



## **Australian High Commission**

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### **Malaysia**

#### **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Australian Government Supports Launch of Malaysia's First Women's Empowerment Principles Corporate Action Lab to Advance Gender Equality in Business**

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA – 20 May 2025 – The Australian Government, through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), today celebrated the launch of the inaugural Malaysia Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) Corporate Action Lab at the Majestic Hotel in Kuala Lumpur. Co-implemented by UN Women, LeadWomen, and TalentCorp, this flagship initiative is part of the UN Women Gender Action Lab: Innovation and Impact for Gender Equality in Asia-Pacific, proudly supported by DFAT as the lead sponsor. Malaysia is the first among four participating countries to launch a WEPs Corporate Action Lab.

The WEPs Corporate Action Lab (WEPsCAL) is a dynamic, cohort-based programme designed to support companies in assessing current progress and utilizing data, tailored tools and targeted support to co-create and implement actionable gender equality strategies aligned with specific WEPs focus areas. The WEPs provide a globally recognized framework for companies of all sizes and sectors to adopt gender-responsive policies and practices across their value chains. UN Women leverages the WEPs to engage the private sector in delivering transformative change for gender equality in business.

In Malaysia, the first WEPs Corporate Action Lab focuses on the theme Innovating the Future of Family-Friendly Workplaces. The launch event introduced the first Malaysian cohort of WEPs Changemakers—11 companies spanning diverse industries and organizational sizes:

- AirAsia Aviation Management Services Sdn. Bhd.
- FGV Holdings Berhad
- Grant Thornton Malaysia PLT
- HAYS Malaysia
- Kiddocare Sdn. Bhd.
- Mastrak Sdn. Bhd.
- Micron Memory Malaysia Sdn. Bhd.

- PEOPLElogy Development Sdn. Bhd.
- QSR Brands (M) Holdings Bhd
- Sagemaker Asia PLT
- Wipro Unza Malaysia Sdn. Bhd.

Speaking ahead of the launch, Katja Freiwald, Regional Lead for Women's Economic Empowerment and Migration, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, said: "Transforming businesses and workplaces is essential to increasing women's labour force participation and building more inclusive, resilient economies. It's inspiring to see Malaysia leading the way with the WEPs Corporate Action Lab's inaugural theme, Innovating the Future of Family-Friendly Workplaces, a significant step that holds promise for scalable solutions across Asia and the Pacific".

The launch also featured a panel discussion with YB Wong Shu Qi, TalentCorp Chairperson, Amy Baum, Programme Specialist, Women's Economic Empowerment and Private Sector Engagement, UN Women Asia-Pacific, Shakira Teh Sharifuddin, Senior Economist, The World Bank Group and Dr. John Loh, Chairman of Sustainability and Circular Economy, Small and Medium Enterprises Association (SAMENTA) Malaysia on the importance of public-private collaboration in creating family-friendly workplaces to support the return, retention and success of women in the workplace.

Clare Gatehouse, Political and Economic Counsellor, Australian High Commission to Malaysia, added: "Gender equality benefits everyone. It drives economic growth, enhances social cohesion, and increases the wellbeing of all members of society. Australia is proud to champion this innovative programme supporting practical, private sector-led solutions for boosting women's economic participation".

Speaking at the event, YB Ms. Wong Shu Qi, TalentCorp Board of Directors Chairperson committed to empower women through TalentCorp, saying TalentCorp is proud to champion this initiative, working with partners to break down barriers and build pathways that enable women to balance careers and caregiving responsibilities, unlocking their full potential and shaping a future where gender equality drives national prosperity.

"This partnership marks a pivotal milestone in our collective commitment to empower women across Malaysia. By fostering strong public-private collaboration, we aim to accelerate progress towards achieving a 60% female labour participation rate, creating family-friendly workplaces that support women's return, retention, and advancement, and ensuring equal opportunities for women to contribute and thrive in the workforce." she added.

The launch of the Malaysia WEPs Corporate Action Lab marks a significant step in fostering gender equality in the business sector. LeadWomen, UN Women and TalentCorp are confident that this initiative will support companies in building inclusive, equitable workplaces and contribute to a thriving economy where women can fully participate and lead. Moving forward, the partners aim to expand the programme's reach and catalyse systemic change to advance women's empowerment across Malaysia's private sector.

Aligning strongly with Malaysia's Chair of ASEAN 2025 and its theme of 'Sustainability and Inclusivity, the WEPs Corporate Action Lab's focus on family-friendly workplaces, further bolstered by UN Women's new partnership with the ASEAN-Business Advisory Council Malaysia in support of the ASEAN Inclusivity Collective, is poised to garner business support to ignite a regional movement advancing inclusive economic growth throughout ASEAN.

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Media note: Imagery available via [link](#).