

Private sector still behind in advocating women in leadership role, says Nancy

By [Kalbana Perimbanayagam](#) - October 19, 2023 @ 7:19pm



(FILE PHOTO) Women, Family, and Community Development minister Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri. -NSTP FILE/HAIRUL ANUAR RAHIM

KUALA LUMPUR: The private sector is still behind in advocating women's participation in corporate leadership roles, says the Women, Family, and Community Development Ministry.

Its minister Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri said the public sector has so far exceeded its goal of 30 per cent with its latest achievement of 38.8 per cent women participation in decision-making roles.

She said the public sector, namely the government-linked companies (GLCs) and ministries have adopted the idea, with significant number of women holding key decision-making positions in many department and agencies.

"Unfortunately, this is not case with women employed in the private sector, as we do not have control over decisions involving companies in private sector," she said, adding that she is hoping for the private sector to meet the common target.

On encouraging women to join the workforce, Nancy said the government has announced various initiatives and tax exemptions for women.

Speaking to reporters after chairing the inaugural National Women and Family Council (NWFC) meeting today, Nancy said the government's target for 60 per cent of women to join the workforce has to be carefully studied as it involved several factors, such as facilities for working mothers, adequate salary and other income options which women now have.

"We are actually in the midst of making certain reforms to encourage women to return to the corporate sector, including making legal framework reforms for working women and organising advocacy programs such as 'Jerai Wara' and 'Wanita Bangkit' at a national level.

"Jerai Wara for instance is an anti sexual harassment programme which will provide women the confidence to return to work. These people can be confident that they will not become victims since now there are avenues and laws for such complaints at workplace," Nancy said.

She added that Malaysia also can take example from other countries in ensuring more women participation.

"For instance Singapore, which has more than 70 per cent women in their workforce. Maybe improving the facilities at the work place to include daycare centre or nurseries, providing lactation room and providing adequate and necessary support at the work place would be good to draw women to rejoin the workforce today.

"One more thing that has become a trend now after the pandemic is that more women have started venturing into doing online businesses and find it more convenient to work from home.

"So, there are a few things that the ministry must look into in driving women back to work," she said adding that NWFC has been tasked to study some of these issues.

Speaking on the outcome of the NWFC meeting at Lembaga Pertubuhan Peladang here today, Nancy said it was a healthy engagement they had with their stakeholders, especially by raising issues of child marriages, teens who marry young and are unable to cope, financial crisis in a family and struggles commonly faced.

"We discussed many things related to empowering women in various roles, about the challenges and exchanged ideas with relevant agencies as well as NGOs," she said.

She said the primary goal of NWFC is to empower women and reject any form of gender-based discrimination, in line with Article 8 of the Federal Constitution and Malaysia's obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

"This council also aligns with the country National Family Policy in building and strengthening family institutions and serves as a platform for various stakeholders, including federal government agencies, private sector representatives, academics and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), to provide insights and ideas to empower women and enhance family institutions comprehensively," she said.

Also present at the meeting were Women, Family, and Community Development deputy minister Datuk Aiman Aiman Athirah Sabu and secretary general Datuk Dr Maziah Che Yusoff.