MINISTRY OF WOMEN, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION

MALAYSIA PROGRESS REPORT 2020 - 2024

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AI	Artificial Intelligent
AIF	Applied Innovation Fund
AI-LWBW	AI-Latent-Workforce-Back-to-Work
AI-RMAP	The National Artificial Intelligence Roadmap 2021-2025
AKRAB	Public Service Counselling Support Group
APU	Asia Pacific University
ASB	Asia School of Business
BNM	Bank Negara Malaysia
BPfA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
BSN	Bank Simpanan Nasional
CCP	CyberSecurity Malaysia Collaboration Program
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
DELIMa	Digital Educational Learning Initiative Malaysia
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
DWD	Department of Women's Development
EDL	Executive Digital Leadership
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
EPF	Employees Provident Fund
XR	Extended Reality
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GCED	Global Citizenship Education
GFP	Gender Focal Point
GFT	Gender Focal Team
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
IHL	Institutions of Higher Learning
IHSAN	Child Sexual Crime Intervention Module in Schools
KSSM	Standard Secondary School Curriculum
KSSR	Standard Primary School Curriculum
MBOT	Malaysia Board of Technologists
MGC	Malaysia Grand Challenge
MIV	Malaysia ICT Volunteers
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MOSTI	Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation
MPCC	Malaysian Peacekeeping Centre
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise

MWFCD	Ministry of Women Family and Community Department
MySPC	Malaysian Social Protection Council
NBOS	National Blue Ocean Strategy
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NIMP 2030	New Industrial Master Plan 2030
NSW	National Science Week
OMEGA	KASIH Wanita: Sustainable Development Economy
PAKK	Children's Activity Center
PAWE	Pusat Aktiviti Warga Emas
PDG	Program Duta Guru
PEERS	Reproductive and Social Health Education
PEKERTI	National Reproductive Health Education and Social Education
PLC	Public Listed Company
PN	National Planetarium
PPKK	Children's Protection Team
PWD	People With Disabilities
SISPAA	Public Complaints Management System
SKSSR	Skim Keselamatan Sosial Suri Rumah
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TEKUN	Tabung Ekonomi Kumpulan Usaha Niaga
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
WTC	Women Technologist Chapter

SECTION ONE: PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS

A. Priorities for Accelerating Progress for Women and Girls

i. Non-Discrimination Under the Law, Access to Justice, and Eliminating Violence Against Women and Girls

1. Malaysia has made significant progress over the last five years in relation to its commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. This report highlights achievements in several key areas, including law and justice, the economy, and social participation.

2. The Malaysian Government consistently prioritize women empowerment and gender equality in its development plans. Since the early 80s, the women empowerment agenda was part of the five-year Malaysia Plan and annual national budget. This continuous commitment by the government is currently reflected in the recent Twelfth Malaysia Plan (2021 – 2025) ensuring the inclusion of women in the national development agenda.

3. Malaysia is committed to ensuring equality and non-discrimination under the law, particularly in providing access to justice for women and girls. To strengthen protection mechanisms, Malaysia enacted the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act in 2022, providing a legal framework for addressing sexual harassment and provide remedies for victims. On 8 March 2024, the Tribunal for Anti-Sexual Harassment was established as a redress mechanism, which use balance of probabilities as the standard of proof and recognizing that harassment occurs in various contexts. Furthermore, it aims to address the issue of under-reporting by expedite sexual harassment complaints with minimal cost and takes less time compared with the court proceedings.

4. This tribunal reflects Malaysia's dedication to enhancing accountability and providing justice for victims of sexual harassment in both public and employment spaces. The enforcement of the Act starts with advocacy to provide awareness, education, and understanding about the act and sexual harassment to the community.

5. The Domestic Violence Act 1994 [Act 521] serves as a crucial legal instrument in Malaysia that not only protects family members from violence but also incentivizes women to seek help and assert their rights in abusive situations. By providing clear definitions of domestic violence and establishing mechanisms for legal protection, including the issuance of protection orders, the Act empowers family members especially women to take decisive action against their abusers without fear of retribution. This legislation fosters a supportive environment that encourages family members especially women to

prioritise their safety and well-being, ultimately promoting their autonomy and enabling them to pursue healthier, violence-free relationships.

6.　　In 2023, Malaysia criminalizes stalking. This ground-breaking measure was done by including the implementation of Section 507A of the Penal Code and amendment of Criminal Procedure Code. This empower law enforcement agencies to thoroughly investigate cases of stalking, prosecute offenders in court, and impose significant penalties, including imprisonment of up to three years. With these legislative advancements we are steadfast in our resolve to combat stalking and create a safer society for everyone, especially women.

7.　　The Sexual Offences against Children Act 2017 was amended in 2023. It is to ensure the law remained in line with technological developments and to better protect children against all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse online. It imposes stricter penalties for those involved in the production, distribution, or possession of child pornography. Additionally, it includes provisions for enhanced monitoring and enforcement measures allowing perpetrators who are beyond our borders to be prosecuted. Overall, the amendment provides greater protection for children particularly girls against sexual exploitation and abuse in the digital age.

8.　　Another effort done by the Government is the annual celebration of Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls on the 25th of November. This momentous day which is spearheaded by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Department (MWFCD) commemorates the relentless advocacy efforts to end all forms of violence that occurs towards women and girls while encouraging continuous empowerment for women nationwide. Last year itself, the celebration has reached 17,705 people through 85 programmes all over the country. Numerous campaigns and activities were conducted revolving around the theme of eliminating violence against women and girls, which helps to instil further understanding to the community on the dire need to be vigilant and act when witnessing these violent acts against women.

ii. Women's Entrepreneurship and Women's Enterprises

9.　　The eUsahawan programme has been implemented since 2015 with the aim of building a more inclusive culture towards adopting digital technology, especially digital marketing and e-commerce. This program targets Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) / Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) students, entrepreneurs as well as Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), including women entrepreneurs and people with disabilities (PWD) to accelerate their careers, earn income and grow their businesses.

10.　　In Budget 2024, the Malaysian Government has proposed RM720 million (in the form of small business loan facility under agencies such as *Tabung*

Ekonomi Kumpulan Usaha Niaga (TEKUN), *Bank Negara Malaysia* (BNM), *Bank Simpanan Nasional* (BSN) to be set aside to encourage women and youth to venture into business as micro-entrepreneurs and small traders.

11.   Additionally, several steps have been taken to economically empower women. One such initiative is the WeJana Programme, designed for women aspiring to generate income through entrepreneurship but lacking the necessary products or knowledge to start a business. The programme offers training in four key areas: financial management, sales and marketing, business branding, and customer service. Since its launch in 2022, the programme has helped 573 participants earn income from the comfort of their homes.

12.   The "Wanita Bangkit@KPWKM" which was launched on 1 September 2021 with the aim to uplift the lives of women from poverty and to address the economic crisis faced by women during the COVID-19 pandemic which was more than just a health issue that affected the lives and the livelihoods of the community. To date, this initiative focuses on income-generating activities by connecting women to various platforms that offer employment, business or entrepreneurial opportunities through government agencies, private sectors and industries to become business owners or drop-ship agents.

13.   From April 2021 until 31 December 2021, a total of 4,541 women have successfully generated income through small businesses or entrepreneurship in the informal sector while 594 women have found employment in retail, pharmacy and manufacturing in the formal sector. While from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022, a total of 6,823 women have successfully generated income through small businesses or are involved in entrepreneurship in the informal sector, followed by 238 women who have found employment in the formal sector.

14.   The MyKasih Kapital was introduced as a one-off basic business capital assistance of RM500 for women entrepreneurs. Ever since it was introduced in April 2021 till date, a total of 14,770 participants have benefitted from this initiative.

15.   WeBridge Programme is a programme that aims to connect women who own small businesses with existing e-commerce platforms and wish to expand their business services. Since 2022, the programme has assisted 410 participants in expanding their businesses across the country and overseas.

16.   The KASIH Wanita: Sustainable Development Economy (OMEGA) programme is a skill programme based on the concept of Circular Economy and also supports the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goal as outlined by the United Nations (UN). The OMEGA programme aims to create and implement modules that can help women to generate income through a creative and innovative approach based on discarded and used materials.

Besides, the programme also aims to improve women's technical skills in line with the government's desire to produce skilled human capital and to increase local economic resources such as handicrafts from discarded materials. This skills programme aims to generate income for participants through handicraft sale.

17. MamaCare is another initiative to train elderly women and single mothers to generate family income through traditional and modern holistic postpartum care services.

iii. Changing Discriminatory Social Norms and Gender Stereotype

18. An important goal in Malaysia for the progress of girls and women is to combat gender stereotypes and discriminatory societal conventions. As part of an all-encompassing framework of laws, regulations, and initiatives, the country has outlined strategies aimed at changing these conventions and prejudices.

19. A central initiative in this effort has been the promotion of gender awareness in education. Recognizing the powerful role education plays in shaping public opinion, Malaysia has implemented policies to ensure that schools incorporate gender-sensitive curricula and textbooks. These ongoing efforts are conducted through school curriculum policy within the framework of the Standard Secondary School Curriculum (KSSM) and Standard Primary School Curriculum (KSSR).

20. The Ministry of Education (MOE) has taken steps to review and revise educational materials to address gender bias in the newly revised school curriculum - 2027 School Curriculum. The ministry had engaged with 1,600 individuals consisting of teachers, lecturers, parents, non-governmental organisations and education sector players through 21 engagements from August to December 2023 to ensure the implementation of 2027 School Curriculum recognizes the importance of gender equality, breaking stereotypes, and challenging discriminatory practices and norms.

21. Apart from that, a module has also been developed to guide teachers in the teaching and learning process through *Modul Bimbingan* (Guidance Module).

22. The fight against discrimination and for gender equality in Malaysia has also relied on legislative improvements. There have been legislative efforts to strengthen safeguards against violence and discrimination based on gender. Additionally, Malaysia has consistently demonstrated its commitment to women empowerment and gender equality principles at the international level by acceded Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

23.   The government also has been at the forefront of strong awareness campaigns and public outreach programs. Malaysia aims to promote gender equality and dispel damaging gender stereotypes using a variety of mediums, including online platforms, community events, and media outlets. Malaysia aims to promote gender equality by drawing attention to the negative impacts of gender biases and highlighting positive portrayals of women and girls. Additionally, each Ministry and Agency has appointed a Gender Focal Point (GFP) and a Gender Focal Team (GFT) to ensure the effective implementation of gender equality initiatives through gender mainstreaming.

24.   Initiating targeted programs to dismantle damaging masculinity norms and promote positive male role models, Malaysia has entered the fight for gender equality with the understanding that men and boys must be engaged as partners. These programs inspire males to do more than just talk about gender equality; they should fight for women's rights, dismantle harmful stereotypes, and help build a more welcoming community.

25.   Malaysia aims to promote gender equality and mutual respect by encouraging collaboration between the sexes. One of the initiative is The Qawwam Male Initiative, introduced to strengthen the role of men as leaders, protectors, and advocates within families and communities, continues to be actively implemented by various executing agencies according to their respective capacities and mandates.

26.   As a conclusion, improving women's and girls' status is Malaysia's top priority, and the country sees the elimination of harmful gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms as a means to that end. Malaysia is committed to creating a society that is more equitable and inclusive for everyone.

iv. Gender-Responsive Budgeting

27.   Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) has been actively promoted and encouraging ministries to gain comprehensive knowledge and exposure to GRB. A guideline has been introduced that emphasizes gender analysis in the preparation of both management and development budgets. This guideline serves as a tool for all ministries to integrate GRB into their budget planning, ensuring that budget allocations consider the needs of all segments of society, including women, men, children, PWD, and the elderly.

28.   To improve and standardize the understanding of GRB, a series of workshops and comprehensive briefings have been conducted across various ministries. These efforts are based on the belief that raising awareness and implementing GRB are crucial to ensuring that ministry budgets are effectively aligned to meet the needs of all segments of society.

B. Rights of Vulnerable Groups of Women and Girls

29.   Every Malaysian child, regardless of background, deserves equal access to quality education, including rural girls, to help them reach their potential.

30.   As of February 2024, 80.3% of populated areas, including rural and suburban regions, have achieved digital connectivity. The ongoing expansion of 5G coverage is expected to drive significant progress in areas such as the economy, education, healthcare, and employment in the medium and long term, particularly for women living in remote and rural areas.

31.   In line with Malaysia's commitment to the CEDAW, significant progress is being made to advance the rights of vulnerable women, particularly those with disabilities. As of December 2023, 238,394 women with disabilities are registered, with 1,609 employed in the public sector. The amended Human Rights Commission of Malaysia Act 1999 [Act 597] now requires the inclusion of at least one representative from persons with disabilities and 30% women in the appointment of Commissioners, reinforcing their representation in decision-making roles.

32.   Budget 2022 further underscored this commitment by allocating RM15 million each to the MOE and the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) to improve educational infrastructure for persons with disabilities. This funding was directed to 186 schools under MOE and 19 Public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), including 13 Polytechnics and 11 Community Colleges under MOHE, ensuring greater accessibility in educational settings.

33.   Additionally, the "Guideline for the Implementation of the Inclusive Policy for Disabilities in HEIs," introduced on 5 September 2019, aims to end the segregation between students with and without disabilities. It promotes continuous education and ensures that HEIs provide comprehensive facilities and support for students with disabilities.

34.   Currently, 20 public universities have implemented disability-friendly facilities, including designated parking spaces, tactile routes, accessible hostel accommodations, toilets, ablution lounges, wheelchair routes, bus stops, transportation, and library support services. These universities have also established dedicated units to address the welfare of staff and students with disabilities, promoting an inclusive academic environment for all.

C. Impact of Crises on BPfA Implementation and Measures to Protect Progress for Women and Girls

35.   The onset of COVID-19 in 2020 brought unprecedented challenges globally, and Malaysia was no exception. The pandemic disrupted daily life, the economy, and posed significant health risks, particularly to women and girls, who are among the most vulnerable groups.

36.   In response, Malaysia swiftly introduced comprehensive measures to mitigate the crisis, with a special focus on women, who were disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Economic relief packages, enhanced healthcare services, and targeted support programs were rolled out to assist women, reflecting Malaysia's commitment to protecting the progress made under the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action BPfA and ensuring gender equality remained a priority, even in times of crisis.

37.   The pandemic challenged Malaysia's progress in advancing women empowerment and gender equality, particularly those in lower income or informal sectors. Women faced disproportionate job losses, income reductions, and heightened caregiving responsibilities. To protect these vulnerable women, Malaysia introduced targeted initiatives, including financial assistance, access to credit, and skills training for women entrepreneurs and those in at-risk sectors.

38.   Additional policies promoting flexible work arrangements and childcare subsidies were enacted to help women balance their professional and caregiving responsibilities, ensuring their continued participation in the workforce despite the crisis.

39.   The pandemic also disrupted education, disproportionately affecting girls, especially those in underserved communities. In response, Malaysia launched online learning platforms, provided educational materials, and improved digital connectivity to ensure girls' continued access to education.

40.   The surge in domestic violence during lockdowns further underscored the need to combat gender-based violence (GBV). In response, Malaysia expanded helplines, shelters, and legal aid for survivors, and ensured continued access to essential healthcare services, including sexual and reproductive health services. These actions demonstrate Malaysia's resilience in safeguarding the progress made for women and girls under the BPfA.

D. Malaysia's Priorities for The Progress of Women and Girls for the Next 5 Years

41.   Malaysia focuses on elevating the standard of living for B40 communities, particularly assisting women and vulnerable groups through targeted social assistance programs. A notable initiative is the Rahmah Cash Assistance, which has seen a significant increase in its allocation for Budget 2024, rising from RM8 billion to RM10 billion—an impressive 25% increase. Under this program, cash handouts are provided in three categories: single individuals, households, and senior citizens, with income limits set between RM2,500 and RM5,000 per month. This financial support is crucial for women, many of whom are primary caregivers and may face economic challenges.

42.   Additionally, the government has extended the Rahmah Basic Assistance, allowing eligible recipients to receive assistance of up to RM100 per month for basic goods, totaling RM1,200 annually. This support is vital for women in the B40 category, enabling them to meet their families' essential needs.

43.   Moreover, the government is implementing targeted hiring incentives to promote employment among vulnerable groups, including women. Employers who hire individuals from these target groups can benefit from cash incentives for a duration of 3 to 6 months. Such initiatives not only help improve the economic conditions for women but also foster greater inclusion in the workforce, ultimately contributing to their empowerment and upliftment within the community.

44.   According to the Department of Social Welfare's (DSW) records from 2022, 63.5% of child abuse victims are girls, highlighting the urgent need to address this growing issue. In response, the Department has launched the Children's Protection Programme: Care for Children, which will be implemented nationwide across all states. Targeting 300 schools in 2024, the program aims to achieve several key objectives:

  i.   Enhance Awareness: Educate children about situations that necessitate care and protection.
  ii.   Empower Action: Inform children and their guardians about the appropriate actions to take when confronted with abuse, emphasizing community involvement.
  iii. Strengthen Local Teams: Equip the Children's Protection Team (PPKK) with better insights into the children in their areas, enabling them to effectively fulfill their roles and responsibilities as outlined in the PPKK and Children's Activity Center (PAKK).

45.   By fostering awareness and empowering both children and their communities, this initiative aims to create a safer environment for all children.

46.   Improving access to high-quality education, vocational training, and lifelong learning opportunities for women and girls in Malaysia is an ongoing national priority. The initiatives focuses on ensuring that all girls and women, regardless of socioeconomic status or location, can access quality education. To achieve this, digital literacy among underserved populations is enhanced, particularly women, those in rural areas, and individuals with disabilities. In times of crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic, we work to maintain educational continuity by providing accessible online learning platforms, distributing educational materials, and supporting digital connectivity efforts.

47.   Additionally, we are committed to advocating for gender-sensitive curricula and teaching methods to combat stereotypes and create inclusive classrooms. By integrating gender perspectives into education at all levels, we aim to encourage women and girls to pursue diverse subjects and careers traditionally dominated by men. The strategies include enhancing access to TVET for women, equipping them with the skills necessary for an evolving job market. Collaborating with various partners — such as educational institutions, government agencies, and civil society organizations — is crucial in developing effective, gender-sensitive programs. Through continuous monitoring and evaluation, we aim to empower women to realize their potential, contribute to economic growth, and promote a more inclusive and equitable society.

48.   One of our key initiatives, the Children's Protection Advocacy Program: Care for Children, is a collaborative effort with the Ministry of Education, the Royal Malaysia Police, the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, and the Department of Women's Development. This program aims to educate children about cyber safety, safe and unsafe touches, and sexual harassment.

49.   Additionally, we continue to implement the Reproductive and Social Health Education (PEERS) curriculum in schools, which covers essential topics such as emotional well-being, consent, and contraceptive knowledge. By fostering strong partnerships with stakeholders, including parents, we can ensure the successful implementation of these programs, empowering women and girls to make informed decisions and build healthy, positive relationships. Through these combined efforts, we aim to create an inclusive environment that prioritizes the rights and well-being of women and girls in Malaysia.

50.   Recognizing the barriers posed by societal expectations, male dominance in politics, and entrenched stereotypes, Malaysia is committed to empowering women through targeted strategies. This includes leadership training and pathways for women in decision-making to create a more inclusive political landscape. One example is the Women Leadership Apprentice Program (PERANTIS) 2024, which strengthens women's leadership across sectors such as politics, economics, technology, and legislation. Offering intensive training, workshops, hands-on experience, and mentorship from prominent

women leaders, the program supports women in realizing their potential, building networks, and excelling across fields.

51.   Another key priority is to change discriminatory societal norms and combat gender stereotypes through comprehensive education and awareness initiatives. The Malaysian Parliament has established strict measures against sexist remarks, promoting accountability among its members, while the MOE is revising curricula to eliminate gender bias and promote inclusivity. The newly developed 2027 School Curriculum engages stakeholders to ensure that educational materials challenge discriminatory practices and foster gender equality. This approach aims to create a supportive environment for all students, regardless of gender, and to encourage women and girls to pursue leadership roles.

52.   Moreover, community engagement play a vital role in promoting self-reliance among women and girls, giving them platforms to voice their experiences and participate in decision-making. Future efforts will involve strengthening laws and regulations, increasing awareness campaigns, and promoting gender-sensitive education.

SECTION TWO: PROGRESS ACROSS THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

A. Inclusive Development, Shared Prosperity and Decent Work

i. Gender Equality in the World of Work

53. Malaysia has undertaken significant initiatives to promote gender equality in the workplace, implementing laws and policies designed to prevent discrimination and ensure equal opportunities for women. A notable advancement is the recent amendment to the Employment Act 1955 [Act 265], which includes key provisions such as increased maternity leave, protection against termination for pregnant employees, the right to request flexible working arrangements, prohibitions against employment discrimination and mandatory notices regarding sexual harassment.

54. The enforcement of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) laws mandates that all businesses treat women and men equally, thereby enhancing career growth and opportunities for women across various fields. To support the effective implementation of these laws, the government has established monitoring systems, capacity-building initiatives, and public awareness campaigns, all aimed at ensuring compliance.

55. Several initiatives aimed at advancing gender equality in the workforce have been implemented, targeting a female labor force participation rate of 60%. To facilitate this, the government has extended tax exemptions for women returning to work until December 31, 2027. Additionally, childcare facilities have been established near public sector workplaces, and subsidies are provided to civil servants in the B40 income group to help offset childcare costs, making it easier for women to balance work and family responsibilities.

56. Additionally, the government has prioritized the promotion of equal pay laws and policies to address the persistent gender wage gap. These efforts ensure that men and women receive equal compensation for equal work, supported by funding for research, statistical analysis, and public education initiatives aimed at raising awareness.

57. Malaysia actively promotes gender-sensitive workplace policies that foster equality and work-life balance, including measures to prevent sexual harassment, support flexible work arrangements, and strengthen parental leave. These efforts create inclusive environments where both men and women can succeed professionally while managing personal responsibilities. The government supports this goal with funding for capacity-building, training workshops, and the development of gender-responsive best practices for businesses. Additionally, Malaysia's 30% women on boards policy seeks to ensure at least 30% female representation in corporate boardrooms, furthering

gender equality in leadership. As of June 2023, women make up 30.6% of directors in the Top 100 Public Listed Companies (PLCs) and 24.6% across all PLCs.

58. To promote entrepreneurship among women, substantial financial assistance is provided, including access to sizable funds and lower financing rates. The Self-Employment Social Security Scheme also plays a critical role by subsidizing 90% of insurance coverage for self-employed individuals, helping to create a safety net for women entrepreneurs. Collectively, these actions represent a robust commitment by the Malaysian government to foster a more equitable labor market that encourages women's participation and success in both employment and entrepreneurship.

59. In recent years, Malaysia has made significant strides in promoting gender equality within the civil service and armed forces through comprehensive policies and regulations. The Public Service Department has established guidelines for recruitment, promotion, and various aspects of human resource management, ensuring that these processes are free from gender-based discrimination.

60. In addition, the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation (MOSTI) established the Women Technologist Chapter (WTC) under the Malaysia Board of Technologists (MBOT) in 2022 to enhance the visibility and competency of women in technology fields. By December 2023, MBOT registered 19,929 women members, reflecting a growing community of female technologists. The National Artificial Intelligence Roadmap 2021-2025 (AI-RMAP) includes strategies specifically aimed at boosting the number of Artifial Intelligent (AI) talents, with initiatives like the AI-Latent-Workforce-Back-to-Work (AI-LWBW) program designed to empower female talents through support mechanisms such as childcare and flexible work-from-home options. These programs are essential for fostering women's participation in non-traditional employment sectors.

61. The Public Service Department has taken significant steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace by issuing Service Circular No. 5/2018, which outlines the "Guidelines for Addressing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace." This comprehensive guideline serves as a preventive measure aimed at eliminating sexual harassment within the public service sector, ensuring a safe and respectful work environment for all employees.

62. In addition to these guidelines, the Department has implemented programs such as CyberSAFE (Cyber Security Awareness For Everyone) to enhance cybersecurity awareness among the public. This initiative not only focuses on protecting individuals from various cyber threats like cyber spying and cyberstalking but also aims to address the issue of electronic sexual harassment. By promoting awareness and providing education on identifying

and reporting such threats, these measures are designed to prevent sexual harassment through electronic mediums at an early stage, fostering a safer digital environment alongside traditional workplace protections.

63. The advancement of digital connectivity, such as 5G, plays a crucial role in facilitating the transition from informal to formal work by enhancing awareness and providing greater access to supportive policies and legal measures. The widespread availability of advanced telecommunications networks enables the implementation of digital surveillance and reporting technologies, which can ensure that women are comprehensively included in formal employment practices, thereby fostering an inclusive digital society.

ii. Unpaid Care and Domestic Work, Work-Life and Family Balance and Rights of Paid Care Workers

64. Over the past five years, Malaysia has taken significant steps to recognize, reduce, and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work, as well as to promote work-life balance and strengthen the rights of paid care workers. Under the National AI-RMAP 2021-2025 , initiatives such as the AI-LWBW program have been implemented to empower women, especially those with caregiving responsibilities, by providing resources like childcare support and flexible work-from-home options that enable women to balance work and family commitments effectively.

65. To create a supportive ecosystem for women's economic participation, Malaysia has enforced policies that promote flexible working arrangements, maternity and paternity leave, and unemployment protections for women. The government has also improve access to affordable childcare services, recognizing the need for support in managing caregiving responsibilities.

66. Additionally, training programs and social protection measures for paid care workers have been enhanced, focusing on fair wages and improved working conditions. An example of this is the *Skim Keselamatan Sosial Suri Rumah* (SKSSR), a voluntary program designed to safeguard the health, safety, and well-being of housewives against certain risks.

67. Child Care Subsidy Grants is a program which aims to alleviate the burden on low-income parents, provide opportunities for children to receive better early care and education in childcare centres, and indirectly contribute to the development of quality, healthy, and balanced human capital. Subsidies are given to low-income parents or caregivers who send their children to registered childcare centres on a monthly basis. This program not only helps low-income parents to enter the workforce but also provides opportunities to provide quality and safe early education and care for children

68. Home Help Service Program is an initiative designed to alleviate the care burden on families who may lack the resources to provide adequate support. This program aligns with the National Blue Ocean Strategy (NBOS) by ensuring low-cost, high-impact, and sustainable services that benefit target groups. It offers social support services, rehabilitation, care, and integration through community volunteers, significantly reducing the need for institutional care for the elderly and supporting the success of the deinstitutionalization efforts by the DSW.

69. Another vital initiative is the establishment of *Pusat Aktiviti Warga Emas* (PAWE), or Elderly Activity Centers, which serve as community hubs for elderly individuals to engage in daily activities. These centers are the result of strategic collaborations between the MWFCD, other government agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

70. In recent years, Malaysia has implemented several measures to enhance family leave provisions, recognizing the importance of supporting working parents and caregivers in balancing their professional and family responsibilities. Maternity leave for government female employees is now a maximum of 360 days, inclusive of weekends and public holidays, allowing flexibility to choose between 60 to 90 days, with a mandatory minimum of 60 days. This policy ensures that mothers can take adequate time off for recovery and bonding with their newborns.

71. Additionally, female employees who give birth after 22 weeks of pregnancy are eligible for maternity leave, whether the baby is born alive or stillborn, reflecting a compassionate approach to maternal health.

72. Paternity leave has also been established for government male employees, granting them up to seven days of unrecorded leave (including weekends and public holidays) for each childbirth. This leave can be utilized a maximum of five times throughout their service, promoting shared parental responsibilities and supporting fathers' roles in child-rearing. Furthermore, parental leave is available as unpaid leave for government employees to care for their children. This includes a parental leave option linked to maternity leave, limited to five years throughout their service, and an independent parental leave of up to one year until the child reaches the age of five.

73. In addition to maternity, paternity, and parental leave, the government provides various types of leave to support employees dealing with family responsibilities. This includes annual leave, half-pay leave for caring for ill close family members, and unpaid leave for personal matters, among other provisions. The government has also introduced policies such as allowing pregnant employees to leave one hour early and providing additional leave for those needing to care for a sick child or family member.

74.   Additionally, awareness campaigns are being designed to highlight the value of shared responsibilities in caregiving and domestic work, encouraging men and boys to take an active role. By integrating these principles into education and raising awareness, Malaysia aims to foster a more equitable distribution of unpaid care work and challenge existing societal norms.

iii. Gender Digital Divide

75.   In the past five years, Malaysia has actively worked to reduce the gender digital divide through initiatives like the Malaysia ICT Volunteers (MIV). This program specifically encourages women's participation as ICT volunteers, empowering them to become digital champions within their communities. Community-based projects have targeted schools, institutions of higher learning, and rural areas, facilitating hands-on digital skills training and awareness activities. From 2016 to 2023, a total of 6,217 women have joined the MIV initiative, significantly contributing to bridging the digital divide and promoting gender equality in technology access and literacy.

76.   To reduce the gender digital divide, Malaysia has integrated gender perspectives into its national digital policies, notably through the accelerated rollout of the 5G network. This initiative is essential for fostering a gender-inclusive digital society, as recognized by international organizations like Opensignal and OOKLA for its quality and reliability. The introduction of 5G has notably improved Malaysia's global standing, moving from 45th to 41st in OOKLA's Speedtest mobile rankings as of Q3 2023. Enhanced internet connectivity ensure that women and girls, particularly in rural areas, have meaningful access to digital resources.

77.   In alignment with Malaysia's Ekonomi MADANI and New Industrial Master Plan 2030 (NIMP 2030), the focus on advanced connectivity is expected to stimulate the digital economy and promote the development of safe, affordable, and inclusive digital tools and services. Furthermore, programs like eUsahawan have empowered women entrepreneurs by providing essential training in digital marketing and e-commerce, enabling them to expand their businesses in both local and global markets. Since its launch in 2015, 57% of women entrepreneurs have participated in the eUsahawan Programme, significantly contributing to their economic empowerment and bridging the digital divide.

78.   The Digital Education Policy, launched in November 2023, lays a strong foundation for the next generation, including girls and women, to succeed in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields while addressing the gender gap in digital skills. This policy aims to enhance students' digital competencies and foster interest in computer science and STEM from an early age, thus promoting greater participation of women in these sectors.

79. Other initiatives also contribute to a broader effort to promote gender equality in the workplace and bridge the digital divide by focusing on digital literacy and technological competence, including:
    i. Executive Digital Leadership (EDL): A 3-month program aimed at developing digital talent among senior leaders in both public and private sectors. Running for five years with 21 cohorts, this program collaborates with the Asia School of Business (ASB) and MIT Sloan, offering participants invaluable insights from major technology companies like IBM, Microsoft, and AWS.
    ii. AI Untuk Rakyat: An accessible self-learning online program designed to raise public awareness about Artificial Intelligence (AI). This program caters to a diverse audience and is available in multiple languages, ensuring inclusivity, especially for the visually impaired. It provides foundational knowledge about AI and its applications.
    iii. My5G Ericsson Malaysia Pioneers Program: An online learning initiative focused on digital technology and 5G, aimed at higher education students, developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Digital and Ericsson.
    iv. XR Hub Community: A partnership with Asia Pacific University (APU) to establish a community for developing the Extended Reality (XR) ecosystem, involving 40 members from various organizations.
    v. My 5G Portal: An interactive center showcasing over 50 5G use cases across 12 industries, open to the public, including women and girls, fostering talent development in 5G applications.
    vi. CyberSAFE (Cyber Security Awareness For Everyone): A program promoting cybersecurity awareness while encouraging gender equality and digital access across communities.

80. Promoting gender-responsive STEM education has been a key focus in reducing the gender digital divide. The Ministry of Education has outlined strategies to promote students' interest in STEM from an early age, ensuring science and mathematics are integrated into the national curriculum starting from preschool.

81. Co-curricular programs like the Young STEMist Expo (YSE) provide opportunities for girls to engage in STEM-focused events and contests, fostering digital literacy and hands-on learning. Partnerships with organizations such as PETRONAS Foundation, MDEC, Mara University of Technology, and Intel Malaysia connect young women with role models and STEM mentors.

82. Initiatives like Girls4Tech offer inquiry-based activities in cryptology, digital technologies, big data, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) for social good, helping girls explore and understand the roles of women in these critical fields.

83. Digital Educational Learning Initiative Malaysia (DELIMa) platform is an initiative which enhances student engagement through personalized learning and comprehensive, interactive resources that cater to both male and female students. Collaborations with diverse partners further ensure that gender-responsive content is made available to teachers and students from preschool to secondary levels.

84. This gender-responsive STEM education measures are part of the country's broader efforts to improve gender equality in the workforce by closing the gender gap in STEM sectors. It creates more equitable educational opportunities, instill confidence in girls and women, and promote their success in STEM careers. Special attention is given to underrepresented groups such as those in rural areas, indigenous communities, and those living with disabilities. The success of these programs has been reflected in increased enrollment of girls in STEM, improved academic performance, and more inclusive STEM career pathways.

85. Initiatives such as National Science Week (NSW) and Malaysia Techlympics exemplify this effort. These programs, which incorporate hands-on experiential learning and competitions, attracted nearly 600,000 participants through NSW in 2023, while Malaysia Techlympics saw 1.8 million participants nationwide, including significant involvement from female students and youth.

86. Additionally, National Science Centre (PSN) and National Planetarium (PN) attracted over 1.3 million and 73,320 visitors respectively in 2023, further encouraging interest in STEM among students, including girls.

87. National Guidelines on Artificial Intelligence (AI) Governance & Ethics for Responsible AI (National Guidelines on AIGE) promote fairness and non-discrimination in AI systems, ensuring that they do not discriminate based on race, gender, ethnicity, or religion. By emphasizing diversity, non-discrimination, and fairness, the guidelines aim to mitigate biases in data and algorithms, creating a more inclusive digital landscape for women and girls.

88. In addition, there have been broader efforts in Malaysia to increase digital literacy and skills among women and girls, particularly those from underrepresented groups, such as rural communities, indigenous populations, and those with disabilities. These programs include online platforms, courses, and training seminars designed to enhance women's and girls' digital literacy, with a focus on inclusivity. Special attention is given to providing technological infrastructure and culturally sensitive approaches to ensure these initiatives reach their target audiences.

89.   Through these efforts, Malaysia continues to create inclusive digital learning environments that cater to the unique needs of both girls and boys, helping to close the gender digital divide.

B. Poverty Eradication, Social Protection and Social Services

i.   Poverty Among Women and Girls

90.   Poverty eradication is central to the 12th Malaysia Plan and the Malaysia Madani Framework, focusing on empowering vulnerable groups, including women, by expanding job opportunities and enhancing social protection. In 2023, RM235 million was allocated to support women entrepreneurs, with initiatives such as Bank Rakyat's BR Plus – i BizLady and MARA's *Skim Pembiayaan Perniagaan Khas Wanita* offering favorable financing options.

91.   To address the low participation of women in formal retirement schemes, the government has introduced programs through the Employees Provident Fund (EPF). These include:

   i.   i-Suri: Provides a 50% government incentive for housewives in the e-Kasih database, encouraging retirement savings with benefits up to RM3,000.
   ii.   i-Saraan: Offers informal workers a 15% incentive for their contributions, with enhanced lifetime benefits capped at RM5,000.
   iii.   i-Sayang: Allows husbands to allocate 2% of their EPF contributions to their wives' accounts, benefiting thousands of households.

92.   These efforts aim to reduce poverty among women and girls and support their long-term economic security.

93.   Malaysia's supply-led 5G rollout model is set to enhance inclusive economic opportunities for women across the country. This initiative enables women to have broadened access to essential resources such as land, housing, finance, technology, and agricultural extension services. By leveraging advanced digital infrastructure, women benefit from improved connectivity, which is key to accessing national socio-economic development programs that empower them in these areas. This digital transformation supports women's economic advancement, especially in rural and underserved communities, fostering greater financial inclusion and resource accessibility.

94.   To support women's entrepreneurship, access to markets, and business development, Malaysia has implemented several initiatives:

   i.   Malaysia Grand Challenge (MGC) Program: The Program offers R&D funding to address national strategic issues and improve societal well-

being via science, technology, and innovation (STI). The Applied Innovation Fund (AIF) is one of the key funding schemes, providing up to RM500,000 per project for SMEs, STI agencies, NGOs, and cooperatives, and up to RM50,000 for individuals, including women (particularly single mothers), to encourage technological innovations that have commercial potential. This initiative supports women's involvement in innovation, offering them access to R&D funding opportunities.

ii.   eUsahawan Program: This program focuses on equipping women entrepreneurs, including those in rural and micro-businesses, with digital entrepreneurship skills. It helps them improve product marketing, expand market access, and boost sales, ultimately supporting income generation and business growth for women entrepreneurs.

95.   These initiatives are aimed at enhancing women's economic empowerment, fostering innovation, and improving market access for women entrepreneurs, particularly those from disadvantaged groups.

ii. Access to Social Protection

96.   Malaysia's social protection framework adopts a life cycle approach, integrating women and girls into programs designed to safeguard various demographic groups from socio-economic risks.

97.   MySPC evaluates new proposals from ministries and agencies aimed at benefiting all citizens including vulnerable groups or safeguarding them against unforeseen risks. By prioritizing input and feedback from relevant ministries, Malaysia aims to create comprehensive programs that support women's empowerment and improve their socio-economic conditions.

98.   Key measures to enhance women's access include empowering them through entrepreneurship, education, and healthcare initiatives, as well as streamlining policies for flexible work arrangements and enhanced parental leave to support work-life balance. Security schemes for housewives and matching grants for retirement savings further bolster financial security. Additionally, the government collaborates with NGOs to create a comprehensive social protection network that effectively addresses the challenges faced by vulnerable women and girls, promoting resilience and inclusion.

99.   The Department of Social Welfare (JKM) consistently provides assistance to eligible target groups. The primary goal of this financial aid is to address basic needs and alleviate the burden on recipients. This assistance is intended to be temporary, helping individuals sustain themselves during challenging times. From 2020 to 2023, JKM has allocated nearly RM2.5 billion annually, benefiting approximately 530,000 recipients each year.

iii. Health Outcomes

100.   Malaysia has undertaken various gender-specific public awareness and health promotion campaigns to improve health outcomes for women and girls. To improve health outcomes for women and girls, Malaysia has aligned its initiatives with the objectives of the National Reproductive Health Education and Social Education (PEKERTI) program, which focuses on increasing awareness and empowering communities regarding reproductive health. There is also the implementation of the Personal Hygiene Kit Giving Program, which includes reproductive health advocacy efforts aimed at enhancing reproductive health knowledge among female youth.

101.   Public awareness campaigns addressing critical health issues such as maternal health, reproductive health, and non-communicable diseases were launched. These campaigns target women and girls across all demographics, with special attention given to high-risk groups, including pregnant women, teenagers, and those living in rural areas. The programs encompass healthcare services, educational resources, and outreach initiatives designed to encourage women to seek medical attention when necessary. Engaging the community, employing culturally sensitive approaches, and fostering cross-sector collaboration are essential strategies for reducing health disparities among women in Malaysia.

102.   To improve health outcomes for women and girls, Malaysia has strengthened comprehensive sexuality education through the implementation of the PEERS program, which is integrated into the Health Education curriculum for primary and secondary schools under the Ministry of Education. PEERS provides a comprehensive, curriculum-based approach to teaching various aspects of sexuality, including cognitive, emotional, physical, spiritual, and social dimensions, while emphasizing psychosocial competence.

103.   The PEERS program is designed to be incremental, age-appropriate, culturally relevant, and context-specific, fostering safe, healthy, and positive relationships among students. Successful implementation relies on the continuous collaboration of all stakeholders, including parents, to empower children to make informed decisions. Key topics covered in PEERS include emotional well-being, consent, and contraceptives, ensuring that young people receive essential knowledge to support their health and development.

104.   The Public Service Department has implemented initiatives focused on psychological health and awareness, such as the Public Service Counselling Support Group (AKRAB) (Public Service Counselling Support Group), the Mental Health Literacy Program, and the annual Public Service Psychology Conference. More recently, the Public Service Department has developed the Digital Profiling of the Psychological Health of Civil Servants Malaysia. This

screening system is developed to identify psychological health risks and the well-being of civil servants pertaining to issues related to depression, anxiety, stress, suicidal behaviour and other physical and mental health concerns.

iv. Education Outcomes and Skills

105. To improve education outcomes for girls and ensure their retention and completion of primary and secondary education, the Ministry of Education has implemented several initiatives aimed at increasing accessibility, particularly for rural students. One key initiative is the Zero Student Dropout Programme, which was piloted in 2018-2019 across several states. This program involved collaboration among various agencies. As a result of this initiative, a total of 1,666 primary school students and 2,703 secondary school students were successfully brought back to continue their education.

106. Additionally, the Guidelines for Managing Risk of Students' Dropout in Schools has been in place since 2018 to help schools manage and implement intervention programs for students identified as at risk of dropping out. Schools conduct targeted interventions based on categories and factors outlined in the Highlighting Personal Excellence and SUDI Module. Although not exclusively for girls, these initiatives benefit them significantly by addressing barriers to their education, helping to ensure their continuous learning and development.

107. Furthermore, the Ministry has developed a Student at Risk of Dropping Out Dashboard to identify and analyze factors contributing to dropout rates. This dashboard categorizes students into low, moderate, and high-risk levels, enabling more focused support and intervention strategies. These comprehensive measures aim to enhance girls' access to education and improve retention and completion rates in primary and secondary schooling.

108. Significant efforts have been made to enhance education outcomes for women and girls, particularly in TVET, where their representation has been historically low. Initiatives have been implemented to boost enrollment, retention, and graduation rates of girls in TVET programs, including policy reforms, educator training, and targeted scholarships.

109. These programs aim to create inclusive classroom environments free from gender bias, improve educational resources, and develop gender-sensitive curricula, specifically targeting young women from disadvantaged backgrounds. Funding supports scholarships, student services, infrastructure, and teacher training. Overall, these initiatives reflect Malaysia's commitment to providing equal access to quality education for all girls and women, closing gender gaps, and promoting their participation across various economic sectors.

110. Malaysia has taken important steps to help girls and women transition smoothly from education to the workforce, especially in sectors where they are underrepresented. Key initiatives include career counselling, internships, apprenticeships, and vocational training, often in partnership with industries. These programs help students and recent graduates gain the skills and experience they need to succeed in the job market.

111. Government efforts also focus on teacher training, job placement support, and entrepreneurship opportunities. As a result, more women and girls are finding jobs, staying employed, and advancing in their careers, which helps reduce the gender gap in the workplace and supports economic growth.

112. By providing targeted career guidance and building strong partnerships with businesses and educational institutions, Malaysia is working to ensure that women and girls have equal opportunities to succeed in their careers and contribute to the country's economy.

113. Significant steps have been taken to strengthen educational curricula to be more gender-responsive and eliminate bias at all levels of education, particularly in sectors where women and girls are underrepresented. This includes revising school curricula to promote gender equality and challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes.

114. The updated frameworks and teaching materials incorporate gender-sensitive perspectives and encourage diversity, ensuring that students, teachers, and policymakers alike are exposed to these values. These changes have been introduced across technical and vocational programs, as well as at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education.

115. Funds have been allocated for curriculum design, teacher training, educational resources, and evaluation to support these reforms. Impact assessments, including academic tests, focus groups, and surveys, have shown positive shifts in attitudes, behaviours, and academic outcomes related to gender equality. These efforts highlight the importance of ongoing collaboration between stakeholders and continuous monitoring to ensure effective implementation. By embedding gender responsiveness in education, Malaysia is empowering women and girls, promoting equality in the classroom, and preparing them to contribute meaningfully to all areas of society.

116. Malaysia has made it a priority to create safe, harassment-free, and inclusive educational environments for women and girls to improve their education outcomes and skills, especially in underrepresented sectors. One key action is raising awareness about gender-based discrimination and harassment in schools through workshops and training for educators, administrators, and students. These programs help identify and address issues of gender-based

violence and discrimination, with the aim of creating more welcoming educational spaces for all students.

117. Additionally, policies are enforced to ensure campuses are safe, including clear procedures for reporting harassment and support services like counselling and legal aid for victims. Efforts to promote gender-sensitive teaching and diverse curricula also play a role in fostering inclusivity. These initiatives, supported by funding for training, policy development, and awareness campaigns, aim to shift attitudes and improve outcomes for women and girls. Evaluations show progress in creating safer learning environments, highlighting the importance of continued community involvement, institutional support, and ongoing capacity-building efforts. Malaysia's commitment to these initiatives reflects its dedication to gender equality and better education for all.

118. Programs like NSW and Malaysia Techlympics promote STEM education through hands-on learning and competitions. In 2023, these programs saw participation from almost 600,000 students, including girls, while the Malaysia Techlympics attracted 1.8 million participants. Institutions like the National Science Centre and National Planetarium also organize activities to spark interest in STEM among girls.

119. Additional efforts include scholarships, mentorship programs, and partnerships with private companies to provide internships and apprenticeships, targeting women from diverse backgrounds such as rural and low-income communities. These programs aim to increase female participation in STEM fields and are supported by funding for outreach, educational resources, and program administration. Success is measured by enrollment, graduation, and employment rates, showing progress in helping women and girls enter and thrive in STEM careers.

120. Malaysia has taken steps to improve education outcomes for women and girls by ensuring access to safe water and sanitation services, and supporting menstrual hygiene management, especially in schools. Initiatives include providing menstrual hygiene products, building private toilet facilities with proper sanitation, and educating students about menstrual hygiene. These efforts aim to create a more supportive environment for female students in primary, secondary, and higher education, ensuring they can fully participate in school without barriers.

121. Special attention is given to girls from low-income, rural, and indigenous communities, who may face greater challenges in accessing menstrual hygiene products and services. Budgets for these programs cover the installation and upkeep of sanitation facilities, distribution of hygiene products, and educational workshops. Impact evaluations assess how these initiatives improve the health, well-being, and school attendance of female students.

Lessons learned emphasize the importance of culturally sensitive education, maintaining sanitation facilities, and involving communities in promoting menstrual hygiene in schools.

122. Steps also taken to prevent adolescent pregnancies and support girls who become pregnant, especially to help them continue their education. These initiatives include providing comprehensive sexuality education, access to reproductive health services, and support networks to guide girls in making informed choices. The policies also ensure that pregnant and parenting girls can stay in school by offering alternative education options and extra support. The Government also has launched the National Strategy Plan in Addressing the Causes of Child Marriage 2020-2025. This Plan covers awareness campaigns on sexual and reproductive health, gaps in legislation, education, strengthening family support system and collecting socio economic data.

123. These efforts focus on helping teenage girls in secondary and tertiary education, particularly those at risk of pregnancy or already experiencing it. Resources like childcare, counselling, and tailored education programs for young mothers are provided. The success of these initiatives is measured by how well they reduce teen pregnancies and support girls in completing their education, ensuring they have the help they need to stay healthy and succeed in school.

C. Freedom From Violence, Stigma and Stereotypes

i. Priority Areas of Gender-Based Violence and Specific Contexts for Action

124. Malaysia has prioritized addressing sexual harassment and violence in public places, educational settings, and workplaces through various initiatives and guidelines. One key resource available to victims is the Talian Kasih helpline, which operates 24/7 and can be reached by calling 15999 or via WhatsApp at 013-2615999. This helpline provides immediate support and assistance to individuals facing abuse or domestic violence.

125. The Public Service Department issued Service Circular "Guidelines for Addressing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace," to eliminate such harassment in the public sector. Regular briefing sessions are held to ensure awareness and implementation of these guidelines. Similarly, the Ministry of Education emphasizes the importance of creating safe educational environments, as sexual harassment can significantly impact students' academic performance and overall well-being.

126. In response to the urgent need to combat sexual harassment and violence, Malaysia has implemented policies that classify sexual harassment as a crime and provide legal recourse for survivors. Educational institutions have established reporting channels, support resources, and training programs to address and prevent incidents of sexual harassment. Workplace initiatives also aim to foster a respectful environment, offering education for employees on identifying and reporting harassment.

127. Malaysia is prioritizing the prevention of violence against women and girls facilitated by technology, such as online sexual harassment, stalking, and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images. Currently, Children's Services System (ANAK) is being developed, which includes a Crimes Against Children Screening Module. This module aims to enhance the protection and safety of children by checking the criminal records of individuals working with them.

128. Programs like CyberSAFE (Cyber Security Awareness for Everyone) are also in place to raise public awareness about cybersecurity and protect individuals from cyber threats, including cyberstalking and cyber harassment. This promotes gender equality and digital equity, ensuring that all community members, regardless of their racial backgrounds, are informed and protected against online violence.

129. Malaysia has taken steps to address gender-based violence against women in politics, including women human rights defenders, by enforcing parliamentary regulations. Standing Orders 36(4) prohibits the use of rude, condescending, or sexist remarks during discussions, fostering a more respectful environment. To reinforce this, MPs who engage in such behavior can be fined RM1,000, highlighting Malaysia's commitment to combating gender-based violence and promoting respect and equality in politics.

ii. Priority Actions to Address Gender-Based Violence

130. Significant steps are taken to strengthen laws addressing violence against women and enhance their enforcement. As an example,"Guidelines on the Management of Sexual Misconduct in Educational Institutions" provides clear procedures for reporting incidents of sexual harassment in schools. Three reporting channels have been established, including a dedicated hotline, email, and the Public Complaints Management System (SISPAA).

131. The Domestic Violence Act offers legal protections for victims, primarily women, allowing them to seek restraining orders against their abusers. This law has been amended to broaden the definition of domestic violence and introduce emergency protection measures. The Sexual Offences Against Children Act focuses on child protection, enhancing penalties for offenders and establishing special judicial procedures.

132.	Additionally, the government has set up shelters and support centers for survivors, alongside training for law enforcement to improve responses to gender-based violence. Despite these advancements, continued efforts are needed to enforce laws effectively and change societal attitudes toward gender-based violence.

133.	To further address gender-based violence, Malaysia is actively working on various initiatives to enhance awareness and education surrounding these issues. The National Council for Children brings together multiple stakeholders to develop coordinated responses to child abuse and violence against women. The government has also drafted a Cyber Security Bill aimed at improving online safety, which indirectly supports efforts to combat digital forms of gender-based violence, such as online harassment and stalking. By fostering collaboration among public and private sectors, Malaysia is committed to creating a safer environment for women and children while reinforcing the legal framework to combat gender-based violence effectively.

134.	National Strategic Plan to Address Domestic Violence (2019–2023) focuses on enhancing victim support services, improving legislative frameworks, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders. This plan outlines specific objectives such as increasing access to support services, raising public awareness of domestic violence, and strengthening the capacity of law enforcement and service providers to handle domestic violence cases effectively.

135.	Additionally, Guidelines on the Management of Sexual Misconduct in Educational Institutions tackle sexual harassment in schools. This includes multiple reporting channels for students, parents, and the community. For perpetrators in positions of authority, disciplinary actions can be enforced under the Public Officers Regulations, and they may also face penalties under relevant child protection laws. Moreover, the Domestic Violence Act 1994 has been amended to broaden its definition and enhance protective measures.

136.	Under the Domestic Violence Act 1994, a total of 37 institutions and 5 NGOs have been recognized as safe havens for victims of domestic violence, providing essential protection and support. These initiatives reflect Malaysia's commitment to improving the justice system's responsiveness to gender-based violence, ensuring that survivors receive the necessary protection, redress, and support in their pursuit of justice.

137.	In the education sector, the Guidelines on the Management of Sexual Misconduct in Educational Institutions were launched to addresses bullying. Furthermore, continuous awareness programs are conducted in collaboration with various agencies to promote psychoeducation and highlight issues like reproductive health and sexual harassment. The Talian Aduan Buli hotline

enables easy reporting of bullying incidents, ensuring prompt action and support for affected individuals.

138. To further combat gender-based violence, Malaysia engages in community mobilization and educational initiatives targeting men and boys. Programs aim to challenge harmful masculine norms and promote respectful interactions, thereby fostering a supportive environment for women and girls.

139. The government also leverages the 5G network to enhance safety and security through improved connectivity and technology, facilitating access to emergency services and cyber safety education. These comprehensive strategies reflect Malaysia's commitment to preventing gender-based violence and promoting gender equality across various sectors of society. Monitoring and evaluation of impact, including evidence generation and data collection

140. Child Sexual Crime Intervention Module in Schools (IHSAN) was introduced to raise awareness among students about sexual crimes and their impact on victims' well-being. Continuous awareness programs, in collaboration with governmental and non-governmental organizations, focus on psychoeducation, reproductive health, and the risks of sexual harassment.

141. In addition to educational efforts, Malaysia prioritizes capacity-building for professionals responsible for preventing and responding to violence against women. This includes training sessions, seminars, and workshops for individuals working in education, social work, healthcare, law enforcement, and community leadership. The aim is to equip these stakeholders with the necessary tools and knowledge to recognize, respond to, and prevent acts of violence against women.

142. Moreover, initiatives have been established to improve data collection and analysis on violence against women from various sources, including medical records, social services, and police reports. This collaborative approach enhances the understanding of trends and causes of gender-based violence.

143. Efforts like the CyberSAFE program, which raises awareness about cybersecurity threats, further contribute to preventing gender-based violence at early stages. This connectivity supports awareness and advocacy initiatives aimed at improving understanding of violence against women, reflecting Malaysia's commitment to addressing this critical issue and fostering a coordinated response across all sectors.

iii. Strategies Used to Prevent Gender-Based Violence

144. Data collection and analysis to understand the root causes and patterns of gender-based violence is important. By improving data analytic skills and establishing standardized reporting processes, stakeholders can gather

insights from diverse sources, such as medical records and police reports. This data-driven approach fosters collaboration among government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and international partners, ensuring a coordinated response to violence against women.

145.   To assess the effectiveness of these strategies, the country conducts surveys, interviews, and focus groups to evaluate changes in professionals' attitudes and the overall impact on programs and policies. These efforts highlight our commitment to combatting gender-based violence and promoting gender equality, providing survivors with the necessary support and resources to heal and rebuild their lives.

146.   Several strategies to prevent gender-based violence has been implemented, particularly by alleviating poverty through targeted interventions for women and households. The country's social protection system adopts a life cycle approach, addressing the needs of various groups, including women and girls. This ensures that policies and programs consider the unique challenges faced by these demographics.

147.   Through these targeted interventions, Malaysia seeks to strengthen the resilience of women and households, ultimately contributing to the prevention of gender-based violence and promoting gender equality across society.

148.   Malaysia has taken significant steps to create safe environments in schools, workplaces, and public spaces to prevent gender-based violence. The Childcare Fees Subsidy program supports civil servants with children under four by subsidizing childcare at workplace facilities, encouraging government agencies to set up childcare centers (TASKA). This initiative also allows nursing mothers to breastfeed during breaks, promoting a family-friendly workplace.

149.   In schools, comprehensive guidelines have been established, including staff training on recognizing and responding to violence and supportive reporting processes for students. The aim is to create a zero-tolerance culture for gender-based violence and involve parents and the community in these efforts. Evaluations assess the effectiveness of these policies by monitoring reported incidents and changes in attitudes.

150.   The CyberSAFE program raises awareness about cybersecurity to protect against online threats, promoting a safer digital environment. Programs to combat bullying, such as the Safe School Programme and the Caring Teacher Programme, have also been launched. In schools, staff are trained to recognize and respond to violence, with supportive reporting processes for students. These efforts aim to create a zero-tolerance culture for gender-based

violence, while involving parents and the community in fostering a safer environment.

151. To promote non-violent family relationships and positive parenting practices, Malaysia's Ministry of Education has integrated Global Citizenship Education (GCED) into the national curriculum since 2017. Rather than being a standalone subject, GCED is woven throughout various subjects, helping students understand and appreciate global issues like gender inequality, climate change, and peace.

152. Additionally, since 2023, the Ministry has focused on enhancing communication between schools, parents, and the ministry, highlighting the importance of human dignity (karamah insaniah). This approach aims to develop soft skills, good manners, and integrity among students, fostering the growth of virtuous and intelligent future generations. Together, these initiatives support a culture of peace and nonviolence within families and communities.

iv. Actions Taken to Prevent and Respond to Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence

153. To prevent and respond to technology-facilitated gender-based violence, Malaysia is enhancing its legislative framework. The Department of Social Welfare (JKM) is developing the Children's Services System (ANAK), which support the protection of children by documenting cases of abuse, including details about the perpetrators, under the authority of the Children Act 2001.

154. Recognizing the challenges posed by rapid digitalization, the National Security Council (Majlis Keselamatan Negara) has drafted a Cyber Security Bill. This legislation aims to improve governance in managing cyber threats, including online harassment and other forms of digital violence, by fostering collaboration among stakeholders in both the public and private sectors.

155. Awareness programs such as CyberSAFE (Cyber Security Awareness For Everyone), helps to foster cybersecurity awareness among the public and protect them from various cyber threats, including cyber spying and cyberstalking.

156. National Guidelines on Artificial Intelligence (AI) Governance & Ethics for Responsible AI is developed to promote responsible AI usage among stakeholders by emphasizing fairness, ensuring that AI systems do not discriminate based on race, gender, ethnicity, or religion. They also address unintentional biases in data and algorithms, promoting diversity and non-discrimination.

157.   To enhance the capacity of government actors in addressing technology-facilitated gender-based violence, Malaysia is adopting 5G technologies. This transition improve policy and legislation development as well as enforcement through three key aspects: first, it provides enhanced connectivity and technological capabilities in public sector workplaces, facilitating better documentation, monitoring, management, and collaboration; second, it drives socioeconomic development, leading to the creation of new policies and legislation to address emerging risks and opportunities; and third, it offers opportunities to utilize 5G-enabled technologies for effective surveillance and enforcement strategies to combat gender-based violence.

v. Actions and Measures to Address Gender Bias in Media and Support Women's Organizations in Preventing and Responding to Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

158.   Malaysia has taken significant measures to support women's organizations in preventing and responding to GBV. The Department of Women's Development (DWD) collaborates closely with various government agencies, including the Royal Malaysian Police, the Legal Aid Department, and the Department of Islamic Development, to create a comprehensive response to GBV. These agencies serve as vital resources for the Skuad Waja volunteers, who assist the community. As of September 2024, there are 336,590 Skuad Waja volunteers with 260,899 females and 75,691 males, those of which have aided a record of 81,473 people in the communities throughout the country. Additionally, NGOs are actively engaged in advocacy efforts to combat violence against women.

159.   Furthermore, coordinated activities and promotions to address domestic violence are managed across all agencies, ensuring that everyone involved is informed and can enhance the quality of their advocacy efforts. NGOs also play a crucial role in supporting vulnerable women, particularly survivors of human trafficking, by providing care, protection, counseling, and translation services throughout their stay in Malaysia.

160.   Various measures are implemented to address the portrayal of women and girls and combat discrimination and gender bias in the media, including social media. The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Content Code, in line with the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998, mandates that media content must not include abusive or discriminatory material based on race, religion, gender, or other characteristics. Sections 211 and 233 of the Act impose penalties, including fines and imprisonment, for individuals who provide or share indecent, obscene, or offensive content intended to harass others, thereby promoting accountability among content providers.

161.   Additionally, awareness programs like CyberSAFE (Cyber Security Awareness for Everyone) enhance public understanding of cybersecurity issues,

protecting individuals from threats such as cyberstalking and online harassment. These initiatives contribute to creating a safer digital environment, ultimately reducing the risk of gender-based violence and fostering respectful interactions online.

D. Participation, Accountability and Gender-Responsive Institutions

162. Malaysia has implemented several measures to enhance women's access to expression and participation in media and ICT, focusing on increasing access, affordability, and usage of technology. The CyberSecurity Malaysia Collaboration Program (CCP) fosters cooperation between government and industry to create a secure cybersecurity ecosystem, driving both innovation and economic growth.

163. The rollout of 5G technology is a key initiative, improving connectivity and enabling socioeconomic advancement for all Malaysians, especially women. Specific actions include:

    i. Expanding access to ICTs for women and girls through initiatives like free Wi-Fi hubs and community tech centers.
    ii. Introducing regulations to ensure equal pay, retention, and career advancement for women in media and ICT.
    iii. Partnering with employers to improve internal policies and hiring practices that support gender equality.
    iv. Supporting the creation of women's media networks to further integrate women into the economy and society.

164. Malaysia has made notable progress in increasing women's participation in decision-making within the media and ICT sectors. Programs like CyberGuru and the Global Ace Scheme were launched to train and certify cybersecurity professionals, promoting a skilled digital workforce that includes women.

165. To encourage women's leadership in media and ICT, the government has integrated media management and leadership courses into TVET programs. These courses equip women with skills in strategic communication, digital content creation, and media production, preparing them for managerial and executive roles in the sector.

166. Overall, Malaysia's initiatives aim to promote gender equality in decision-making roles within the media and ensure better representation of women's perspectives in media content. Government agencies and educational institutions can provide more details on these efforts.

E. Peaceful and Inclusive Societies

167. The Malaysian Peacekeeping Centre (MPCC) plays a vital role in enhancing the skills and understanding of women in the Armed Forces through various courses and training programs, preparing them for future roles in peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts. Additionally, the Malaysian Armed Forces, both male and female, actively participated in humanitarian missions during the floods and landslides that affected Malaysia in 2022.

168. Furthermore, Malaysia has signed and ratified the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, strengthening its commitment to uphold human rights and humanitarian law in various contexts. These measures collectively aim to enhance judicial and non-judicial accountability for violations impacting women and girls in armed and crisis situations.

169. The Malaysian government is currently in the proses of developing the women, peace and security NAP.

F. Environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation

170. Malaysia is working to promote the education of women and girls in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) to improve gender perspectives in environmental policies.

171. Events such as NSW and the Malaysia Techlympics have been organized with a focus on sustainability. In 2022, NSW highlighted themes like ecosystems and climate change, while the 2023 Techlympics offered hands-on learning experiences centered on sustainability.

172. To support female participation in STEM, Malaysia has established STEM schools for girls and ensures equal access to STEM activities for all students. The participation rates of girls and boys in these activities are nearly equal. Additionally, programs like *Program Duta Guru* (PDG) have trained many female teachers, with 73% of participants being women.

173. These initiatives aim to empower girls and women to engage in environmental conservation. By encouraging younger girls to pursue STEM education, Malaysia seeks to develop future female leaders in environmental fields. Funding for these programs includes scholarships and partnerships with the private sector and NGOs.

174. To evaluate the success of these efforts, the government tracks metrics like enrollment and graduation rates in STEM. Creating an inclusive environment

for all students, especially girls, is essential for encouraging interest in STEM careers.

175.   The government has implemented initiatives aimed at creating equal job opportunities for women in sustainable sectors, helping them access roles in restoration, preservation, and conservation. These programs focus on breaking down barriers to employment in the green economy for underrepresented groups, empowering women and promoting gender equality.

176.   Training programs and skill development initiatives are part of these efforts, increasing women's employability in eco-friendly industries. Budget allocations for these projects may also include partnerships with businesses and NGOs to enhance sustainability and effectiveness.