



MEDIA RELEASE

MALAYSIA HOSTS FIRST PUBLIC-PRIVATE DIALOGUE IN 2019 TO ADVANCE WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AGENDA IN THE COMMONWEALTH

29-30 JANUARY 2019, KUALA LUMPUR

YAB Dato' Seri Dr. Wan Azizah Dr. Wan Ismail, Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) and Minister of Women, Family and Community Development officiated the 'Workshop on Inclusive Trade in Commonwealth' today at the Park Royal Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, accompanied by YB Datuk Ignatius Darell Leiking, YB Minister of International Trade and Industry. The two-day Workshop with the theme 'Public Private Dialogue on Women in the Digital Economy and International Trade' is jointly organised by the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the Commonwealth Secretariat in partnership with the Government of Malaysia.

In her keynote address during the opening ceremony, YAB DPM expressed the Government's appreciation to the organisers for selecting Malaysia as the first host country to kick-start the Commonwealth's dialogue and discussion in the area of inclusive and sustainable trade. "It entails a significant commitment to make trade and investment more inclusive by encouraging the participation of women and youth in business activities, taking a gender-responsive approach to the development of trade policy, increasing opportunities for women to participate in international trade, and breaking down gender barriers in all economic sectors," she reiterated.

Dato' Seri Dr. Wan Azizah further recognised that the Workshop would provide a platform for public and private stakeholders from the Commonwealth countries to exchange ideas and best practices to address systemic barriers to women's full participation in the digital economy and international trade. She was also pleased that the ITC has included Malaysia together with Bangladesh, Ghana, Jamaica and the United Kingdom in the pilot phase of the 'SheTrades Outlook' (STO) policy tool which is anticipated to be published by early 2020. The STO can provide optimal assessment, improvement and monitoring of the institutional ecosystems for women's economic empowerment and participation in international trade – a policy tool which would benefit developing economies such as Malaysia in reviewing the efficiency and effectiveness of domestic policies and measures on women and trade.

"Malaysia has a long history of women's venture in business which contributed towards national economic development," YAB DPM said. "The Government has and continues to undertake numerous efforts to ensure that women are able to realise their full potential and participate effectively in the economic and social development of the country," she added. Among others, she further highlighted the Government's stronger focus on "enhancing inclusive development and wellbeing" under the 'Mid-Term Review of the Eleventh Malaysian Plan (2018-2020)', the long-standing policy on more than 30% women participation in high-level positions/directors in the public and private sectors, the



'Women Exporters Development Programme' (WEDP) under MATRADE, the newly launched 'Harapan Rural Development Plan 2018-2023' which has incorporated a specific thrust for the development of rural women, and various entrepreneurship and SME-related programmes with majority women participation.

As part of the 'Declaration on the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda on Trade and Investment' (CCA) adopted by the Commonwealth Leaders in April 2018, mainstreaming inclusive and sustainable trade into the CCA as a cross-cutting element is crucial towards realising the aim to increase intra-Commonwealth trade to USD2 trillion by 2030. Among others, the ITC has also launched the 'SheTrades in the Commonwealth' initiative in April 2018 to connect 3 million women entrepreneurs to international market by 2021 and to rally stakeholders globally to work together to address trade barriers and create greater opportunities for women entrepreneurs. SheTrades works with governments, corporations and business support organizations to undertake research and champion quality data, shape and enact fair and enabling trade policies and regulations, facilitate financing and business deals, enable and expand access to markets, public tenders and corporate supply chains, as well as grant ownership rights.

From January-November 2018, Malaysia's total trade with the Commonwealth countries increased by 4.3% to RM397 billion or USD98.6 billion (exports: RM235.1 billion (USD58.4 billion); imports: RM161.8 billion (USD40.2 billion)) compared to the same period in 2017.

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Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI)

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MITI is the key driver in making Malaysia the preferred destination for quality investments and enhancing the nation's rising status as a globally competitive trading nation. Its objectives and roles are oriented towards ensuring Malaysia's rapid economic development and help achieve the country's stated goal of becoming a developed nation by 2020 .

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