diri (Homes for Destitute)**

Desa Bina Diri provides care, protection and rehabilitation for destitute to become more productive, skilled and inculcate positive values to enable them to be integrated back into the society.

- **Activity Centre for Older Persons**

Activity Centre for Older Persons (PAWE) is an outreach and developmental programme for older persons with strategic cooperation between MWFC and other government agencies and NGOs. As of February 2019, there are a total of 88 activity centres around Malaysia. Various activities and programmes are provided at the centre including religious and recreational activities, therapy and rehabilitation, medical screening, health talks and relevant training.

- **We Care Unit for Older Persons**

We Care Unit for Older Persons is a smart partnership programme between DSW and the Central Welfare Council of Malaysia (CWCM). This collaboration provides services and transportation facilities to older persons who live alone or are financially unstable for health screening and treatment at government or private hospitals and health clinics.

- **Home Help Services**

Home Help Services is a programme that provides services to older persons who live alone or without any family members. This is a social outreach programme where volunteers visit the houses of older persons before they are called for help. Home Help Services is also a programme based on charity as a collective responsibility which requires the involvement of everyone.

- **Financial Assistance for Older Persons**

The Government through DSW provides financial assistance for older persons amounting to RM350 (about USD100) per month to assist the elderly poor to remain in their families/communities. The recipients of this financial assistance must be registered with the DSW, are Malaysian citizens aged 60 years and above, and with household income below RM960 per month for Peninsular Malaysia; RM1,020 for Sarawak and RM1,180 for Sabah. In 2018, 139,673 older persons received the financial assistance amounting to RM557,394,800.

87. To further promote work-family conciliation, MOHR is drafting amendments to the Employment Act 1955 to increase the number of days for maternity leave to 98 days, and new clause on paternity leave. In the public sector, full paid maternity leave is provided up to 360 days throughout service and seven days of paternity leave for male employees.

88. In promoting decent work for paid care workers, MOHR has established a “Guideline and Tips for Employers of Foreign Domestic Helpers” to create awareness to the employers and ensure adequate protection of foreign domestic helpers. The guideline covers useful information regarding laws and practices related to the recruitment and employment of foreign domestic helpers and addresses key questions on resolving conflicts and provides adequate resources to support households employing foreign domestic helpers. The guideline was launched on 25 May 2017 and made public via MOHR website. MOHR through the Department of Labour (DOL) has conducted several seminar sessions throughout 2016 involving employers, employees as well as NGOs. MOHR is also drafting amendments to the Employment Act 1955 to replace the word “domestic servant” with “domestic employee”.

Division of Marital Assets

89. **The Law Reform (Marriage and Divorce) Act 1976 [Act 164]** was amended in 2017 as one of the measures to address issues arising out of the conversion to Islam of one party to a civil marriage. The amendments came into force on 17 October 2017. Previously, the right to dissolve a civil marriage is only given to the spouse who has not converted to Islam which had caused a lot of problems. With the amendments, the converting spouse has a right to file a petition for divorce to dissolve his/her civil marriage.

90. The amendments to Act 164 heralds a new milestone in children and women’s rights, notably on issues regarding matrimonial disputes, such as child support and the division of matrimonial assets in divorce proceedings. For an example, divorced fathers are now required to pay child support until the completion of further or higher education or training of their children.

91. In relation to division of matrimonial assets, Act 164 now considers, among others, the contribution of mothers to the welfare of the family by looking after the home or caring for the family, and the duration of the marriage. Further, the amendments to Act 164 will be applicable to any existing actions or proceedings which commenced immediately before the amendment came into force.

Fiscal Consolidation Initiatives

92. The Government of Malaysia has embarked on fiscal consolidation initiatives since 2013. The initiatives aim at reducing the Federal Government's fiscal deficit and its debt level in order to ensure long-term fiscal sustainability, sustain economic resilience, as well as create fiscal space and flexibility to implement counter-cyclical measures to support the economy during a crisis.

93. To date, several key fiscal consolidation measures have been implemented. The measures include enhancing tax administration and compliance, expenditure rationalisation and optimisation, improving fiscal policy institution, as well as strengthening budget management and control. The expenditure rationalisation and optimisation exercise involves streamlining the functions of ministries and agencies, scaling down and ceasing programmes and projects with low multiplier effects to the economy, and improving government procurement policy.

94. The Government has not made any assessment on the impact of expenditure rationalisation and optimisation on women and men. However, the expenditure rationalisation was implemented in stages by taking into account various aspects and has been carefully examined to balance the welfare of the people with the need to strengthen the fiscal position of the country. The Government has also prioritised its spending on initiatives such as to increase labour market participation of women, in line with the Government's effort to empower women in Budget 2018.

II - Poverty Eradication, Social Protection and Social Services

(Critical areas of concern: A. Women and Poverty, B. Education and Training of Women, C. Women and Health, I. Human Rights of Women, & L. The Girl Child)

Initiatives to Reduce/Eradicate Poverty Among Women and Girls

95. On 7 June 2016, Malaysia deposited the instrument of ratification of the Minimum Wage Fixing Convention 1970 (No.131) with the ILO. In conjunction with the ratification, the Minimum Wages Order 2012 was enacted to provide minimum wage to both foreign and local workers irrespective of gender which is reviewed on a two yearly basis. Throughout the years (2012-2019), the minimum wage has been increased from RM900 to the current RM1,100.

96. In order to reduce poverty among women and girls in rural areas, MOHR through DOL conducted Job Fairs to facilitate employment opportunities. The following programmes have also been carried out to promote poor women's access to decent work:

- **Single Mother Mini Carnival 2016**

The implementation of this programme is in line with the role of the MOHR as a Committee Member for the Single Mother Empowerment Action Plan (2015-2020) led by MWFCD. The main objective of the carnival is to promote the role and responsibilities of relevant government agencies in coordinating job offers as well as training, skills programmes and activities to single mothers. A total of 1,000 people attended this programme, 525 of which are single mothers. 362 people enrolled for a career interview by 14 employers offering job opportunities.

- **Seminar on Career, Entrepreneurship and Social Welfare of Single Mothers 2017**

The main objectives of the seminar were:

- to nurture and disseminate information on the rights/welfare/opportunities in employment and related issues from the legal perspective;
- to raise awareness about the rights and welfare of single mothers in the aspects of marriage/post-marriage through legal aid provided by the Ministries/Departments/Agencies involved;
- to raise awareness on the importance of socio-economic status through the advice of Ministries/Departments/Agencies related to employment, entrepreneurship, welfare, health and family; and
- to offer employment opportunities and skills training to single mothers.

A total of 100 people attended this seminar, 70 of which are single mothers.

97. MRD has launched the Rural Development Plan (2018 – 2023) which consist of six thrusts. One of the thrusts is to empower rural women, which consists of three strategies and nine programmes. One of the three strategies focuses on optimizing the capacity and employment rate for rural women. In terms of implementation, MRD has introduced several programmes to eradicate poverty and increase household income of rural population, including women such as:

- **Income Enhancement Programme** - To provide assistance to B40 individuals, especially the poor and hard core poor in the rural areas. Priority is given to single mothers. Under this programme, MRD provides assistance up to RM10,000 in grant to help the target group to participate in economic activities such as setting up small businesses, delivering services, agriculture, fishery and farming as well as setting up agro-based activities. Assistance is provided in the form of tools, seedlings, premises, raw materials and trainings.

- **Skills Training and Career Programme** - To provide training grant to B40 individuals ages 15 and above, especially the poor and hard core poor, in the rural area. The training grants enable the targeted individuals to undergo skills training to increase their potential and employability. The grant includes tuition fees and subsistence allowance.

- **Quick Wins Course** - This course is targeted for B40 individuals, especially housewives, single mothers and rural youth. MRD provides skills training such as sewing, culinary, computer literacy, handicraft and grooming, as well as toolkit worth up to RM2,000 for the recipients to start their own business.

98. Malaysia values and supports the empowerment of women through the implementation of various programmes and projects as well as services of technical expertise to emphasize the role of women in Malaysia. The success and achievement of women in the agriculture sector gives impact to the industry and the country. Nowadays, there are many women entrepreneurs who are able to build up their own brands and market their products abroad with the assistance of the Government.

99. In line with the Government's aim to strengthen the SME and micro entrepreneurs, MOA through its National Agrofood Policy (NAP) is focusing to improve the efficiency of agrofood industry in Malaysia in terms of driving productivity and competitiveness across the industry value chain. The main objectives of the policy are to ensure adequate food supply and food safety, develop the agrofood industry into a competitive and sustainable industry, as well as increase the income level of agricultural entrepreneurs.

- **Matching Grant Programme** was created to help agro-based industry entrepreneurs to improve the quality and product manufacturing capabilities through High Impact Product Programme (HIP) and Change Product Upgrade Programme (CUP). To date, a total of 308 women entrepreneurs out of 1,743 entrepreneurs have benefited from MOA's matching grant.
- **Human Capital Development Programme** aims to improve the service delivery by strengthening the knowledge and skills of entrepreneurs through:
 - trainings related to capacity building: to focus on quality improvement through standards/certification, technology and marketing disclosure, and business management and finance; and
 - monitoring the development of the industry through e-IAT system.

100. Human Capital Development Programme also aims to expand and introduce agricultural products and enhance the agro-based industry products both domestically and internationally. Until today, a total of 6,269 participants have attended the training on human capital development and 54 products have been certified (Halal, GMP, HACCP etc). This training also benefited women as entrepreneurs to improve their knowledge in business and increase their performance.

101. In the agriculture sector, women have long played and will continue to play an active part by engaging in a wide variety of tasks related to cultivation. Approximately 18% of the 85,109 farmers are women and involved in various types of projects such as fruit and vegetable clusters and Permanent Food Production Park (TKPM). Meanwhile in the agro-based industry, the involvement of women is more significant with 73% of 8,860 entrepreneurs are women producing various agro-based products such as snacks, frozen foods, fruit-based products and bakeries.

102. To encourage and increase women's participation in agriculture, Agrobank, a financing institution under MOA launched a microcredit financing programme in 2018, specifically designed for women agropreneurs known as **Agro Nissa'-i**. The programme aims to help women entrepreneurs in the start-up and expansion of their business.

103. Food security is a global issue of concern for developing countries including Malaysia. There is a close relationship between food security and poverty, which is a common problem affecting rural communities and low-income households. To address the issues of food security, the four dimensions of food security, namely availability, accessibility, utilization and stability must be properly tackled.

104. As one of the fastest growing economies in the region, Malaysia has successfully transformed from an agro-based to industrial-based and service-based country since independence. This is clearly shown in the GDP value contributed by the agriculture sector which changed significantly from 37.9% to 8.6% between the years 1960 to 2000.

105. Malaysia has taken the following initiatives to ensure food security and sustainable development of agro-food industry:

- **Malaysian Good Agricultural Practices (myGAP)**

myGAP is a certification scheme to encourage good agricultural practices which emphasizes on the environment, economy and social aspects to ensure the agricultural produce is safe and of good quality. Farms which adopt good agricultural practices will manage the hazards associated with the elements of land, water, inputs, processes and output of agricultural production, indirectly contribute to achieving sustainable agriculture development system.

- **Malaysian Organic (myOrganic)**

myOrganic is a certification programme to certify farms that are operated in an organic method according to its criteria and guidelines. myOrganic restricts the usage of chemical inputs, synthetic additives, genetically modified organism (GMO), agricultural residue burning and other inputs or practices which create hazards to the environment and human well-being. myOrganic ensures the food produced is safe for consumption while minimizing the impacts to the environment.

- **National Strategies and Action Plans on Agricultural Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Utilisation (NSAP)**

The NSAP was formulated and implemented in 2012 to identify, conserve and optimize the use of agricultural biodiversity in Malaysia. The conservation of biological diversity is vital for sustainable food security and agricultural production to enhance productivity, improving human and environmental safety and quality of life. The NSAP includes three components of dimensions of genetic resources for food and agriculture, namely plant, animal, and microbial. For each of the components, four issues are identified, which include education and public awareness, capacity building, research and monitoring, and legal and institutional framework.

106. As with other developing countries in the region, Malaysia also faces similar challenges in the agriculture sector such as rapid population growth, land limitation, low

productivity and income of farmers, aging workforce, coupled with the impacts of climate change. To realign the strategies and initiatives, Malaysia has just recently unveiled the five-point directions towards ensuring food security and boosting income in the agriculture sector. The new direction is centred on food security, rural economic development as well as domestic investment and international trade. It will focus on modern technology, research and development as well as agriculture database to improve farmers' capacity and service delivery.

107. Housing Assistance Programme for the Poor was introduced by MRD to provide housing assistance to enable the target groups to live in a safe and comfortable house, and to improve their quality of life. The assistance includes funding of up to RM68,000 to build a new house and up to RM15,000 for house restoration. The target group is poor and hard core poor individuals with priority given to single parents, senior citizens, people with disability and disaster victims.

Women's Entrepreneurship and Business Development Activities

108. Among the programmes introduced by MWFCD to support women's entrepreneurship and business development activities are as follows:

- **MAMACARE** is a Confinement Care Programme carried out by NPFDB for low-income households (LIH) to generate their income by offering traditional and modern holistic postnatal care services for mothers. This programme focuses on holistic confinement care for postnatal mothers to increase their health status and knowledge in managing their newborn babies and also their families.

109. The programme was established in 2012 under the National Blue Ocean Strategy (NBOS), 1Malaysia Women's Initiative and Self-Empowerment (1MWISE). It initially targeted single mothers, older women, and women from LIH. Between November 2012 and December 2017, a total of 1,111 MamaCare practitioners have participated in the MamaCare training programme. For that period, they have provided 27,093 postnatal care sessions for young mothers and 141,720 sessions of wellness services to women. As a result, the majority of these trained MamaCare practitioners managed to double their monthly income. It has now received many applications from private sectors, NGOs, and individuals including women in rural communities across the country.

110. To ensure the continuity of the programme, MamaCare programme has expanded its target to women in B40 household (household income below RM3,860). As of December 2017, a total of 1,111 MamaCare practitioners have been trained nationwide. MamaCare practitioners have been awarded the certification in MamaCare Malay Massage Professional Practice through MamaCare Graduation Ceremony endorsed by NPFDB and *Gabungan Pertubuhan Pengamal Perubatan Tradisional Melayu Malaysia* (GAPERMA).

111. Today, several MamaCare practitioners are able to generate monthly income up to RM12,000. A total of 86 MamaCare practitioners have also been involved in social entrepreneurship by starting their own spa and mobile spa from their income through

MamaCare service. Meanwhile, 50 MamaCare practitioners managed to produce and market their own products on a small scale while some have expanded their services abroad to Dubai, Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom, Singapore, Vietnam, Thailand, Australia, Japan, Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Brunei. The success of MamaCare programme has been made into a case study of social innovation project which was presented at the University of Oxford during the Challenges of Government Conference held in May 2016.

- **Single Mother Skill Incubator (I-KIT) and Women Entrepreneurship Incubator (I-KeuNita) rebranded to Development of Women Entrepreneurs Initiatives (DeWI)** targets vulnerable women including those in the B40 group, single mothers, widows and indigenous women. Participants undergo training in areas such as tailoring, beauty therapy, handicraft production, childcare, tourism and food processing. Through these programmes and trainings, participants are expected to start up business with the skills, advice, guidance and equipment acquired.

112. A total of 303 I-KIT programme have been carried out from 2008 to December 2016, involving 5,294 single mothers, out of which 2,359 have become successful entrepreneurs. For the I-KeuNita programme, 237 programmes have been implemented and 8,510 women have participated since it was introduced in 2010 until December 2016, out of which 1,446 women have succeeded in becoming entrepreneurs with 50% increase in income.

113. In 2017, initiatives have been taken to improve the implementation of women economic empowerment programmes to give more impact and bring benefit to not only the targeted group but to the DWD indicator on the effort to encourage society involvement in organised programmes. Among the improvements are as follows:

- Participant composition must involve all group/ethnicity;
- Minimum 30% of the participant's composition must be single mothers;
- Monitoring of participants' activities for 6 months;
- Participants Income Statement for the first 3 months and the second 3 months after the course participation to be submitted; and
- Rebranding of the I-KIT/I-KeuNITA into the DeWI programme.

114. By the end of 2017, a total of 59 DeWI programmes have been carried out involving 1,048 participants. Out of these total participants, 130 have managed to raise 50% of their income. In 2018, a total of 18 programmes have been implemented with 431 participants. However, on 18 May 2018, the DeWI programme has been put on hold for review.

- **Harmony Community (previously known as PERWANI)** is a programme with the objective to create 100,000 small groups of women (comprising 10 – 20 individuals in each group) to act as an agent of change in their very own communities, by implementing programmes for the well-being of women and the community, and also as the Government's agents in ensuring a multi-directional information relay between the Government, its agencies and the public at large. The Harmony Community promote healthcare, family welfare, skill training, entrepreneurship and tuition programmes.

- **Centre for the Development of the Economic Growth Activity (PACBE)** run by DWD consists of capacity building programmes to ensure the well-being of women. Through this Community Based Enterprise (CBE) concept programme, DWD works closely with successful business entrepreneurs and instructors to train and develop the capacity of women in the field of skills that have a high demand in the marketplace such as catering, sewing and beauty. Entrepreneurship is being taught to help participants understand the nature of business and to be able to generate income thus improving the quality of life. DWD also provides guidance to participants to get the skills acquired.

115. DWD has and will expand cooperation with various parties including RMP, AGC, MOE, and MRD to implement the programmes such DeStress Clinic, Legal Clinic, Anti-Crime Women's Seminar and EVAW Campaign. Through the PACBE initiative, DWD intends to create a network of women across Malaysia to act as agent of transformation in their respective communities.

- **Smart Domestic Managers Programme** is a training course conducted by DWD in the field of household management to enable women to secure better jobs and thus secure higher income.
- **Economic Inspiration for Women (WISE)** is a programme to increase women participation in entrepreneurship by providing trainings, financing assistance, seminars and marketing activities. This includes 'entrepreneur clinic', a consultation and advisory services as well as sales carnival to provide additional marketing platform for women entrepreneurs.
- **Initial Entrepreneurship Course** aims to create awareness on entrepreneurship opportunities as well as to increase entrepreneurship skills especially for rural women. The training modules consist of 21st Century Basic Entrepreneurship Course, Business Plan Development Course, Financial Management Course, Business Model Design Course and Online Marketing Course.

116. There are other financing scheme and business support activities provided by agencies under MRD. For example, 30% of women are currently the tenant at MARA premises all over Malaysia. Under this programme, women entrepreneurs are able to rent various types of business premises at an affordable rate.

117. Financial assistance schemes are also provided by the Government through the DSW under MWFCF. These schemes have three key purposes, namely:

- maintenance of family income to meet basic needs;
- improve clients' living standards; and
- encourage target groups who are still productive such as the disabled and single mothers to continue working and regain financial independence.

118. There are 10 Assistance Schemes under the DSW which are:

- Financial Assistance for Children;
- Financial Assistance for the Older Persons;
- Financial Assistance for Foster Care Children;
- Incentive Allowance for Disabled Workers;
- Financial Assistance for PWDs who are incapable of work;
- Public Assistance;
- Financial Assistance for Carers of Bed-Ridden Disabled and the Chronically Ill;
- Launching Grant;
- Financial Assistance for Artificial Aids/Assistance Devices; and
- Apprenticeship Allowance.

119. DWD has set up Legal Clinics to provide public disclosure and understanding of gender and women's rights and related issues. It also serves to enhance knowledge and understanding of legal rights, especially among women so that the laws serve as tools to uphold justice other than to guarantee their virtues and dignity. Legal Clinics also provide information to women and communities on assistance provided and the available channels to report crimes. Besides Legal Clinics, in providing low-cost legal services for women living in poverty, legal aid assistance is available through the Legal Aid Bureau and NGOs.

120. The Syariah Court of the Federal Territories suggested the establishment of *Mahkamah Tinggi Hadhanah* (High Court for Child Custody), *Mahkamah Tinggi Nafkah* (High Court for Maintenance) and *Mahkamah Penguatkuasaan dan Pelaksanaan* (High Court for Enforcement and Implementation) in 2017. The establishment of these courts aim to address issues relating to increase of related cases and lack of court offices to hear and decide such cases. Furthermore, such courts also encourage the development of expertise among the Syarie judges in handling cases relating to family matters. Currently, the establishment of such courts has been tabled and passed by the Cabinet.

Improving Access to Social Protection

121. To provide social protection to all sections of society, the Government has placed focus on housewives. For housewives who are registered in the National Poverty Database under the e-Kasih programme, the Government has introduced the EPF i-SURI contribution scheme where husbands are incentivised to contribute to their wives' retirement savings. For the e-Kasih beneficiaries whose husbands contribute at least RM5 monthly into their wives' retirement savings, the Government will contribute RM40 a month. An allocation of RM45 million is provided for this scheme. The objectives of this scheme is to ensure that housewives have savings for retirement and future protection; and to promote and educate the vulnerable groups in the society to start saving for current day-to-day use or in the case of misfortune such as divorce, husband's death or husband's disability. Additional benefits of i-Suri are the same as other EPF members who enjoy annual dividends and are eligible for disability assistance, death assistance, withdrawal of savings as well as tax relief (subject to prescribed

conditions). Until 15 June 2019, a total of 113,114 women have registered under the i-Suri across Malaysia.

122. MOHR through HRDF has established the Housewives Enhancement and Reactivate Talent Scheme (HEARTS) with the following objectives:

- To enable housewives to actively participate in the workplace and thus contribute productively to the country's economic growth;
- Provide a platform for non-working housewives to enhance their knowledge and skills in specific areas to enable them to work independently from home whilst maintaining their status quo as housewives;
- To help increase the percentage of FLFPR to 55%; and
- To help increase household income and elevate housewives from the B40 group.

123. The target group for the HEARTS programme includes married women or single mothers amongst Malaysian citizens whom are unemployed, aged between 25 - 60 years old and hold a Diploma and above or the equivalent. Throughout the implementation of this initiative, more than 10 focus group sessions were held with women's NGOs, employers, and training associations for input and feedback on the suitability of courses offered. As a result, 13 specific areas have been introduced. All course fees are fully borne by the Government.

124. In terms of programme mechanisms, housewives that are interested in participating in the HEARTS programme will undergo an interview to determine their interest in the courses to be followed. Each participant who joins the HEARTS Programme will be equipped with two mandatory modules and a specialization module of their choice. The modules are:

- **Transition**

Through this module, participants will be prepared with motivational and positive mind-set exercises before they can participate in the next module.

- **Communication and Business Etiquette**

Participants will follow training that emphasizes efficient and effective communication methods, as well as practice transparent and positive business ethics.

- **Functional/Technical Knowledge**

Trainees may select one of the 13 approved modules, according to their respective preferences.

125. After attending the course, participants will have the opportunity to be employed or self-employed. Through the HEARTS programme, 1,309 housewives have been trained successfully.

126. Besides that, previously starting from July 2013, 1Malaysia Support for Housewives Programme was established and regulated by DOL. This programme was designated to give women who are housewives the opportunity to enter into the labour market through a group business (in a group) with a grant given by the Government under the NBOS budget. The

number of projects carried out and the number of participants involved in the 1Malaysia Support for Housewives Programme is presented in Table 4 of the Annex of this report.

127. As of 1 January 2018, MOHR through the Social Security Organisation (SOCSO) has established the Employment Insurance System (EIS). EIS is a financial scheme aimed at helping employees who have lost their job. This scheme is meant to enable retrenched workers to gain monetary funds that would help them get back on their feet for up to six months. Basically, EIS aims to:

- provide immediate financial benefits and upskilling opportunities to workers who have lost their jobs;
- assist workers in finding suitable employment based on their skills and interests;
- assist employers in filling vacancies with the best candidates; and
- provide up-to-date and comprehensive Labour Market Information (LMI) to policymakers.

Statistics of workers that have benefitted from EIS is presented in Table 5 of the Annex of this report.

Improving Health Outcomes

128. The public health care services are largely funded by the Government and financed mainly through the general taxation of income. Malaysia provides highly subsidized health services at minimum or no cost at primary, secondary and tertiary public health care facilities. In government health facilities, a nominal fee of RM1 (equivalent to USD 0.23) is charged for each outpatient visit at primary care and this covers consultations, investigations and treatments. Services are accessible through 3,223 static health facilities (1,085 Health Clinics, 1,796 *Klinik Desa* and 342 Community Clinics). In terms of access to static health facilities (public and private), 84% percent of the population are within 5 km radius. For those who are unable to access static facilities, mobile services through land, water and air are provided. As of 31 December 2018, a total of 247 mobile health services comprising 235 mobile health teams and 12 Flying Doctor Services teams have provided services to remote and hard to reach population. This includes provision of health services to *Orang Asli* community and the population in the interior Sabah and Sarawak.

129. Maternal health services in public sector are accessible to all without any discrimination, regardless of social grouping, nationality, including migrant workers irrespective of their legal status. Antenatal and postnatal care is given free for Malaysian women at public facilities. Based on the National Health Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2016,¹¹ 97.4% of pregnant women received minimum of four total antenatal visits as recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO), and almost 70% of them came early for antenatal care before 12 weeks pregnancy. The proportion of deliveries conducted by skilled health personnel (safe deliveries) was high at 99.5% and the vast majority of them delivered in hospitals. At least 88% of postnatal mothers received minimum of three scheduled home visits as part of their postnatal health care.

¹¹ National Health Mobility Survey (NHMS) 2016

130. Provision of family planning is accessible in government and private health facilities. However, it is a continuous challenge for Malaysians to increase the contraceptive prevalence rate which has plateaued at about 52.2% for the past two decades.

131. Out of wedlock teenage pregnancy has been a social stigma in conservative Asian society. Since 2012, special emphasis has been given towards teenage pregnancies by making the services friendlier, non-judgemental and provide psychosocial support during pregnancy through multi agency collaboration. Currently, more than 80% of new antenatal teenage pregnant mothers have received antenatal care at government health facilities. Malaysia has done extremely well in reducing the age-specific fertility rate (ASFR) among adolescents 15-19 years from 28 per 1,000 girls in 1991 to 9 per 1,000 girls in 2017.

132. Over the past five years, the NPFDB has continued the endeavour to deliver reproductive health services especially for women and girls, in the form of:

- **Subsidy Programme for Mammogram Screening**

133. Realizing that breast cancer is one of the most common killers among women, since 2007, the Government has approved the proposal from MWFCD to provide a RM50 subsidy for every mammogram done in private facilities registered with the NPFDB. The objective of the subsidy is to promote greater awareness among women in high risk group to undergo mammogram screening for early detection of breast cancer. Malaysian women and permanent residents, aged 40-70 are eligible for mammogram screening at private mammogram centres registered under NPFDB. Meanwhile, women aged 35-39 with family history of breast cancer before the age of 40 are also eligible but require referral by a doctor. From 2014 until 2018, a total of 183,091 women received subsidy for mammogram.

- **Clinical Breast Examination**

134. Clinical Breast Examination (CBE) is a physical exam done by a healthcare provider, often done during regular medical check-up. A CBE should be performed using proper technique (must be performed by a physician, nurse or other qualified medical staff). From 2014 to 30 March 2019, a total of 296,613 women came for CBE.

- **HPV Vaccination Programme**

135. Cervical cancer is one of the deadliest but most easily preventable forms of cancer for women with 270,000 deaths annually with 85% occurrence in developing countries. In Malaysia, it is the third most common cancer¹², with infection of the cervix with HPV as the most common causes of cervical cancer. HPV vaccination was implemented since 2012 through the HPV Vaccination Catch Up Program. The implementation of this programme is for women aged 18 years old and above who meet the eligibility requirements and have never been vaccinated. From 2014 to 2019, a total of 234,434 women and girls have benefited from this vaccination programme.

¹² National Cancer Registry, 2011

- **Pap Smear**

136. Pap smear screening is a type of procedure that needs to be done within a period of time to detect changes in cervical cells in the early stage before it spreads to cancer cells. Pap Smear examination can detect any abnormalities in the cervix. The abnormal results obtained not necessarily means that you have cervical cancer; it may also indicate other infections and require further examination. Any woman between 26 and 70 years old and married (active in sex) is strongly advised to perform this screening except for women who have undergone hysterectomy (removal of the uterus and cervix). A total of 98,801 clients received Pap Smear screening services from between 2014 until 2018.

- **Family Planning**

137. The National Family Planning Board (NFPB) was established in 1966 to plan, execute and coordinate all family planning activities in the country. The programme began with the provision of clinical contraceptive services mainly in the urban areas. Subsequently, the national programme was expanded to the rural areas through the integration of family planning with primary health care services of MOH in the early 1970s. In 1984, NFPB has been renamed as NPFDB to extend their scope of services from family planning to family development, reproductive health and population. Now, the family planning services provided by NPFDB can be accessed through 49 clinics all over Malaysia. From 2014 to 2018, a total of 294,238 have received consultation, services and information regarding family planning provided by NPFDB.

- **Sub Fertility Services**

138. Fertility treatments are among the major elements in reproductive health. NPFDB has also provided this service since its inception in 1979 and has become one of the main and best specialist centres for the public sector. The services provided are comprehensive and up to date and able to serve those who need it. Among the fertility treatment techniques provided by NPFDB are intra uterine insemination (IUI), in vitro fertilization (IVF) and intra-cytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI). The target group are couples with trouble conceiving and also those experiencing difficulty in getting pregnant again. From 2014 to 31 Mac 2019, a total of 35,150 couples have undergone sub fertility programmes at NPFDB.

139. MOH provides universal access to health care services to all including adolescents through its network of 3,223 (figure for 2017) primary health care facilities nationwide regardless of age, sex, race, socio cultural/religious values or political norms. All 1,085 government primary health clinics provide comprehensive adolescent health services which include health promotion, health risk assessment, advice, counselling and referral to other agencies or experts where necessary. The scope of services includes physical health, nutritional health, mental health, sexual reproductive health and risk behaviours. All the 1,796 (2017) community clinics nationwide also provides services for pregnant teenagers.

140. In 2001, MOH developed a National Adolescent Health Policy and subsequently, the National Adolescent Health Plan of Action as an advocacy tool to various relevant agencies

to guide and support the health and development of adolescents in the country through holistic interventions. MOH has also developed various modules, guidelines, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to train health care providers on provision of quality, comprehensive adolescent friendly health services. Regular training on adolescent health care and counselling skills are conducted at the national, state and district levels to empower primary health care providers to engage and manage teenagers in a friendly and non-judgemental manner. All the while taking into consideration the principles of harm reduction in the best interest of the child, as well as their rights for appropriate information and SRH services.

141. In 2012, MOH has developed a National Guideline on Managing SRH Problems Among Adolescents for Primary Health Care Providers which focuses on management of teenage pregnancy, request for abortion, management of STI/HIV/sexual abuse and contraception services. This guideline aims to strengthen the delivery of SRH services to adolescents which takes into consideration the legal and ethical rights, as well as socio-cultural and religious perspective, as Malaysia is a country with diverse ethnicity, socio-cultural and religious beliefs.

Women and HIV

142. Retrospectively, the national response to HIV started as far back in 1985. HIV/AIDS and death related to it was added to the list of notifiable diseases under the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Act 1988. Raising awareness and knowledge on HIV/AIDS has been the focus of MOH since the formulation of the Plan of Action in 1988. The first National Strategic Plan (NSP) on HIV/AIDS was developed in 2000. In 2005, the NSP was reviewed and a 5-year NSP (2006-2010) for HIV responses was endorsed and implemented. Thereafter, MOH continues to implement HIV response under the National Strategic Plan for Ending AIDS (NSPEA) 2016 - 2030. It prioritizes several programmes among others, expansion of testing and free treatment to those infected. Under the NSPEA, all HIV-infected people are treated and followed-up comprehensively by Infectious Disease Physicians or Family Medicine Specialists at no cost.

143. By the end of 2018, Malaysia had a cumulative total of 118,883 HIV cases, 25,925 AIDS cases and 43,843 deaths related to HIV/AIDS, thus giving reported people living with HIV (PLHIV) of 75,040 cases. The annual number of newly reported HIV cases has been on a steady decline from a peak of 6,978 in 2002 to 3,293 in 2018. Similarly, there has been a decline in the number of AIDS-related deaths and this is directly attributed to the introduction of more affordable and accessible first and second line antiretroviral (ARV) treatment. HIV in Malaysia is predominantly male as they constitute 88.7 per cent of cumulative HIV cases of whom majority are people with injecting drug use (PWID). However, the trend of infection by sex has changed increasingly with female acquiring the infection with male/female ratio decreasing from 9.6 in 2000 to 7.3 in 2018. In the earlier phase of the pandemic, PWID was the driving factor. With rigorous implementation of harm reduction programmes since 2005, the country is shifting progressively from PWID predominant to sexual transmission with PWID/sexual transmission ratio of 3.9 in 2000 subsequently reducing to 0.03 in 2018.

144. As of 2018, HIV prevalence was estimated to be 0.4%. Currently, all government health facilities (1,085 health clinics and 145 hospitals inclusive of non-MOH hospitals) are providing free HIV screening facilities. HIV screening includes mandatory HIV screening for all donated blood, blood products and organs; routine HIV screening of inmates in drug rehabilitation centres and prisons; HIV screening among TB and STI cases, clients of harm reduction programme and contacts of cases; HIV screening for premarital couples; an opt-out antenatal screening and voluntary HIV screening and voluntary HIV screening for those who want to know their HIV status. In 2018, a total of 51,515 people accessed facilities for voluntary HIV screening, out of which 75% were male and 75% were between the ages of 20 and 39.

145. Premarital HIV screening for Muslim couples was an initiative by the state religious department in one of the 14 states in Malaysia in 2001 and this later expanded to the other states by 2007. Since 2010, the screening is accessible in all government health clinics to all, irrespective of religion. In 2018, a total of 261,876 men and women came for HIV premarital screening of which 88 (0.03%) were confirmed to be HIV positive. In general, over the past five years, an average of 1.6 million HIV screening is conducted annually.

- **Awareness Programme**

146. Besides providing cancer screening services to the people, NPFDB also conducts awareness programmes on the importance of women to undergo cancer screening. In 2014, NPFDB collaborated with AVON Cosmetics (M) to organize a programme called 'Kiss Goodbye to Breast Cancer' to create awareness on the importance of early detection of breast cancer.

147. In order to increase women's awareness of early detection of cervical cancer, NPFDB implemented the 'Wellbeing of Women (WOW)' campaign in 2017. Through this campaign, women had the opportunity to undergo a pap smear test for free from September 2017 until December 2017. During that period, 22,000 women benefited from the campaign.

148. MOH has come out with a deep analysis on health issues for both men and women. All the necessary elements of health including the social determinants were also being planned as a way forward to improve the quality of health for both genders. The early initiatives were formalized in 2009 in which MOH participated in the National Gender Programme which was led by MWFCD through the Gender Responsive Budget Approach. From then, it has evolved to increasing capacity building with more training on gender mainstreaming for health managers. It was targeted for all health officers at ministry level beginning 2013. The main objective is to increase health professionals' awareness on the role of gender norms, values, and inequality in perpetuating disease, disability, and death, as well as to promote societal change to eliminate gender as a barrier to good health.

149. Many synergistic efforts are made towards improving the Gender-Based Approach to Public Health Communication to understand and appreciate the health risks, experiences and outcomes which are different for women and men, boys and girls, and to act accordingly as part of intervention design and implementation in the various policies that the Ministry

develops. As a result of this, MOH has come out with a comprehensive Men's Health Plan of Action 2018-2025. The next in the pipeline will be the development of a five year Women's Health Plan of Action. These action plans aims to promote gender equity through measures that target the health and quality of life of Malaysian men and women.

150. Sexuality education at schools is provided through the Health, Reproductive and Social Education (PEERS), one of the main components of the Health Education Curriculum introduced from preschool to secondary. PEERS comprises elements of personal and reproductive health to equip school children with knowledge, skills and values so that they can make informed and responsible decisions on matters related to social and sexual relationships. At preschool level, children will be introduced to the anatomy and the different physiology of a boy and a girl. At this age, they will also be taught on what construe as good touch and bad touch. They must be able to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate touching and how to stay safe. In an effort to enhance knowledge on PEERS, children are given brochures on PEERS for them to share with their parents or guardians at home.

151. The components of PEERS are being taught in progression at different levels of schooling. The component comprises 75% of the Health Education Curriculum followed by healthy eating (15%) and first aid (10%). PEERS emphasizes a holistic approach to equip children and young people with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed. PEERS is scientifically accurate, culturally and age-appropriate, gender-sensitive and life skills-based. This is to ensure that all children and young people are informed about comprehensive sexuality education and provided with life skills-based health education, learning opportunities and efficacy to make informed decisions about their sexuality and lifestyle to reduce their vulnerability and enable them to avoid risky behaviour.

152. NPFDB has been actively involved in reproductive health and social education for young people since 2004, in line with the National Policy on Reproductive Health and Social Education 2009. The sexuality education is given through the in-house Kafe@TEEN Adolescent Centres, schools, colleges, institutions and at community level. SRH modules used were developed periodically to cater for the new technology savvy era of adolescents.

153. In line with the Plan of Action of Policy on Social and Reproductive Health Education, several programmes and initiatives were put in place. Currently, there are 17 Kafe@TEEN Adolescent Centres managed by the NPFDB has been providing free reproductive health and social services to young people aged 13 – 24 years of age. Since 2014 to April 2019, a total of 412,388 young people have participated in the Kafe@TEEN education and skill building programmes whilst 2,282 young people have utilized the reproductive health and counselling services.

154. Furthermore, the following training modules on SRH of adolescents have been developed by MWFCDC with the cooperation of related government agencies, NGOs and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA):

- **Healthy Living Skills Module** (*Modul Kesejahteraan Hidup*) developed by the NPFDB to cater for reproductive health and social education of young people ages 18 years and above. This module was integrated into the National Service Training Programme (PLKN) from June 2011 to January 2015. A total of 267,121 national service trainees were trained in this programme at the 81 National Service Training camps. The PEKERTI@PLKN Module have been used covering topics on SRH, gender equality, family development, living without violence and HIV/AIDS.

- **I'm In Control Module** (*Modul Cakna Diri*) was developed for adolescents and parents in collaboration with UNFPA Malaysia for a Pilot Project entitled Upscaling Kafe@TEEN Programme.

155. These two modules have been successfully pilot-tested in five selected secondary schools in Malaysia from 2009 to 2012. The modules are now implemented under the PEKERTI@Community programme throughout Malaysia. A total of 6,736 adolescents and 1,415 parents attended these programmes from 2014 to April 2019.

156. Refugee women and girls as well as women and girls in humanitarian settings are also provided access to SRH services. All 17 detention centres in Malaysia are attached to the nearest healthcare clinics. A team of Healthcare Personnel will do health visits at regular intervals, at least once in every two weeks. Necessary treatment will be given to all detainees as required. Mothers requiring antenatal care are brought to the nearest government health clinics for regular antenatal examination and follow-ups.

157. It is a standard practice in the country that a postnatal mother and her new born baby are discharged within 24 hours after a smooth delivery once they are examined and confirmed fit for discharge as the Government promotes care closer to home. However, if the mother has any pre-existing comorbidity or certain social circumstances, the discharge plan would then need be tailored towards her condition to ensure proper passing over and continuation of care in the postpartum period. This includes discharge notification to appropriate level and place of care.

158. Once the hospital has discharged, the mother and the new born baby will receive scheduled postnatal care provided either at the nearby government health clinics or detention centres. Mother and baby are given care which include general health checks, abdomen and wound examination, breastfeeding counselling, immunization, vitamin supplements, growth and development monitoring, and hygiene care in accordance to the standard practice.

Improving Education Outcomes and Skills

159. Every child in Malaysia, regardless of wealth, ethnicity or background, deserves equal access to quality education that will enable the student to achieve his or her potential. Building upon the principle of Education for All which is further reiterated in the Education Blueprint, Malaysia aspires to ensure universal access to education and full enrolment of all children from preschool through to the upper secondary level (Form Five). As of 2016, the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) stands at 97.24% for primary level and 90% for secondary level. Data

shows that Malaysia had already surpassed the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Goal 2 in providing universal primary education for boys and girls even before the MDGs in 2000. In 2016, the completion rate at primary level increased to 98.37% while the completion rates at secondary level stood at 88.29%. Transition rate from primary to secondary education was also promising with 96.05% success rate. Gender parity had been achieved for participation and completion of education as well as transitioning between primary and secondary education levels. In fact, Malaysia has reached gender parity with a slight advantage to girls in secondary and tertiary education participation. As of 2017, the ratio of girls to boys is at 1.01 at secondary and 1.06 at tertiary level.

160. The MEB 2015-2025 (Higher Education) or MEB(HE) outlines five system aspirations for Malaysian higher education in alignment and consistent with the aspirations of MEB 2013-2025 (Preschool to Post-Secondary Education). The five system aspirations cover access, quality, equity, unity and efficiency. With regards to equity, Malaysia aspires to provide an equitable education system for all Malaysians regardless of geography, gender or socio-economic background ensuring all students have the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

161. Currently, the statistics on enrolment in Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs) indicates that there is no gender disparity in higher education. Based on the five-year trend of HEIs students, female students are more dominant compared to the male students as the enrolment ratio of male to female students are 39:61 (2018), 38:62 (2017 and 2016), 45:55 (2015) and 43:57 (2014). However, for graduate employment, male graduates are more likely to be employed than female graduates as the five-year trend shows on average 56% male will be employed within six months after graduation compared to 53% female graduates. MOE will regularly review students' outcome data on performance gaps and is committed to ensure a balanced enrolment rate and completion rate of students of different gender.

162. On academic performance, girls consistently outperform boys at every level. The gap in performance is already evident at primary school level and increases over a student's lifetime up to university level, where females comprise approximately 70% of the cohort.

163. The Department of Polytechnic and Community College Education, MOE ensures that all the women and girls in the institutions are given equal opportunities and benefits in every aspect of education, training and life-long learning. There are currently 31 female Directors heading six Polytechnics and 25 Community Colleges respectively. These top management women officials are also involved in the decision making of policies, management and operations of the polytechnics and community colleges.

164. MOHR via the Manpower Department conducts TVET promotions to school leavers on a frequent basis. The promotional activities are aimed to increase intake of TVET students regardless of gender. Culture and Learning is a compulsory course to be taken by all second year students of the Bachelor of Education Programme. This course discusses the concept of culture; aspects, effects and implications of socio-cultural diversity in Malaysia; cultural-friendly classroom management; national integration; communication skills; and teachers as agents of culture. Gender issues and equality are emphasized in this course. A total of 143,003 (51%) male as compared to 139,055 (49%) female Education Service Officers

attended training throughout 2019 based on the Training Management System (*Sistem Pengurusan Latihan KPM*).

Capacity Building Programmes in Science, Technology and Innovation (STI)

165. Between 2014-2019, the International Science, Technology and Innovation Centre for South-South Cooperation under the Auspices of UNESCO (ISTIC) had undertaken four international training workshops for women in STI at middle level management as follows:

- Training workshop on Developing Talents of Women in STI 3-6 August 2015;
- Training workshop on Developing Talents for Women in STI 18-22 July 2016;
- Training Workshop on Technopreneurship for Women in STI 5-9 September 2016 (involving 32 delegates, whereby 15 are from Malaysia); and
- Training Workshop on Developing Leadership Talents of Women in STI, 17-20 July 2018, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (involving 29 delegates, whereby 15 are from Malaysia).

166. The training workshops on developing talents of women are aimed at engaging women at middle level management on developing their own strengths and talents; enhancing their skills, knowledge and attitudes regarding the environment at the workplace; and enhancing their self-beliefs. The training workshop on technopreneurship was aimed at assisting women researchers on the commercialisation of their research products.

167. In addition, ISTIC also organised the following international conferences for Women in STI.

- **ISTIC/Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO)/ UNESCO Malaysian National Commission International Forum on Harnessing Women's Talents in Science, Technology and Innovation, 25-26 May 2015** (127 participants)

The Forum was aimed at discussing strategies and solutions of the under-representation of women in STI careers and in higher positions. Recommendations were made on how women in STI can be made visible in their organisations and on how their potential can be maximised to benefit both the women and the organisations. The Forum concluded with a declaration.

- **3rd ISTIC Biennial International Conference on Women in Science, Technology and Innovation: Innovative Solutions by Women in STI for UN Sustainable Development Goals** (115 delegates of which 60 were Malaysians).

The international conferences highlighted the successful innovations in STI in solving or minimising problems faced by women; and at exchanging and sharing experiences on how to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The Conference concluded with a Declaration.

Safe Water and Sanitation Service in Education Settings

168. Generally, water supply in Malaysia is safe for human consumption including for menstrual hygiene management. In 2017, 95% of households in Malaysia have access to clean piped water, fulfilling WHO's drinking water standard. In addition, Malaysia has an excellent sanitation service that is vital to support the general public health. Modern sewerage system has, to some extent, minimised water-borne diseases especially among the under-served community. In general, more than 80% of Malaysian households have access to connected sewerage system, while well-functioning and maintained primitive systems such as pour flush, individual septic tank and communal septic tank still do exist in some parts of the country.

Measures to Prevent Adolescent Pregnancies

169. In Malaysia, students who were found to be pregnant or have gone through pregnancies are still allowed to attend schooling as usual. However, the stigma they face would usually cause them to drop out of school. *Sekolah Harapan* or 'School of Hope' is the first school for pregnant teenagers set up in Malacca in 2010 with the aim to provide support for pregnant students and to curb the epidemic of 'baby dumping'. The Safe School Concept and Manual: Implementation Guide to Create a Safe School, Community and Family for Children (MOE, 2002) provides guidelines for teachers, students and communities on their role in contributing to a safe school culture and environment including girls. MOE is also in the process of developing guidelines and SOPs on how to handle pregnant students in schools and also students who have been sexually abused. For pregnant adolescents being placed at institutions under DSW, NPFDB have been conducting interventions by offering Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) to the inmates. 4,301 girls have benefitted from the CSE programmes from 2014 to 2018.

III - Freedom from Violence, Stigma and Stereotypes

(Critical areas of concern: D. Violence against women, I. Human rights of women, J. Women and the media, L. The girl child)

Domestic Violence

170. Amendments were made to the Domestic Violence Act 1994 (Act 521) in 2017 to enhance the protection for a victim of domestic violence by making provision for an Emergency Protection Order (EPO). An application for an EPO may be made at any time whether or not other protection order made under this Act has been previously made, or the application thereof is still pending. As a form of protection, the application for an EPO can be made *ex-parte* by either (i) the victim; (ii) the victim's counsel; or (iii) in the case where the victim is a child, the guardian, relative or person responsible for the care of such child, or a social welfare officer.

171. In order to provide better protection for the victim, the scope of the Act was also expanded to include three more circumstances in which domestic violence could occur as follows:

- the act of dishonestly misappropriating the victim's property which causes distress to victim;
- the act of threatening the victim which causes the victim to suffer distress or to fear the safety of a third person, or with intent to instil fear of victim's property or her own safety; and
- the act of communicating with or about the victim to a third person through any means, electronic or otherwise, with the intent to insult the modesty of the victim.

172. Further, amendment to the provision under the Act now empowers the courts if satisfied that it is necessary to do so for the protection and personal safety of the victim, child or incapacitated adult to grant the right of exclusive occupation of the whole shared residence in a protection order to a protected person. Thus, under the new amendment, the court is no longer allowed to grant the right of exclusive occupation of only a specified part of the shared residence to a protected person.

173. Under the 2017 amendment, the rehabilitation programme is made available to the parties in dispute, provided that an order to refer the victim to the rehabilitation programme shall be made with the victim's consent.

Sexual Harassment and Violence in Public Places, Educational Settings and in Employment

174. Currently, Part XVA of the Employment Act 1995 [Act 265] has specific provisions on sexual harassment including the interpretation and process on making a complaint of sexual harassment that occurred in a workplace. From 2014 to 2018, DOL has received a total of 95 cases. The breakdown of the number of reported sexual harassment cases in the workplace (2014 – 2018) is presented in Table 6 of the Annex of this report. In the effort to overcome this, MOHR through DOL has initiated several awareness programmes through social dialogue with tripartite partners (employers, workers and their trade unions).

175. The tort of sexual harassment has also been introduced into Malaysia's legal and judicial system. A landmark decision was made by the Federal Court in the case of ***Mohd Ridzwan Abdul Razak v Asmah Hj Mohd Nor [2016] 6 CLJ 346***. This case concerns a complaint by an employee of *Lembaga Tabung Haji* to the CEO of the company, alleging sexual harassment by her supervisor. The supervisor commenced legal action against the employee, claiming that her complaint of sexual harassment was defamatory and the employee filed a counter-claim against him, seeking general and aggravated damages for sexual harassment. The Federal Court in this case undertook judicial activism and decided that it is timely to import the tort of sexual harassment into Malaysia's legal and judicial system and dismissed the supervisor's appeal.

176. In the educational setting, the MOE has established a committee to examine and formulate a strategy to minimise risks at schools, in the effort to create a safe school environment. A blueprint for a Safe School Programme was developed, known as the Safe

School Concept and Manual: Implementation Guide to Create a Safe School, Community and Family for Children (Ministry of Education, 2002). The main aim of the Blueprint, which called for the support of families and local communities, was to reduce school violence and contribute to a safe school culture and environment. The Blueprint was also developed with following objectives:

- improve understanding of safety-related procedures, such as emergencies, accidents and disasters;
- develop strategies for planning and incorporating safety-related issues in school activities;
- foster a school environment that is safe, healthy and conducive to learning;
- protect the rights of each individual in school;
- enhance the quality of teaching and learning;
- prepare guidelines for each action;
- increase focus on study and work in the school community; and
- encourage all involved to make positive contribution towards the school.

177. As for the tertiary level, the Governance and Excellence Division of MOE is responsible for regulating, monitoring and facilitating the operation of all polytechnics and community colleges under the purview of the Department of Polytechnic and Community Colleges. Should there be any complaints of any form, the division through its Internal Inspectorate Team will conduct the necessary investigation and subsequently will propose further recommendation and/or action.

Violence Against Women Facilitated by Technology

178. From 2016 - March 2019, the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) received a total of 4,879 complaints from the public on obscene, offensive and menacing content i.e. online sexual harassment, online stalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images, sextortion, and misuse of personal information for sexual solicitation, whereby most of the victims are female. The Government's priorities have been in addressing content that constitutes a genuine risk of physical harm or credible threat to public or personal safety, adult/child nudity and sexual exploitation/activity of adult/children, images of sexual violence, bullying that purposefully targets private individuals with the intention of degrading or shaming them, harassment, and disclosure of private information that targets victims of serious physical, financial or emotional harm.

179. In order to strengthen efforts to protect children specifically in cyberspace, the Government has also developed a Plan of Action on Child Online Protection (PTCOP) in 2015. This plan emphasizes four key aspects of advocacy, prevention, intervention and support services. The Action Plan, which includes programmes and coordinated actions must be implemented by all parties, particularly government agencies to protect children online. This Action Plan will also act as a catalyst in raising awareness and commitment of every member of the community, especially industry players, parents, caregivers, teachers, communities and NGOs.

Child Marriages and Forced Marriages

180. The Government believes that children should be given the opportunity to develop their full potential. Any activities that might hinder their development, particularly in terms of education and health should be minimized so that they can pursue a future. Child marriage will give pressure physically and emotionally to the child especially to girls. Allowing children to marry means putting heavy burdens and responsibilities as spouses and parents. Exposing them to these responsibilities will increase the probability of divorce and social illness among them in the future. This view was clearly projected in the Government's media statement and as reported by media.

181. The legislation for marriages is decentralised in Malaysia. Muslim marriage is governed by the Islamic Family Law (Federal Territories) Act 1984 (IFLA). It is under the purview of the Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Religion) and overseen by the Department of Islamic Development (JAKIM), whereas Enactments/Ordinances of Islamic Family Law are under State's jurisdiction as provided for in the Ninth Schedule-List II of the FC.

182. For Non-Muslim, marriages are governed by the Law Reform (Marriage and Divorce) Act 1976 under the purview of the MOHA. Besides that, customary marriages for certain ethnic groups in Sabah and Sarawak are solemnised and registered under their own Customary Laws which is under the *Majlis Adat Istiadat* in Sarawak, and Native Court Enactment 1992 in Sabah. There is no law governing child marriage among indigenous children (*Orang Asli*) in Peninsular Malaysia.

183. According to statistics by the Department of Syariah and Judiciary Malaysia, for Muslims, the total number of underage marriage applications from 2013 to 2017 is 5,362 cases. Whereas for non-Muslims, the National Registration Department recorded 2,367 cases for the same time period.

184. One of the characteristics of child marriages in Malaysia is that they are often from families with low education levels as well as low income. The Government is committed to work closely with the relevant agencies to eradicate poverty, improve education levels and standards of living of the rural communities, and empower them economically to ensure families do not resort to marrying off their children to reduce the family burden.

185. Based on the findings of a study by United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in 2018, focus should be placed on educating parents and the general public on the negative impacts of child marriages. Marriage at a very young age denies the child the right to health, education, safety and development. NPFDB and relevant stakeholders have carried out reproductive health education modules as a supplement to what children are taught in schools. Through this programme, children, especially girls will be able to better understand their reproductive rights and be hindered from immoral activities which could even lead to sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

186. The Government is currently looking into raising the minimum age of marriage to 18 years old in all existing written legislations and practices among the various ethnic groups including *Orang Asli* and indigenous people in Sabah and Sarawak. Besides this, the Government will continue to focus on factors leading to child marriage mentioned such as poverty, low income household, dropout in education and absence of information on SRH. Empowering children and parents on SRH is an effort in empowering girls and adolescents to ensure that they are able to protect themselves from unplanned pregnancies and out of wedlock sexual behaviour as the major reason for child marriage.

187. There have been cases of prosecution of the accused in rape cases despite getting married to the victim. In the case of ***Riduan Masmud V. PP & Another [2015] 1 LNS 449***, the High Court heard an appeal by the appellant who was charged and convicted by the Session Court for the offence of rape of a 12-year-old and 6 months old girl under section 376(1) of the Penal Code. The appellant raised a defence that he loved the girl and had married her after he had been charged for the rape.

188. In dismissing the appeal, the High Court, among others, held that the appellant's marriage did not change the fact that he had sexual intercourse with the girl, which was prior to the purported marriage and therefore was an offence under section 376(1) of the Penal Code. This case was later brought on appeal to the Court of Appeal. The Court of Appeal rejected the appeal and upheld the decision of the High Court.

Trafficking in Women and Girls

189. Malaysia's strategic geographical location puts the country in a unique position where it is regarded, to a certain extent, as a transit as well as a destination country for trafficking in persons. Trafficking in persons cases in Malaysia largely involve sexual exploitation of women and children, and labour exploitation including forced labour. In order to combat these crimes, the country introduced the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act 2007 which has since been amended twice in 2010 and 2015 respectively.

190. The amendments in 2010, among others, were to widen the definition of trafficking in persons to also include labour exploitation as well as to provide for harsher punishments for profits obtained from the crime. Furthermore, the amendments also criminalise people smuggling activities and subsequently the Act became known as the Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007 (ATIPSOM).

191. In addition, the amendments to ATIPSOM 2007 in 2015 were designed to be victim-centric. NGOs are now given greater roles and functions, especially in the aspect of care and protection of trafficked victims. Among the significant amendments were provisions on allowing trafficked victims to be given the permission to move freely and permission to work, as well as providing subsistence allowance to trafficked victims on a monthly basis.

192. In 2016, the Government launched the National Action Plan on Anti Trafficking in Persons 2016 – 2020 in an effort to upgrade to Tier 1 ranking in the US State Department's

“Trafficking in Persons Report” by 2020 and to combat forced labour for the 2016 – 2020 period.

193. MWFCD with support from DWD and DSW is responsible for the care and protection of trafficked victims. To date, seven shelter homes are being fully funded and supervised by the Government (one shelter for men, four shelters for women, one shelter for boys and one shelter for girls).

194. The Government works with NGOs such as Tenaganita Sdn. Bhd. and Global Shepherds Berhad (GSB) in the aspect of care and protection of women trafficked victims. These NGOs are given greater roles especially in handling shelter homes for trafficked victims. Currently there are three shelters operated by NGOs in Penang, Selangor and Sabah.

195. In March 2019, the Government embarked on another strategic partnership with the Manpower Department under MOHR. A pilot TVET training project for victims of trafficking is being carried out which include eight programme areas namely, basic English, Communication, Basic Computer, Basic Handphone Repairing, Basic Photography, Basic Multimedia Application, Basic Printing, Basic Automotive and Car Servicing as well as Basic Air Condition Servicing. Trafficked victims are allowed to take the course inside the shelters or join the programme at the nearest training institute. They will also be awarded certificates upon completion of the programme. Statistics of trafficked victims (women and girls) from 2016-2018 is presented in Table 7 of the Annex of this report. Statistics of trafficked victims (women and girls) based on the type of exploitations (2018) is presented in Table 8 of the Annex of this report.

Addressing Violence Through Strengthening of Legislation and Regulatory Provisions

The amendment of the Penal Code (Revised - 1997) [Act 574]

196. The Penal Code was amended in 2017 to extend the application of the punishment for the offence of causing hurt under sections 323, 324, 325, 326, 334 or 335 to former spouse, child and others. The amendment also provides for stiffer punishment in which the court shall have the power to punish the offender with imprisonment for a term which may extend to twice of the maximum term for which he would have been punished for that offence. Additionally, the amendment also makes whipping a mandatory punishment for specified sexual offences such as rape, incest, carnal intercourse against the order of nature, and inciting a child to an act of gross indecency.

197. Section 377CA of the Penal Code was also amended in 2017 to extend the application of this section to offences involving sexual connection by using any part of the body other than penis. The new section 377CA is consistent with the interpretation of the word “object” to include “finger”, as decided by the Court of Appeal in the case of *Shafiee bin Awang v PP [unreported]*. Prosecution can now be instituted against any person who has sexual connection with another person by the introduction of any object or any part of the body,

except the penis into the vagina or anus of the other person without the other person's consent.

Sexual Offences Against Children Act 2017

198. The Sexual Offences Against Children Act 2017 was passed by Parliament in April 2017 and came into force in June 2017. The Act addresses several main areas namely child pornography, sexual grooming, physical and non-physical sexual assaults, abuse position of trust, credibility and evidence of children. This effectively widens the definition of sexual abuse in Malaysian law.

Sexual Harassment Bill

199. A Sexual Harassment Bill is sought to be tabled in 2019 to deal with sexual harassment in the workplace, public spaces and in institutions.

Measures to Increase Women's Access to Justice

200. The Office of the Chief Registrar Federal Court of Malaysia (PKPMP) and the Judicial and Legal Training Institute (ILKAP) have organised five training sessions for judicial officers, especially on law relating to sexual offences (which includes women and girls). The training sessions were attended by Magistrates and Sessions Court Judges.

201. Currently the following five courses are conducted annually to train judicial and legal officers, as well as welfare and enforcement agencies:

- **Seminar on Domestic Violence Act 1994 [Act 521] (2018)**

This seminar addresses the latest amendments to Act 521 which came into force on 1 January 2018. From 2015-2017, ILKAP had a 2-day course on Act 521. The curriculum was changed to focus on the amendments only.

- **Seminar on Women's Rights under Syariah Law (2018)**

This seminar focuses on issues faced by Muslim women – divorce procedures, their rights to matrimonial property, custody of children, maintenance, muta'ah and debts, enforcement of court order and rights of women in polygamous marriages.

- **Course on Laws relating to Children in Malaysia (2016)**

This course covers the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), optional protocol and the application in Malaysia, a study of laws currently in force and related to children both as victims and offenders, and the establishment and operation (procedures) of Sexual Crimes Court against Children.

- **Course on Divorce Procedure for Muslim and Non-Muslim in Courts (2018)**

This course is a study on divorce procedures under the Law Reform (Marriage and Divorce) Act 1976 [Act 164] and the Islamic Family Law Enactment.

- **Course on the Law relating to Sexual Crimes (2015)**

This course focuses on the role of prosecutors, investigators, medical experts (obstetrics and gynaecology) and DSW.

Establishment of a Specialised Court

202. Presently, there is no special court to handle cases of VAW. Such cases can be heard in any Magistrates' and Sessions Courts. However, in cases of VAW, for example rape, section 272B of the Criminal Procedure Code (Act 593) provides protection for the victims to give testimony via live video or live television links. These facilities are now available throughout Malaysia's courts to be used to safeguard the victims.

203. On 22 June 2017, a Special Court for Sexual Crimes Against Children addressing any sexual violence against children was first established in Putrajaya pursuant to the Sexual Offences Against Children Act 2017. A Sessions Court Judge with 25 years' experience is tasked to preside at the special court and presently most of the judges appointed to preside in this court are women. The jurisdiction of the Sexual Crimes Against Children Court includes crimes of child pornography, child grooming, physical and non-physical sexual assault, rape, incest, carnal intercourse against the order of nature and child prostitution. Technological facilities available in the court are the Court Recording Transcription System (CRT) and Live TV Link System.

204. For other types of violence against girls like domestic violence or non-sexual physical violence, these will be heard in any Magistrates and Sessions Courts. These Courts will diligently adhere to all the provisions for taking evidence provided in the Child Witnesses Act 2007 (Act 676) when dealing with child victims. Act 676 among others, lays out how the evidence of child witnesses may be given, the procedures for examination of child witnesses, roles of an intermediary, adults accompanying child witnesses, and matters of child witnesses suffering from disabilities.

Services for Survivors of Violence

205. Support services to survivors of violence include emergency assistance for the victims and their children, as well as the more complex and long-term needs of victims and their families. These include medical care, psycho-social support, housing, security, legal assistance, financial support and employment. It is critical that all initiatives and services for victims of violence operate on the principle that protection measures should respect the victim's rights, dignity and privacy. The Government has provided support mechanism for victims of violence, particularly women, as follows:

- **Talian Kasih**

In 2007, MWFCDD introduced *Talian Kasih* 15999. This line helps to facilitate the public to make complaints on community crisis and seek advice on welfare and social issues such as child abuse and neglect, domestic violence and other services under MWFCDD. This child line service has a specific line of action when a call on abuse is received, where the complaint is immediately transmitted to the nearest Social Welfare Office at the district level. The district office is given 72 hours to report back to the *Talian Kasih* team, following which a full report is submitted within 7 days from the day of the received call.

- **NUR Alert System**

The Government of Malaysia on 13 January 2011 approved an alert system known as the National Urgent Response Alert (NUR Alert). The system is to coordinate every agency involved in child protection for immediate action when a child under the age of twelve is reported missing. The implementation of the system is overseen by a task force headed by the RMP and MWFCDD as deputy head. DSW has always been concerned about children, especially those who need protection and rehabilitation. These children will go to formal academic classes just like other children at the nearest school or attend academic classes within the institution. There are 13 *Rumah Kanak-kanak* (children's home), 10 *Asrama Akhlak* (probation hostels), nine *Sekolah Tunas Bakti* (approved school), four *Taman Seri Puteri* (protection institution for girls) and eight *Rumah Tunas Harapan* (children's home in a family system) under the DSW for domestic violence cases.

- **One Stop Crisis Centre (OSCC)**

One-Stop Crisis Centres (OSCC) in Malaysia were established in 1996 in all general and government hospitals nationwide to enable survivors of violence, including domestic violence and sexual assault, to access comprehensive treatment and services at one centralised location. The OSCC is characterised by an integrated and coordinated teamwork of multi-sectoral and inter-agency network for the management of domestic violence, rape, sexual abuse, child abuse and sodomy. This spares victims from going around to seek help from different departments or agencies, thus minimising the trauma and stress for the victims. The OSCC also provides therapeutic and medical intervention, multi-level crisis intervention, counselling and emotional support, temporary shelter as well as legal assistance. In the case of domestic violence or alleged rape, for example, the hospital will call the police who would visit the victim at the OSCC to record the victim's report, while DSW or the Legal Aid Department officers are contacted if needed, to offer appropriate help to the victim. In some urban centres, NGOs provide active support to the OSCC service by being on-call to provide counselling, emotional support and assistance where needed.

- **Safe Homes**

The Government has provided 28 safe homes all over Malaysia to give temporary shelter to women victims of domestic violence.

- **Shelter for victims of violence**

DSW is a frontline agency that helps battered women, specifically victims of domestic violence. The Department provides protection to the victims and helps them to deal with the police and courts. There are about 43 shelters gazetted as places of refuge around the country where they can stay if they cannot return to their homes. In addition, counselling and financial aid are also provided to the victims. The Government also provides financial aid to a number of NGOs that provides shelters to victims of violence.

- **Shelter for trafficked victims**

The Government believes that the existing infrastructure is not enough to cater to these trafficked victims and subsequently approved the development of three new women shelter homes under the purview of MWFCD in Kelantan, Kedah and Sarawak. The new women shelter in Kelantan was opened in April 2019 to cater for the needs of female victims of trafficking in the eastern region. The Government of Malaysia is also looking for capable NGOs that have the potential to provide care and manage women trafficked victims. Victims who are placed at the shelter homes are provided with services such as counselling, interpretation services and medical treatment. Programmes such as learning basic language for communication i.e. English and Bahasa Malaysia (national language), skills training such as cooking classes, sewing, baking and gardening are also provided to keep the victims occupied while waiting for their reports and cases to be completed, and prior to their repatriation.

Strategies to Prevent Violence

206. WHO recommends that the prevention of VAW be considered a high priority for national health, social and legal aspects of both industrialised and developing countries. The Government of Malaysia has pledged its full support to this recommendation by taking preventive measures against all types of VAW. These measures include the following:

- **Legal Literacy Seminars**

DWD organises legal literacy seminars throughout the country, coordinated by all of its 15 state offices. The seminar aims to provide knowledge and awareness to the community, especially women, on their rights in cases related to marital problems, divorce, alimony, sexual harassment, rape, exploitation by drug trafficking syndicates and fraud by job agencies.

- **Violence Against Women Programme/Seminars**

Programmes and seminars to eradicate VAW are conducted by the MWFCD at all 222 parliamentary constituencies in the country. These programmes/seminars are organised through smart partnership with other government departments, private sector as well as NGOs in addressing all forms of VAW. One such programme is the **Women's Anti-Crime Programme (WAJA)** which aims to raise awareness and strengthen understanding on the

role of gender, increase knowledge on the awareness of VAW, and disseminate information to the public on how to make complaint reports and assistances available. Campaigns such as **He For She Campaign** is also carried out to encourage the participation of men in combatting VAW. Women are urged to support the **#MeToo** campaign to encourage victims of violence to speak-up.

- **Emotion Management Programme**

Emotion Management Programmes are organised by MWFCED to address issues related to violence in the family. These programmes employ family counselling approach to provide the humanistic aspect on basic counselling skills, family management psychology and effective emotion management techniques.

207. In general, these programmes are implemented to educate community members on the importance of respecting, protecting and caring for women.

Work in Primary and Secondary Education

208. Student Admission and Development Division, Department of Polytechnic and Community College Education (DPCCE) will carry out outreach programmes on preventions of violence against women and girls from time to time to create awareness among the students. These programmes are conducted with various agencies and ministries including the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS) and MWFCED.

209. As mentioned earlier in the report, PEERS as one of the main components of the Health Education Curriculum introduced from preschool to secondary, equips school children with knowledge, skills and values so that they can make informed and responsible decisions on matters related to social and sexual relationships.

210. D11 Division of the RMP had also organized several Child and Women Awareness Campaigns carried out by the respective contingents as presented in Table 9 of the Annex of this report.

211. In conjunction with the International Day to Fight VAW, a national campaign is held every year. The aim of this campaign is to raise awareness among Malaysians on the importance of rejecting all forms of VAW. The campaign acts as a platform to not only educate and raise the public's awareness on VAW, but to also encourage the participation of corporate bodies in the fight to end VAW. For instance, in 2010, the Youth Orbit Club was launched with the aim of encouraging peer-to-peer approach among youths in Malaysia to spread a positive circle of influence in fighting VAW. Generally, VAW campaigns would start on 1 October being launched by the Minister of Women, Family and Community Development and will continue until the International Day for the Elimination of VAW on 25 November. In 2017, a soft launch for nationwide campaign to stop VAW was done at the Association of Town and Country Planning Officers of Malaysia (PERSADA) in Johor, Malaysia. As of October 2017, a number of 26,205 pledges were recorded being received in showing support to stop VAW which is almost double the amount of pledges received in 2016 (16,000 pledges).

212. In working with boys, NPFDB has recently started CSE for boys using the SRH Module for Boys 16 to 24 years old. This module includes gender equality and violence against girls. From 2016 to 2018, 745 boys have undergone this module from 26 programmes.

213. SMARTSTART Premarital Programme is conducted for couples who are newlyweds (with age of marriage five years and below) or who plan to get married. It consists of a two-day course on preparation for marriage and marriage enhancement. Through this programme, couples are engaged in activities and simulation to ensure active participation and mutual understanding in marriage. The programme is conducted in collaboration with NGOs. About 678 programmes were conducted since 2006 with 27,354 participants.

214. Islamic Pre-marriage courses for all spouses have been introduced since 1997 under the responsibility and monitoring of the State Islamic Religious Department while JAKIM provides the module and course implementation guidelines. This course is one of the initiatives taken by the Malaysian Government as an effort to provide brides-to-be with marriage knowledge including early childhood development knowledge for married couples. Every Muslim bride-to-be is required to attend the Islamic Pre-Marriage Course as a requirement to complete the marriage permission application. This course is very important as a basic knowledge of family life. List of subjects covered during the pre-marriage course can be referred to in Table 10 of the Annex in this report.

Perpetrator Programmes

215. Development Programmes have been conducted for inmates to instil self-discipline and provide religious, spiritual education, vocational and skill training in the process of rehabilitation. Since 2008, the Malaysian Prison Department introduced a Parole System to ensure the reintegration of inmates into the society. Many other community correction programmes such as Corporate Smart Internship (CSI) are implemented to enable job placement and career development for inmates.

216. Periodical assessment such as psychology tests are carried out to categorize and profile the inmates to help in the choice of programme and intervention needed for their rehabilitation. Special modules according to their (prisoner) offence and needs are available to cater for their rehabilitation. All programmes conducted for inmates do not differ by gender. However, special care and treatment is given for women who need special care such as pre-natal and post-natal treatment. Through these programmes, prison inmates will be able to lead a new life upon release without reoffending by being a law abiding and productive citizen. NPFDB also provides counselling to perpetrators and parenting skills courses based on the issues identified upon counselling session with perpetrator and victim.

Violence Against Women and Girls Facilitated by Technology

217. Malaysia's Domestic Violence Act 1994, which came into force on 1 June 1996, states that the definition of domestic violence includes physical injury, fear of physical injury, unlawful detention, mischief or destruction to property knowing that it is likely to cause

distress to the victim; cause emotional, mental and psychological abuse; and the usage of drugs or intoxicating substance on the victim without victim's consent. The definition is further expanded by the amendment to the Act in 2017 to include, among others, communicating with the victim with intent to insult the victim's modesty through any means, electronic or otherwise as an act of domestic violence. This new amendment provides better protection for the victims of domestic violence especially women as the victims could make an application for an interim protection order and a protection order when this circumstance arise.

218. All legitimate cases/complaints lodged with MCMC were pursued with enforcement action; which included investigations under Sections 211 and 233 of the Communications and Multimedia Act 1988 (CMA 1998); and administrative actions, including takedown notice, restriction access to websites, abuse reporting, advisory, and guide on measures that the complainants could pursue by themselves. Issues specifically relating to child abuse material and child pornography are under the jurisdiction of the RMP. MCMC assists the RMP primarily via restricting access to websites containing child pornography materials. MCMC also provides assistance to RMP on suspect identification and digital forensic analysis, on case by case basis. Based on public complaints and in cooperation with the RMP, from 2015 until March 2019, MCMC has blocked a total of 4,841 websites containing obscene content with 401 websites containing child pornography.

219. MCMC ensures the public is made aware of risks arising from internet use and how it can be mitigated. The *Klik Dengan Bijak*® (KDB) or 'Click Wisely' programme was launched in July 2012 to create awareness and educate the public, in particular vulnerable groups such as children and parents about managing their online experience. Users are taught the key pillars of safety, security and responsibility as well as using the internet in a way that is consistent with Malaysia's National Principles (*Rukun Negara*).

220. The implementation of this programme at a national scale requires an integrated approach, thus several key stakeholders have been engaged. Notable amongst them are the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia Malaysia (MCOMM), MOE, MOH, RMP, MWFCD, JAKIM, Scouts Association of Malaysia, Malaysian Youth Council, Communications and Multimedia Content Forum, Communications and Multimedia Consumer Forum, International Telecommunication Union, UNICEF and Google.

221. Examples of recent collaborations and partners include:

- NPFDB, whereby KDB is one of the safety segments in the Family and Child Safety Education Module (*Modul Pendidikan Keselamatan Keluarga dan Anak*) that is being taught by day care operators to parents of children enrolled at such centres;
- MOE, in KDB training for Peer Facilitator (*Pembimbing Rakan Sebaya*), providing content on KDB in the online learning platform called Frog VLE that is available to students, teachers and parents and developing module to supplement the manual on Child Sexual Abuse to be used by school counsellors;
- UNICEF and MWFCD, in co-organising Regional Child Online Protection Seminars (2015 and 2017); and

- MOH, in supporting health online behaviours through video competition as well as providing module on KDB for at risk children (*Modul Tingkah Laku Kesihatan Berisiko dan Resilien Bagi Remaja*).

222. MCMC carries out ground engagement with the target audience which could be in the format of seminars, talks, carnivals, exhibitions or other forms of engagement. Each engagement is supported with educational module comprising presentations and activities as well as learning tools such as the 'Wheel of Knowledge' and 'Klik Hunter' (a game application) to make learning more fun and engaging. These include modules, brochures, website and educational videos on topics such as cyber bullying, oversharing, false information, self-regulation, smart parenting, online grooming, etc. Since KDB's inception in 2012, the activities have reached more than 5 million participants nationwide including engagement programmes done through Regional Offices and internet centres in every region in Malaysia. The KDB programme is not gender-specific. MCMC does not carry out programmes targeted specifically for women or girls.

Addressing Portrayal of Women and Girls and Discrimination in the Media

223. The Government has established the Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia (CMCF) to govern the media content by self-regulation in line with the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Content Code. The Content Code that has been adopted, sets out the guidelines and procedures for good practice and standards of content disseminated to audiences by service providers in the communications and multimedia industry in Malaysia. The Content Code demonstrates a commitment towards self-regulation by the industry in compliance with the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 (Act 588). It seeks to identify what is regarded as offensive and objectionable while spelling out the obligations of content providers within the context of social values in this country. What in essence the Content Code recommends, is guidelines for a responsible approach toward the provision of content and outlines procedures on self-regulation that will provide the platform for creativity, innovation and healthy growth of a fast changing industry.

224. The Film Censorship Board (*Lembaga Penapisan Filem – LPF*) handles film censorship through a holistic guideline that covers all aspects of the society including gender-based discrimination and bias. Binding regulation for the media, including advertisement is contained in the Film Censorship Act 2002 and Film Censorship Guidelines 2010. Trainings are also provided to television stations (Astro and Media Prima) to encourage balanced and diverse images of women and girls in the media.

225. MCMC regulates the networked content carried by licensees through the provisions of the License Conditions as well as the Communications and Multimedia Content Code. The licensees are required to be mindful of the provision of content that is indecent, obscene, false, menacing or offensive in character with intent to annoy, abuse, threaten or harass any person. These would include the prohibition from broadcasting content that promotes sexual degradation, including the portrayal of women as mere sexual objects or to demean them in such manner.

226. MCMC issued advisory warnings against licensees on two cases in 2017 – 2018 relating to negative portrayal of women in broadcast content. Additionally, the CMCF as the administrator of the Content Code also received and deliberated on complaints related to negative portrayal of women. The Forum issued advisory warnings to the relevant content providers on this issue.

IV - Participation, Accountability and Gender-Responsive Institutions

(Critical areas of concern: G. Women in power and decision-making, H. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, I. Human rights of women, J. Women and the media, L. The girl child)

Promoting Women's Participation in Public Life and Decision-Making

227. The Government of Malaysia announced the policy of having women occupy 30% of decision-making positions in the public sector in 2004 and in the corporate sector in 2011. This has been shared in Section One of this report. Percentage of Women on the Boards of Bursa Malaysia's Top 100 is presented in Table 11 of the Annex in this report.

228. NAM Institute for the Empowerment for Women (NIEW) under MWFCDC has been implementing various programmes to increase women's participation in public life and these include in areas such as education, leadership, economic, health and well-being, ICT and VAW. Since 2018, NIEW focuses its programmes more on the efforts to increase leadership competencies among women, starting from youth. The leadership programmes are also integrated with a gender perspective which is one of the main elements for advancing women to leadership positions. To date a total of 1,051 women have participated in Women Directors Programme (WDP), 354 in leadership programme and 932 in programmes covering other areas under NIEW. Statistics of NIEW programmes to increase leadership competencies among women, starting from youths is presented in Table 12 of the Annex of this report.

229. MRD will be conducting a seminar for rural women called 'Rural Women Development Seminar'. This is a newly introduced programme and it will be held for the first time in September 2019. The objective of the seminar is to create awareness about the importance of women leadership in rural organisation. It is estimated that 3,000 rural women will attend the seminar.

230. The following are the initiatives introduced by JAKOA to encourage participation of *Orang Asli* women:

- **Reading Encouragement Programme (3P)**

A total of 45 volunteers among *Orang Asli* women have been appointed to teach children from the age of 2 to 4 years old in their community to read. The programme has been expanded to 13 centres around Peninsular Malaysia.

- **Appointment of Teacher's Assistant at KEMAS/JAKOA Preschool**

A total of 281 preschool Teacher's Assistants have been appointed among *Orang Asli* women to help teachers monitor the safety of the children during the learning session. They are also responsible in preparing balanced and nutritious meals for *Orang Asli* children in preschool.

- **Committee Member of Village Community Management Council (MPKK)**

967 *Orang Asli* women have been appointed as committee members of the Village Community Management Council (MPKK) out of the total 2,740 members. The Council was established by JAKOA with the aim of providing exposure and development to the *Orang Asli* in the area of administration and institutional management in a democratic and structured manner. The Council also acts as a government intermediary to help in assessing the effectiveness of development programmes undertaken by the Government towards ensuring the progress, safety and well-being of the *Orang Asli* community.

- ***Orang Asli* Women Entrepreneurs**

During the period of the 11MP (2016-2018), 225 *Orang Asli* entrepreneurs were produced by JAKOA. Out of the total, 92 entrepreneurs are *Orang Asli* women. *Orang Asli* women entrepreneurs have been given entrepreneurship training courses, business equipment, and business premises. They are mostly involved in the basic services sector, retail, manufacturing and agriculture.

Leadership Training

Perdana Fellowship

231. The Perdana Fellowship is a prestigious programme established by the MYS in 2013 to provide young Malaysians a first-hand experience in matters of national governance. Under this programme, Perdana Fellows are placed under the purview of Ministers of various Ministries to assist in the highest form of governance. In the span of seven years, many talented and bright young Malaysians have experienced Malaysia's federal government system.

232. The programme has done more than just expand their views on Malaysia's administration but also changed their perspective on the obstacles faced in the age of media. The fellowship exposes youths to articulate their viewpoints on critical matters to respective Ministers to inspire change.

233. Upon completion of the Fellowship, Fellows become a member of the Perdana Fellows Alumni Association (PFAA), which continues the culture of fostering a close network between youth leaders as well as government, corporate and NGO leaders. To date, there are a total number of 447 Perdana Fellows from 107 universities in 12 different countries around the world.

Malaysian Youth Parliament

234. The MYS Malaysia introduced the Malaysian Youth Parliament (MYP) Programme in 2015 for youths to participate in the decision making process and discuss issues on national development. MYP is conducted based on Malaysia's Parliamentary System with three sessions held each year and involving 133 elected youth representatives between the ages 18 to 30. The programme gives youth the opportunity to voice their ideas and views on current issues affecting them. The focus of the MYP is to maximize youth potential and their contribution towards national development. 138 new members of MYP have been appointed in the beginning of February 2017 for the term 2017 - 2018. All members are tasked with specific portfolios: Socio-economy Committee; Security, Legal and Integrity; International Relations and Diplomacy; Education and Career; Community Development and Health; Infrastructure, Development and Environment; Culture, Sports, Patriotism and Integration; Religion and Spiritualism; and Technology and Innovation.

Women in Politics

235. Malaysia is a parliamentary democracy with a federal constitutional monarchy. In Malaysia, there is no legal discrimination against a person based upon gender with respect to participating in the electoral process and holding elected offices. Malaysian women are conferred with the right to vote since independence. Therefore, women in Malaysia are not prohibited from participating in election at any level of office and are free to participate in political movement. However, women are still under-represented in political spheres. Mostly women played a supportive role to men except in the women's wings of political parties, where women elect and choose their own leaders.

236. Capable women have been given the opportunity to contest in elections for their constituencies at both federal and state levels. The Rt. Hon. Dato' Seri Dr. Wan Azizah Dr. Wan Ismail is a Malaysian politician serving as the first female Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia cum the Minister of Women, Family and Community Development. The initiative to increase the percentage of women in the field of politics is an initiative that should be shared among all components of political parties to have more women's voices represented. The country had witnessed a steady increase from 10.81% in both previous GE12 and 13 to 14.86% in GE14.

237. Recently, the Penang State Government, Malaysia has begun the initiative in setting up a Women and Family Development Committee at every constituency (total 40 committees comprising women from diverse background), which started operations beginning 2019. This special purpose committee is first of its kind in Malaysia as it will focus mainly on the implementation of programmes for women and family at the grassroots. This is a strategic move to address the developmental needs of women and family. Programmes are also planned to narrow gender gaps for women to achieve their full potential and moving them into decision making positions.

238. In the Rural Development Plan 2018-2023, one of the strategies under Thrust 5: Empowering Rural Women is to increase participation of rural women in the decision-making

process at the community level. This is implemented by setting 30% quota of women representatives in the MPKK. As of March 2019, 24% of the representatives in MPKK are women.

Women's Access to Expression and Decision-Making in the Media and ICT

239. Malaysia's constitution provides citizens with "the right to freedom of speech and expression" but allows for limitations on that right if it infringes on the rights of others. As such, there is no limitation to access of online content based on one's gender. The 1998 CMA gives the MCMC a range of powers, including the authority to license the ownership and operation of network facilities. However, there is no provision in the Act that dictates on the rate of pay, retention or career advancement of employees in media or ICT field, regardless of gender.

240. Digital Literacy programmes initiated in Malaysia by the MCMM through its agency, the Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) is divided into three categories: **school**, **tertiary** and **public**.

241. For **school** initiative, Malaysia launched the **#mydigitalmaker** movement in 2016 to galvanize public-private academia sectors to help nurture and transform Malaysian youths to become digital innovators. This is in view of digital technologies' pervasive impact on all sectors and inevitably future jobs. To-date, an estimated number of 340,000 students are already participating in various digital making activities via the following key initiatives:

- integrating computer science and computational thinking into the national school system; and
- nurturing and grooming talented young digital makers to become future innovators via co-curricular activities in schools and extra-curricular activities via Digital Maker Hubs.

242. The movement aims to:

- cultivate interests and skills in digital innovation and creativity among Malaysian youth;
- encourage students to study STEM subjects in upper secondary schools and Premier Digital Tech University undergraduate courses;
- transform Malaysian youth from being consumers (*users*) to producers and innovators (*makers*) of digital technology; and
- strengthen talent readiness for connected economy job opportunities.

243. For **tertiary** initiative, a recognition award is given to Premier Digital Technology Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) that are able to deliver first-class courses in digital technology and produce highly-employable graduates for the technology sector. This is one of the steps taken by the Government to produce top talents and future leaders in the digital technology industry. The Government initiated a recognition status to deserving IHLs through various and meticulous assessment processes. Through this initiative, these premier institutions can act as benchmarks for other institutions to follow and also be easily identifiable by aspiring digital technology students.

244. The eight universities are (i) Universiti Malaya; (ii) Universiti Teknologi Malaysia; (iii) Universiti Teknologi Mara; (iv) Multimedia University; (v) Tunku Abdul Rahman University College; (vi) Sunway University; (vii) Taylor's University and (viii) Asia Pacific University. In addition, five polytechnics were also awarded the Preferred Digital Tech Polytechnic status, namely (i) Politeknik Balik Pulau; (ii) Politeknik Mersing; (iii) Politeknik Sultan Idris Shah; (iv) Politeknik Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin and (v) Politeknik Ungku Omar.

245. As for **public** programmes, Malaysia introduced the **eUsahawan** programme to empower youth and micro entrepreneurs to leverage online marketing platform. The curriculum focuses on:

- Digital Commerce (via social media) and eCommerce;
- Training deployment via ToT approach and online learning; and
- High potential participants coached and facilitated to get on board ecommerce platforms.

246. Another programme for the public is **eRezeki** which leverages on crowdsourcing which is the sharing economy models in a unique, country-level strategy and approach. The programme aspires to enable and provide opportunities to the community (especially the B40s) to earn additional income that is facilitated by digital technologies. The eRezeki programme has received the following international attention and recognition for its model and implementation:

- World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA) Merit Award for the Digital Opportunity Category in October 2016; and
- Asian-Oceania Computing Industry Organization (ASOCIO) Digital Government Award in November 2016.

247. Since its inception in January 2016 until March 2019, 377,540 people have registered for the eRezeki programme, whereby female participants accounted for 52.8% of the total numbers. While for the eUsahawan programme of the 267,658 participants, 53% (142,704) are female, 36% (96,163) male and 11% (28,771) did not state their gender, for the same time period.

248. Telecentres are set up throughout Malaysia to provide Internet access to local communities, to expose local communities to computer and internet technology, and to improve the economic and social status of the community through the facilities provided and activities carried out at the telecentres. Under the MCOMM there are 2 types of telecentres which includes 811 *Pusat Internet 1Malaysia* (PP1M), which are funded under a Public-Private Partnership Scheme, and 42 *Pusat Internet Desa* (PID) which are directly funded by the Ministry. The media and ICT field is covered by the same employment and labour laws as any other field of work in Malaysia.

Strategy/Action Plan on Gender Equality

249. The National Policy on Women and its Action Plan is a reflection of the Government's commitment to ensure the participation of women in achieving their full potential in the country's planning and development. More recently, a Special Project Team has been set up under MWFCD to examine and establish a legal framework on gender equality aimed at ensuring that individuals can enjoy equal rights and opportunities without any gender-based discrimination in Malaysia.

Action Plan and Timeline for Implementation of CEDAW

250. Malaysia ratified CEDAW in 1995 and currently only maintain reservations on Articles 9(2), 16(1)(a), 16(1)(c), 16(1)(f) and 16(1)(g). On 20 February 2018, Malaysia presented its combined Third, Fourth and Fifth Periodic Report of the State Party to the CEDAW Committee. Subsequently, an inter-agency meeting with the relevant ministries and government agencies was held to discuss on the concluding observations and address recommendations of the CEDAW Committee.

251. Engagements will be carried out separately with multiple stakeholders in preparing for the next periodic country report for CEDAW. As part of its commitment under CEDAW, the Government is committed to taking all appropriate measures in ensuring women and girls in Malaysia are able to enjoy all their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

252. The Government is working on a protection from discrimination against women bill. This act once tabled is intended to satisfy Malaysia's obligations under CEDAW in addressing issues relating to gender equality and discrimination against women.

National Human Rights Institution

253. SUHAKAM is the national human rights institution of Malaysia. It was established by the Malaysian Parliament under the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia Act 1999, Act 597, and began its work in April 2000. SUHAKAM submits shadow report for CEDAW and prepares annual report which includes issues on gender equality and recommendations on women.

V - Peaceful and Inclusive Societies

(Critical areas of concern: E. Women and armed conflict, I. Human rights of women, L. The girl child)

Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

254. Conflict can result in acceptance of higher levels of violence against women and girls, including arbitrary killings, torture and mutilation, sexual violence, and forced marriage.

Women and girls are primarily and increasingly targeted by the use of sexual violence, including as a tactic of war.

255. Malaysia fully supports Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security adopted by the UN Security Council in 2000 that emphasises the importance of women empowerment after conflict, where focus should be given to strengthen protection and security of women in conflict situations. As a signatory to the CEDAW, Malaysia has taken steps to ensure that the empowerment of women in the situation is being addressed.

256. Malaysia has taken actions to sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and taken steps to implement the women, peace and security agenda. The number of women in the armed forces have continued to increase based on the operational requirement. To date there are about 9,354 women serving the armed forces, 6.58% from those enlisted. Women in the armed forces are given the opportunity to attend capacity building activities through courses, seminars, workshops and participation in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations. One of these programmes is *Aman Wanita* RMP Programme (AMANITA) which involves women in the armed forces together with women in the police force.

257. In promoting increased awareness of the women, peace and security agenda, the existing media programmes in the armed forces are being used. However, no special budget has been allocated for the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda as any agenda to be conducted will be allocated sufficient budget based on its priority. Malaysia also does not have excessive military expenditures. Military expenditures are based on procurement plan and operational requirement. Therefore, there has been no budget reallocated from military spending to social and academic development, including for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

258. The armed forces continue to enhance the importance of women in the service through forums, discussions and awareness activities. This is in line with the country's support to the UN Resolution 1325 (2000) Woman, Peace and Security. To date, 448 women of the armed forces have participated in peacekeeping missions. Currently there are 42 women officers and other ranks serving the UN as follows:

- 38 female peacekeepers deployed with the Malaysian Battalion (MALBATT) in UNIFIL Lebanon;
- one female Captain to MONUSCO Congo as military observer;
- one female Lt Col to UNAMID Sudan as military observer; and
- two female Major to MINURSO Western Sahara as military observer.

259. A total of 23 women of the armed forces have participated in humanitarian missions in several countries. Currently, there are seven women officers, three women paramedics, eight women nurses and four women staff being sent to the Malaysian Field Hospital in Cox's Bazar Bangladesh. Malaysia had also participated in the Female Assessment/Analysis and Support Team (FAST 2015) which is a gender integration in civil military operations initiative.

Malaysia also has in place an Armed Forces Act 1972 which is sufficient to provide protection for the women of the armed forces and their rights.

Eliminating Discrimination Against and Violations of Rights of the Girl Child

260. Malaysia has taken measures to combat negative practices and increase the awareness of the needs and potential of all children, especially girls. The following are among the initiatives which have been carried out:

Wise Kid Save and Protect Campaign

261. Wise Kid Save and Protect Campaign is a Blue Ocean Strategy implemented in collaboration with government agencies such as the Department of Education, Department of Health, RMP, Fire and Rescue Department, the Road Safety Department (RSD), National Anti-Drugs Agency (NADA), NPFDB, MCMC, Parents Teachers Association, Cyber Security, telcos and other corporate sectors, NGOs and community activists. The main objective of this programme is to disseminate information related to the safety of children, especially primary school students, on the importance of maintaining the safety of the child and disclose to all parties on legal literacy related sentences imposed on child offenders. This campaign is currently still on-going.

Child Protection Team

262. To assist and support children who are maltreated and neglected, DSW has established Child Protection Teams (CPT) at every district. Amongst the programmes implemented by the CPT is the Child Activity Centres (CAC) in high risk area. The main function of the CAC is to provide support services to children. Besides this, CAC activities indirectly develop children through programmes such as public speaking hence increase thinking skills, confidence, creativity and interactive skills.

Child Welfare Team

263. Child Welfare Team (CWT) is appointed in accordance to Child Act 2001. CWT encourage the involvement of the community in crime prevention, prevent morale decadence as well as focus on the welfare of the child. The members of the CWT are from the local community with various backgrounds and profession, including academicians, religious fraternities, youths etc.

264. In terms of strengthening girl's access to education, in Malaysia, education is provided for all Malaysians irrespective of gender, locality and social background. Girls consistently outperform boys at every level; the gap in performance is already evident at UPSR level and increases over a student's lifetime up to university level, where females comprise approximately 70% of the cohort.

265. Efforts have been taken to eliminate violence against girls including physical and sexual violence, as well as harmful practises. As mentioned earlier in the report, the

Government is currently looking into raising the minimum age of marriage to 18 years old in all existing written legislations and practices among the various ethnic groups including *Orang Asli* and indigenous groups in Sabah and Sarawak.

266. Besides this, the Government will now focus on the factors leading to child marriage such as poverty, low income household, dropout in education and absence of information on SRH. Empowering children and parents on SRH is an effort in empowering girls and adolescents to ensure that they are able to protect themselves from unplanned pregnancies and out of wedlock sexual behaviour as the major reason for child marriage.

267. The Sexual Offences Against Children Act 2017 [Act 792] was enacted in 2017 and came into force on 10 July 2017. This Act aims at addressing the seriousness of sexual offences committed against children in Malaysia by providing better protection for children against sexual offences, safeguard for the interest and well-being of children and deterrence for these offences. The Act criminalises certain sexual acts committed against children including offences related to child pornography, child grooming, physical sexual assault and non-physical sexual assault. The sexual acts criminalised under Act 792 are in addition to other sexual offences punishable in other written laws. In order to ensure effective administration of justice in relation to cases of this nature, Act 792, among others, makes provision for presumption as to the competency of child witnesses in giving evidence. The court also may convict any person who commits an offence under this Act on the basis of uncorroborated evidence of a child under oath and the evidence of *agent provocateur*.

268. The amendment to the provision of Child Registry in Child Act 2001 contains information on offenders for crimes under any written laws where a child is the victim. The information will also include sexual related crimes. The child registry is further enhanced through the development of a system which is accessible to state welfare offices and district welfare offices. Employers in child care/education sector or any person who works directly with children may apply to DSW to screen the particular individuals who intend to work with them. The screening is to ensure that the individuals are free from criminal record where a child is a victim.

269. A Diversion Pilot Programme for children in conflict with the law is expected to be launched in August 2019 for a duration of two years in three districts in Malaysia (Sepang, Port Dickson, and Seremban). "Diversion" refers to a process of diverting children who have committed criminal offenses away from the existing criminal justice system. The introduction of diversion will help meet Malaysia's commitments under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which requires state parties to put in place measures for dealing with children in conflict with the law without resorting to judicial proceedings, providing that human rights and legal safeguards are fully respected [Article 40(3)(b)].

270. On the issue of child labour, the Children and Young Persons (Employment) Act 1966 has been amended on 2018 to cover the rights in employment for children and young person. The amendment strengthens the protection of young person and children in employment including by adopting principles of the relevant ILO Conventions, i.e. the Minimum Age Convention 1973(C138) and the Worst Form of Child Labour Convention 1999 (C182).

271. The new amendment has also specified the list of hazards at the workplace in the Fourth Schedule of the Act that includes:

- work related to machines, installations and other equipment;
- work conducted in a hazardous environment; and
- works that contain certain hazardous nature and condition.

272. In addition, the amended Act also saw an inclusion of the Fifth Schedule which prohibits children and young persons from being employed in employments related to prostitution, pornography, gambling, alcohol, massage services, social escorts and drugs related businesses.

273. In line with CRC which emphasizes on the participation and involvement of children, a children's representative council was established to provide opportunity for children to express their opinions and their voices in relation to children matters and issues. Greater participation of children is addressed in the National Council for Children. This Council acts in advising and proposing recommendations to the Government in all issues related to the protection, care, rehabilitation, development and participation of children at national, regional and international levels. The Council has been established as a combination of the previously existing Advisory and Consultative Council for Children and the Coordinating Council for Child Protection.

274. The Government has also taken initiatives in promoting youths' participation in social, economic and political life. A youth development programme called the Malaysia Future Leaders School (MFLS) was introduced in 2019 with the objectives to enhance youth involvement as a responsible and ethical citizen at all levels with the guidance of the FC and National Principles, as well as the leadership of the future by highlighting the potential and talent of youth leadership to produce a superior, dynamic and world-class leadership talent. Modules for this programme are based on entrepreneurship, patriotism, character building, volunteerism and leadership. The MFLS programme for the youth comprises of a three tier system as follows:

- Tier 1: Selection process via school system (students age 15-17 years old);
- Tier 2: A 10-day programme comprising of 60% indoor activities and 40% outdoor activities (involving 35,000 participants); and
- Tier 3: A 7 months' programme including 14 days in-house training for the best 200 of Tier 2 participants (18 years old).

275. A total of 35,000 students between the age of 15 to 17 will be participating in this programme in 2019. The first cohort of MFLS participated from 1 to 10 April 2019 followed by a second cohort from 14 to 23 April 2019. Subsequently, participation until the 15th cohort is expected to end on 23 December 2019.

276. The Malaysian Youth Council (MYC) is the national umbrella body of youth organisations in Malaysia and provides avenues for youth participation. The Council was

established on 23 July 1948 and currently has 3 million members in 40 affiliates. MYC aims to instil in Malaysian youths an integrated character in terms of mind, body and spirit. It also promotes responsibility, independence, volunteerism and patriotism as youths are the protagonists towards the progress and prosperity of the people, religion and nation. Its aim is to achieve the objectives of the National Youth Development Policy in accordance with Vision 2020. The MYC focuses on the demands of youths to be heard, their issues to be addressed and roles upgraded. The main target is to establish integrated and inter-sectoral youth development to determine national development and revive the youth movement in building a strong Malaysian youth identity.

277. MYC achieves its targets by strengthening youth organisations through idealism, activism and intellectualism. It also encourages the exploration of new fields in youth and national development and heightens the spirit of volunteerism among youths. The main objectives of the MYC are:

- to encourage youth societies to play a positive and effective role to the community and the nation;
- to establish relationships, cooperation, understanding and friendship between youth societies with youth or with international youth societies;
- to promote the development of balanced youth societies in various fields;
- to foster responsible attitude, spirit of patriotism and volunteerism among youth societies;
- to encourage interest in spiritual, physical, economic and youth education amongst those who have an interest in this matter; and
- to work closely with responsible bodies regarding youth affairs for the purpose of youth movement.

278. The Government of Malaysia also recognises the importance of inculcating an entrepreneurial culture and mind set among the country's younger generation. Thus, calls have been made for the IHLs in Malaysia to have a strategic and holistic approach in implementing Entrepreneurship Education in their institutions. In this regard, the MOE Malaysia has produced an Entrepreneurship Development Policy for Malaysian Institutions of Higher Learning in 2010, followed by Entrepreneurship Strategic Action Plans covering a period of 2016-2020, respectively.

279. The main aim is for IHLs in Malaysia to produce balanced and holistic graduates possessing entrepreneurial mind sets and capabilities to become "job creators" and act as catalysts to the country's economic and social development as enshrined in Shift 1 of the Malaysia Higher Education Blueprint 2015-2025. The targets are, by 2020:

- 100% of IHLs students will be exposed to entrepreneurship culture and attributes;
- 10% of graduating students opting for entrepreneurship as a career of choice;
- 15% of IHLs students involving in entrepreneurship activities during studies; and
- 1500 educators possess expertise in entrepreneurship.

280. Since the introduction of the Entrepreneurship Policy for Institutions of Higher Learning in 2010, entrepreneurship programmes and initiatives have grown from year to year. MOE has worked closely with various stakeholders from public and private entities such as Alibaba Business School, Malaysian Global Innovative and Creativity Centre (MAGIC) and Malaysian Technology Development Corporation (MTDC) to enhance our higher education entrepreneurship initiatives. This initiative involves all students of higher education institutions regardless of race and gender. These include:

- students teaming up to have real businesses even when studying, through the *Siswapreneur* Programme;
- the Ministry renting temporary spaces in popular malls for students to actually sell and market their products in the actual business environment (*siswapreneur* showcase);
- educators and leaders attending training of trainers as well as entrepreneurial capacity programmes to enhance their entrepreneurship skills and knowledge;
- October as an entrepreneurship month in all public higher education institutes in Malaysia; and
- students involving in social entrepreneurship activities such as Social Enterprise@Urban Community and Enactus programme.

VII - Environmental Conservation, Protection and Rehabilitation

(Critical areas of concern: I. Human rights of women, K. Women and the environment, L. The girl child)

Integrating Gender Perspectives into Environmental Policies

281. The Government has always been supportive of women's participation and leadership in environmental and natural resource management and governance. In 2019, 4 out of 10 recipients of *Tokoh Jabatan Alam Sekitar* (recognition given to outstanding individuals involved in this field) are women.¹³

282. Among prominent women in this field are Shariffa Sabrina Syed Akil, President of the Association for the Protection of Natural Heritage of Malaysia (PEKA Malaysia); and Yasmin Rasyid, Founder and President of EcoKnights. A marine biologist and mother of two from Ipoh, Yasmin, 41, is a committed environmentalist whose non-profit organisation focuses on environmental education and awareness, as well as community empowerment and development¹⁴.

283. Leadership position and training opportunities in the field of environmental conservation are based on merit and working experience. There is no gender specific programme designed for women participation and leadership in environmental and natural

¹³ <https://enviro.doe.gov.my/emuseum/filter/tokoh-jas>

¹⁴ <https://cleanmalaysia.com/2016/08/28/hail-women-warriors-nature>

resources management and governance. In short, there is no gender discrimination in finding suitable candidates.

284. Women's access to and control over water, energy and other natural resources are equal to men. In 2017, almost 95% of Malaysian households enjoy access to treated water, making Malaysia a nation with one of the widest access to clean water in the Asia Pacific region. In addition, some form of targeted free water policies has been introduced in some states to further accelerate access to treated water especially among B40s.

285. MESTECC actively took part in contributing to the promotion of women and girls in STEM through the hosting of the 26th Pan Pacific and Southeast Asian Women's Association (PPSEAWA) Conference on the topic 'Respect the Environment for a Sustainable and Peaceful Future' in 2016.

286. Ministry of Water, Land and Natural Resources is also a frontier in promoting education and awareness campaign of water resources implemented through Public Outreach Programme (POP) for the public/students/school children with no gender specific target. In short, both genders enjoy the same access to education in science, engineering, technology and other disciplines related to the natural environment.

287. Under the 11 MP, the Ministry of Water, Land and Natural Resources through the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) is currently implementing a project on the application of traditional knowledge towards shared benefits and increase in the living standards of the *Orang Asli* people, which is a continuation from projects of previous Malaysia Plans. Under this project, the activities carried out include documentation of the traditional knowledge on medicinal plants of the 18 sub-ethnics of the *Orang Asli*, development of product prototypes based on one species of medicinal plant, development of research plot and mapping of the distribution of medicinal plants whereby involvement of *Orang Asli* women play a significant role in ensuring the success of each activity done under this project. Based on records, the participation of *Orang Asli* women is around 58%.

Integrating Gender Perspective into Policies and Programmes for Disaster Risk Reduction

288. DSW plays an important role in coordinating and managing disaster victims. This role, as stated in the National Security Council Directive No. 20: The Policy and Mechanism for National Disaster Management includes:

- providing and managing relief/evacuation centres and forward-supply bases;
- preparing and distributing food, clothing and other essential items to the affected victims;
- registering the disaster victims for the purpose of rehabilitation; and
- providing guidance and counselling services to the affected victims.

289. The participation of women in evacuation centres is very important as they can better understand the needs of victims, especially women victims during disaster. With this in mind, DSW has implemented various disaster risk reduction initiatives which involve women carrying out duties and responsibilities, among others:

- as supervisor at Disaster Relief Centres;
- as member of the Committee established for the management of disaster relief centres;
- involvement in various activities at disaster relief centres either as members of voluntary bodies or as volunteers; and
- women with expertise and registered as Counsellors are encouraged to become part of in the Psychological Support Team as facilitators during crisis management and disaster.

SECTION THREE: NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES

National Machinery for Gender Equality

290. Malaysia's current national machinery for gender equality and the empowerment of women is MWFCDC which is headed by the SG of the Ministry. Under this Ministry, the Policy and Strategic Planning Division focuses on the policy aspect, while DWD implements the relevant programmes. A Parliamentary Select Committee on Gender Equality has also been formed to review laws related to gender equality to ensure that every woman enjoys legal equality.

Stakeholders Involved in Contributing to the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

291. All the relevant Ministries and Government Agencies were involved in the preparation of this report. NGOs and civil society organisations (CSOs) were also informed of this process and invited to send in their inputs. In addition, references were also made to various government reports, as mentioned in the introduction.

Mechanisms to Reflect the Concerns of Women and Girls from Marginalised Groups in the Implementation Process

Women and Family Development Committee

292. The Women and Family Development Committee is a discussion platform to identify and discuss current issues related to women and family matters at grassroots level. It is also a platform for policy makers and programme planners to voice out views on matters related to the best interests of women and family. This committee will also foresee and monitor programmes for women and family to be done effectively at all levels.

293. This committee involves participation at exco level (state level politicians) in the planning and decision making process for the betterment of women and family. It is chaired by the Minister of Women, Family and Community Development and consists of the SG of MWFCDC and head of agencies under MWFCDC.

Lay Counsellor

294. Appointment of Lay Counsellors is an initiative by the Government of Malaysia through DWD. It is aimed at seeing women's ability to guide and educate family members and their significant others as well as the community with humanistic approach and the application of counselling methods.

295. Lay Counsellor refers to an individual who has been given appropriate training in basic counselling skills, especially on how to listen properly and to provide psychosocial support at grassroot level. The role of Lay Counsellors is to look at the ability of women to shape, guide

and educate family members as well as the community in the right way, as someone they can trust and believe.

296. To date, a total of 5,572 Lay Counsellors have been trained at community level, especially among the B40 group. These Lay Counsellors have conducted 26,232 counselling sessions with a ratio of 1: 4.8 sessions. Lay Counsellor activities brings positive impact and covers all community levels across race, religion and gender in Malaysia.

Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in the National Strategy for SDG Implementation

Women Agenda in the Malaysia Plan

297. Empowering women was part of the National Malaysia Plan since the early 80s. Women's programme was first mentioned in the 4MP (1981-1985) under Chapter 24: Culture, Community Development, Security and General Administration. Under the 6MP (1991-1995), a full chapter was dedicated to policies and programmes to promote women in development. In the 11MP (2016-2020), the women's agenda continued to be one of the focus areas particularly in the economic development with specifics to increase FLFPR from 54.3 (2016) to 56.5% in 2020, as well as to increase the number of women in key decision making positions. These two areas of focus were timely with the strategy to transform Malaysia as a high income nation by 2020 under the Economic Transformation Programme.

SECTION FOUR: DATA AND STATISTICS

Areas of Progress on Gender Statistics

298. DOSM has taken the initiative to improving gender statistics for the needs of policy formulation and international agenda such as the Agenda 2030. Gender statistics are pertinent information used in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of policies at national and international level. The Gender Statistics released by DOSM takes into account the coordination implemented and agreed upon by the agencies involved through Technical Working Group (TWG) Meeting and Inter-Agency Planning Group Meeting.

299. DOSM publishes the Statistics on Women's Empowerment in Selected Domains Malaysia each year which present gender related statistics for the current year. Besides this, DOSM has been taking steps to better understand the data needs of the SDGs as well as data readiness at national and sub national level on SDG indicators relating to gender.

300. The Malaysian Statistical Training Institute offers courses on gender statistics every year beginning 2019 to strengthen gender statistics in Malaysia. In addition, Malaysia has also been appointed as a focal point in developing curricular training on gender statistics with the UN.

Gender Statistics in Malaysia

301. The Statistics on Women Empowerment in Selected Domains, Malaysia presents gender statistics in Malaysia and gender related indicators as a measurement of gender equality. These statistics focus on the core set of gender indicators which covers the following 8 main domains:

- economic structure, participation in productive activities and access to resources;
- education;
- health and related activities;
- public life and decision making;
- human rights of women and girls;
- social protection;
- disaster risk reduction; and
- peace and security.

302. Statistics compiled are based on the concepts and guidelines of the Gender Statistics Manual: Integrating a Gender Perspective into Statistics (UN Statistics Division, 2017)¹⁵. Selection of the gender related indicators was based on the minimum set of gender indicators, by domain¹⁶ and List of the Core set of Gender Indicators for Asia and the Pacific.¹⁷

¹⁵ UN Statistics Division, 2017

¹⁶ UN Statistical Commission, 2011

¹⁷ UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Malaysia Gender Gap Index

303. The GGGI was first introduced by the World Economic Forum (WEF) 2006 as a framework to capture the magnitude of gender disparities. This index measures the gap across four thematic dimensions which are:

- economic participation and opportunity;
- educational attainment;
- health and survival; and
- political empowerment.

The gap is measured by a scale of 0 to 1. Generally, gender equality is achieved when the index reaches a scale of 1. This gap becomes larger if the scale approaches the scale of 0.

304. Malaysia Gender Gap Index (MGGI) is produced based on the methodology of GGGI taking into account the latest data published by DOSM together with other ministries and agencies in Malaysia.

SDG Indicator: Gender Perspective

305. DOSM is the focal point tasked with the role of compiling and coordinating SDG indicators from relevant agencies in Malaysia. An assessment of SDG Indicators, studies on data readiness and gap analysis, as well as a mapping exercise with Government Plans and Policies have been undertaken to better understand the data needs of the SDGs as well as data readiness at a national level and sub national level. Based on an assessment of data availability as of 20 October 2018, 118 indicators (48% of 244 indicators) were identified as “available”. Another 52 indicators (21%) were described as “partially available”, 38 indicators (18%) were “partially available but need further development”. DOSM identified 24 indicators (10%) for which data are “not available” and 12 indicators (5%) “not relevant” to Malaysia.

306. Besides this, Malaysia undertook an extensive assessment initiative to identify the data gaps for SDGs indicators relating to gender perspective. Findings from the assessment will help DOSM in identifying areas for targeted capacity building and to support the development of a plan for data collection.

Priorities for Strengthening National Gender Statistics

307. DOSM is a premier government agency under the Prime Minister's Office entrusted with the responsibility to collect, interpret and disseminate latest and real time statistics in the monitoring of national economic performance and social development. Periodic Department of Statistics publications, such as the Malaysia Statistics Yearbook provides comprehensive and up-to-date information on social and economic characteristics of Malaysia. The publication presents statistics on a wide array of topics which include among others population, employment, education, health, prices, external trade, national accounts, environment as well as data for various sectors of the economy.

308. MWFCDC also publishes statistics on Malaysian women including the profiling of female population by age group, labour force participation rate, women and education, women and economy, women and health, as well as women in decision making. Gender statistics are not just relevant for monitoring the status of women, but also for making important decisions in the formulation of policy and programmes for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

309. In strengthening national gender statistics, MWFCDC have had several engagements with DOSM to further improve on the collection of gender-disaggregated data. This is necessary in incorporating gender perspectives into Malaysia's development planning and allocation of resources.

National Indicators for Monitoring Progress on SDG

310. Malaysia has in place a defined set of indicators for monitoring progress on the SDGs. A total of 9 targets through 13 indicators, and 4 indicators are gender-specific. Malaysia has continuously embraced sustainable development in the national agenda. In this regard, the commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been mapped with the 11MP to align strategies and initiatives to support the SDGs. The roadmap takes into account the nation's capacities and capabilities in achieving the identified goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda.

311. Goal 5 of SDGs underlines that women and girls must continue to be empowered to reach their full potential. Any forms of violence and harmful practices against them must be eliminated. It seeks to ensure that unpaid, domestic work is recognised; women are able to partake fully in political, economic and public life; can exercise their rights to ownership of productive resources; and have access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. Goal 5 aims to achieve 9 targets through 13 indicators. This Goal has been mapped in parallel with Pillar II and Pillar IV of MTR, 11MP.

Gender Specific Indicator Prioritised

312. Malaysia's top 3 priorities for strengthening national gender statistics over the next five years are:

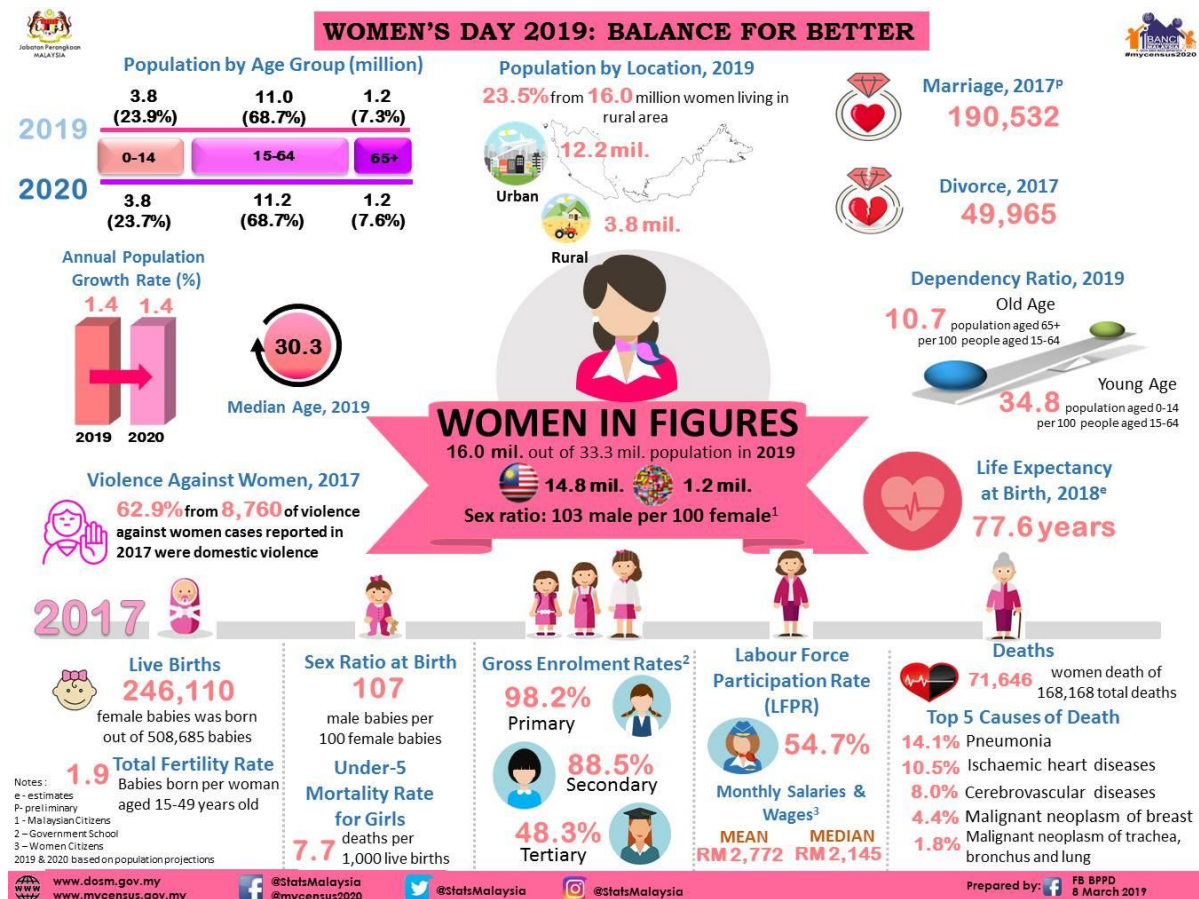
- establishment of an inter-agency coordination mechanism on gender statistics (e.g., technical working group, inter-agency committee);
- re-processing of existing data (e.g., census and surveys) to produce more disaggregated and/or new gender statistics; and
- greater utilization and/or improvement of administrative-based or alternative data sources to address gender data gaps.

Data Disaggregation Provided

313. The following listed are disaggregation routinely provided by major surveys in Malaysia:

- geographic location;
- income;
- sex;
- age;
- education;
- marital status;
- race/ethnicity; and
- disability.

314. Latest statistics on women are shown in the following diagram:



List of Annexes

Table 1: Number of Public Healthcare Facilities as of August 2019

No.	State	Government Health Clinic		Total	Maternity and Paediatric Clinic		Total	Community Clinic		Total
		Urban Area	Rural Area		Urban Area	Rural Area		Urban Area	Rural Area	
1.	Perlis	3	7	10	0	0	0	0	30	30
2.	Kedah	33	27	60	3	3	6	2	216	218
3.	Pulau Pinang	17	13	30	4	2	6	3	56	59
4.	Perak	64	23	87	11	0	11	27	204	231
5.	Selangor	56	23	79	2	2	4	2	111	113
6.	WP Kuala Lumpur	15	0	15	7	0	7	0	0	0
7.	WP Putrajaya	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
8.	Negeri Sembilan	22	28	50	0	0	0	6	90	96
9.	Melaka	20	11	31	0	0	0	13	47	60
10.	Johor	15	81	96	3	0	3	0	261	261
11.	Pahang	47	39	86	4	0	4	7	231	238
12.	Terengganu	22	25	47	1	0	1	34	94	128
13.	Kelantan	8	77	85	0	0	0	0	175	175
14.	Sabah	19	90	109	22	0	22	13	153	166
15.	Sarawak	41	174	215	21	4	25	0	4	4
16.	WP Labuan	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	10	10
MALAYSIA		388	618	1,006	78	11	89	107	1,682	1,789
Total		1,006			89			1,789		
Percentage %		39 %	61 %		88 %	12 %		6 %	94 %	

Table 2: Statistics of Syrian Migrants in the PPSMS Programme

No.	Gender	Number of Participants
1.	Male	1,589
2.	Female	745
Total		2,334

No.	Age Range	Number of Participants
1.	0-6	245
2.	7-12	264
3.	13-17	115
4.	18-30	916
5.	31-50	646
6.	51-85	148
Total		2,334

Table 3: Gender Trend of Public Servant 2013-2017

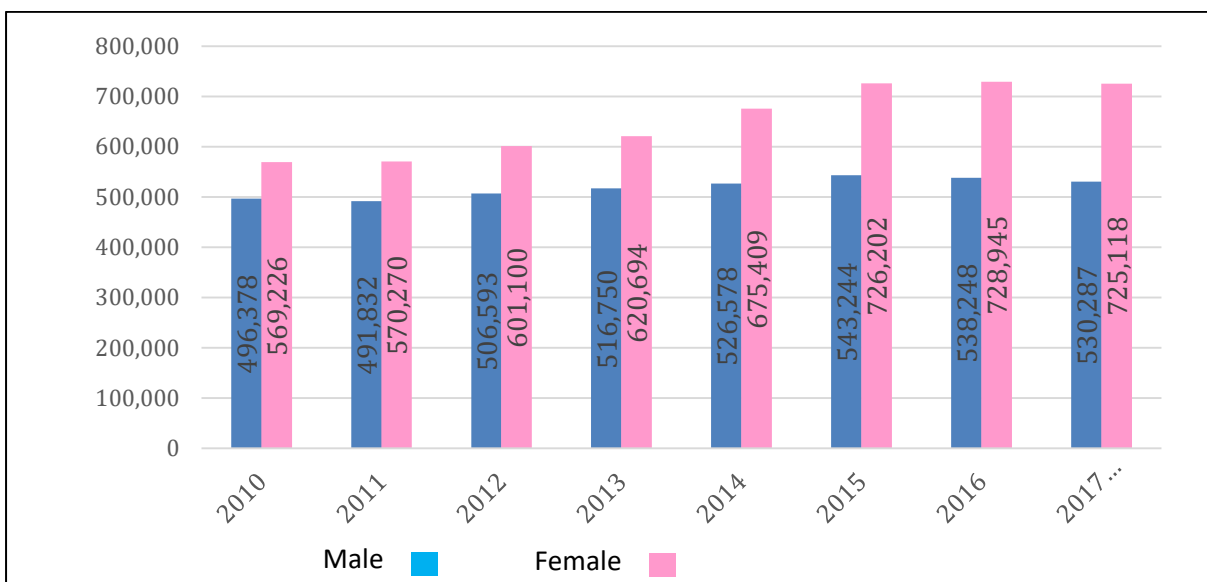


Table 4: 1Malaysia Support for Housewives Programme

Year	Project	Housewives
2015	22 group project	253
2016	14 group project	135
2016	43 individual project	43
Total	79 project	431

Table 5: Statistics of Workers That Have Benefitted from EIS

The number of retrenched workers

Gender	2018	2019
Male	13,695	7,425
Female	10,002	5,242

Workers who have successfully returned to work (insured worker)

Gender	2018	2019
Male	3,973	658
Female	2,997	496

Table 6: Number of Reported Sexual Harassment Cases in the Workplace

Year	Number of cases
2014	14
2015	12
2016	26
2017	24
2018	19

Table 7: Statistics of Trafficked Victims (Women and Girls) 2016-2018

NO.	CATEGORY	2016		2017		2018	
		IPO	PO	IPO	PO	IPO	PO
1	WOMEN	2,224	915	1,999	791	977	67
2	GIRLS (CHILDREN)	104	48	118	56	51	7
	TOTAL	2,328	963	2,117	847	1,028	74

Table 8: Statistics of Trafficked Victims (Women and Girls) Based on the Type of Exploitation 2018

NO.	TYPE OF EXPLOITATION	WOMEN		GIRLS (CHILDREN)	
		IPO	PO	IPO	PO
1.	SEXUAL	753	40	21	5
2.	FORCE LABOUR	206	25	10	0
3.	PHYSICAL VIOLENCE	12	2	0	0
4.	FORCE BEGGING	2	0	12	0
5.	FRAUD JOB	1	0	0	0
6.	BABY SELLING	1	0	8	2
7.	WITHHOLDING OR NON-PAYMENT OF WAGES	2	0	0	0
	TOTAL	977	67	51	7

Table 9: Child Awareness Campaign by the Respective Contingents

Contingent / Year	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		MAC 2019	
	WAC	CAC	WAC	CAC	WAC	CAC	WAC	CAC	WAC	CAC	WAC	CAC
Bukit Aman	3	5	0	4	1	3	2	1	0	1	0	1
Perlis	11	0	2	5	4	13	3	10	4	6	0	1
Kedah	11	2	0	0	25	2	22	3	15	5	5	2
P/Pinang	29	0	5	2	10	5	17	4	12	16	2	3
Perak	16	0	20	15	18	17	27	14	13	38	5	2
Selangor	5	0	1	0	4	0	15	4	0	10	0	5
Kuala Lumpur	6	0	4	4	2	4	3	11	5	11	0	1
N.Sembilan	13	0	4	1	3	10	15	13	14	8	4	2
Melaka	3	0	0	0	7	4	19	2	7	5	3	3
Johor	4	1	1	4	3	1	11	1	0	12	2	0
Pahang	12	0	0	11	5	8	7	5	7	6	3	8
Kelantan	11	0	1	2	4	4	14	7	1	6	0	1
Sabah	1	0	2	1	2	5	5	9	3	16	1	2
Sarawak	7	0	1	1	4	4	17	11	15	13	2	0
Terengganu	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	7	1	1	0	0
	132	8	41	50	92	81	179	102	97	154	27	31
TOTAL	140		91		173		281		251		58	

CAC – CHILD AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

WAC – WOMEN AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Table 10: Subjects Covered Under Islamic Pre-Marriage Course

NO.	TOPIC	HOURS
1.	Islamic Knowledge	1 hour 30 mins
2.	Marriage	1 Hour
3.	Marriage Procedure	1 Hour
4.	Spousal Responsibilities	1 hour 30 mins
5.	Marital Communication	1 Hour
6.	Financial Management	1 Hour
7.	Healthcare Management	2 Hours

NO.	TOPIC	HOURS
8	Stress and Conflict Management	1 Hour 30 mins
9	Dissolution of Marriage	1 Hour 30 mins
10	Solemnisation Ceremony & Wedding Reception	1 Hour
TOTAL HOURS		13 Hours

Table 11: Percentage of Women on the Boards of Bursa Malaysia's Top 100

Years	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Percentage (%)	13.2%	14%	16.6%	19.2%	24.4%

Table 12: Statistics of NIEW Programmes to Increase Leadership Competencies Among Women, Starting from Youths

Name of Programme	Number of Participants
Women Directors Program (WDP)	1,051
Leadership	354
Other areas	932